



# Parent Handbook

1405 Broadway Street  
Alexandria, MN 56308  
Phone: 320.763.4927  
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Dear Stepping Stones Parents:

The Stepping Stones would like to welcome your family to our program. We are delighted you have chosen us to care for your child(ren). It is our goal in this handbook to establish a relationship of understanding between your home and our center. It outlines what you and your family may expect from stepping stones and what we expect from you. Upon registration, you will be asked to sign a form acknowledging that you have read, understand, and will adhere to the policies and information in this booklet. During your time at Stepping Stones, the agency would like to assist your family with the any needs or questions you may have.

You are welcome to visit our center at any time! We do ask, however, that if you visit us at rest time that you are as quiet as possible so we do not disturb the children that are sleeping.

## STEPPING STONES MISSION STATEMENT

Our goal is to provide quality educational childcare in a safe environment for children ages 6 weeks through school age.

Our center is designed to enhance the emotional, social, physical, and cognitive development of children. Our daily activities will help them gain self-esteem and life long social skills.

Our philosophy is as follows:

1. Children learn through their play situations as well as through a structural environment.
2. Each child has different needs and develops at his/her own rate.
3. Our teachers will guide children in developing self-control through POSITIVE disciplinary methods.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

We will be open from 6:00 a.m. through 12:00 a.m., Monday through Friday, and weekends from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

We Provide:

- Infant care for children 6 weeks through 16 months of age
- Toddler care for children 16 months through 33 months of age
- Preschool care for children 33 months through 5 years of age
- Kindergarten age children

## PLANNING FOR YOUR CHILD'S DAY

It is important that your child attend regularly. The routine of regular attendance supports your child's learning and social development.

Indoor clothing should be the "everyday play" kind. The children will be climbing, crawling on the floors, using paint and other messy materials, and though we have paint shirts they aren't always able to stay clean, so please save your child's good clothes for other times.

Please dress your child warmly enough for outdoor play every day. Children have an outside play period every day if the weather permits us to do so. They will need jackets, mittens, hats, socks, snow pants, and boots when it is appropriate.

Labeling all of the children's clothes and other belongings prevents most confusion as children may have similar clothes.

Children are required to have an extra change of clothes for night daycare hours.

Children need to have their shoes on in the classroom so please be sure that your child is comfortable in his/her shoes. Tennis shoes should be available daily for your child. Since outside activities happen daily we ask that tennis shoes be provided in the summer and boots in the winter, which can be stored in the child's cubby if other footwear is worn.

Items from home are hard to share. We ask that your child not bring any items from home. Stepping Stones is not responsible for items brought from home that are broken or lost.

Backpacks are useful in ensuring that children have their shoes, extra clothing and cold weather gear all in one spot. Please write your child's name on the inside of the backpack.

Please check your child's folder/backpacks daily.

## **WHAT IS EDUCATION AT STEPPING STONES?**

A big part of your child's day will be spent in our classrooms, interacting with other children your child's age. We have taken great care to provide a classroom environment, which invites your child to learn as he/she plays. Observing and planning for your child's development learn much.

We believe that children learn through their play situations as well as through a structures environment.

Our curriculum provides learning experiences that are appropriate for your child's age and developmental level and are planned to stimulate your child's learning in all areas. We provide opportunities to develop the intellectual, physical, social and emotional skills of each child.

This is accomplished through...

Language Experience...Stories, poems music and songs, real life experiences, field trips, guest visitors, cooking, writing and videos.

Creative Awareness...Painting, singing, drawing, block building, puppets, and dramatic play.

School Readiness Skills...Counting, matching, classifying; number, letter, and shape and color recognition.

Gross & Fine Motor Development...Hopping, running, parachute activities, games and outdoor play, coloring, bead stringing, cutting, and writing.

Social Skills...Playing cooperatively with friends, listening skills and following directions.

Every week we explore a new topic and through our discussions learn more about our world.

Our daily activities will help children gain self-esteem and life long social skills.

Our programs evaluate your child's development two times per year. We ask that you attend these parent teacher conferences with your child's teacher during this time.

## **CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS**

Cultural and religious beliefs are an important part of family life. There are many items and activities in the classroom reflecting different cultures. Please express any concerns to the teachers or director that you may have about the celebration of holidays at our center.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

Stepping Stones WILL NOT attempt to toilet train any child prior to the age of 18 months. We will make every attempt to support the toilet training process of each family.

## **FOOD/MEALS**

Breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack will be provided. If a child has food allergies, the center must be notified prior to your child's attendance. Toddlers will have their food modified when necessary in order to meet their ability to eat table food

Meal times are as follows:

Breakfast: 7:45-8:30 a.m.

Lunch: 11:30-12:15 p.m.

Snack: 3:00-3:30 p.m.

Supper: 6:30-7:00 p.m.

The center will try to accommodate any special dietary needs your child may have. However, parents/guardians may be asked to bring food from home or make other arrangements in some cases.

Children are NOT allowed to bring any beverages, food or treats to the center.

## **REST TIME**

After lunch, a nap or quiet time will be provided for each child(ren) that stays all day. Children in the toddler and preschool rooms will lie down for thirty minutes, after which time if they are not sleeping children will be allowed to get up and play quietly. School-age children are not required to have a rest time but will be provided on upon the request of the parent. We ask that you bring a blanket and/or pillow for your child to use at rest time. All blankets/pillows should be marked with your child's name and taken home weekly to be laundered before returning to the center.

## **PETS**

From time to time, the pets of others will visit your child's classroom. Visiting pets are always under the supervision of their owners during their time in your child's class. Your family will be notified each time a pet will be visiting.

Having pets in the classroom takes special planning, please talk to your child's teacher to plan any visits from your pet to class. Please make sure your teacher is aware of any allergies to pets

## **FIELD TRIPS**

By signing the enrollment forms parents/guardians give permission for staff to take the children on walks.

We take our field trips primarily during the summer months. Parents/guardians must give written permission for their child to attend each field trip. Parents/guardians are welcome to attend with their child provided that

there is space on the bus. Parents may wish to drive their own vehicle if there is not enough space. Please notify the director if you are able to attend any of the field trips with our classes.

## BIRTHDAYS & OTHER CELEBRATIONS

Arrangements may be made with your child's teacher to bring in a store bought treat for a birthday party or special event. We will celebrate birthdays during afternoon snack time. Your teacher will add special stories, songs, etc. to make this day a special time.

## HEALTH AND MEDICAL

The State of Minnesota requires that there be an up-to-date medical record on file for each child enrolled at the center. The center must be notified of a child's immunizations so that the form can be kept up-to-date. Immunization forms must be filled out prior to your child's first day of attendance. A current health care summary must be on file at the center within 30 days.

Parents/guardians will be informed of their child has been exposed to certain infectious or communicable diseases. Notes will be sent home with each child describing the illness. A notice will also be posted on the bulletin board. We ask that you inform us immediately if you child(ren) has been exposed to or has contacted any of these diseases.

If your child becomes ill during the course of the day, you will be notified immediately. If we cannot reach you, the person listed on the emergency card will be called to take you child home immediately. Until someone has arrived for this child, he/she can lay down on a cot in a quiet area and a blanket will be offered. The sick child will be kept comfortable until he/she is picked up.

Some considerations in deciding whether or not your child should attend the center are as follows:

1. A fever
2. A persistent cough, wheezing, nasal discharge, vomiting or diarrhea
3. Symptoms of a communicable disease
4. Chicken Pox and is no longer infectious or until the lesions are crusted over
5. Has contagious conjunctivitis
6. Has impetigo
7. Has untreated lice, ringworm or scabies
8. Is unable to participate in child care program activities with reasonable comfort
9. Requires more care than the program staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in care.

911 will be called in an emergency. Parents will be called immediately thereafter. Parents will be called in a non-emergency situation that requires medical assessment.

We will take every precaution for the safety of your child(ren). Should an accident occur and medical treatment is necessary, you should contact your insurance company.

By signing the enrollment forms, you are giving Stepping Stones staff the right to take whatever emergency medical measures are necessary in an emergency situation.

## HEALTH POLICIES

Stepping Stones promotes wellness, health, and safety. The staff follows good hand washing, sanitation, and safety policies to prevent the spread of illness and prevent accidents while your child is at the center. Please let your teachers know as soon as possible if your child is sick. If your child becomes sick at the center, staff will move them to a quiet supervised area away from the other children and notify you to pick your child up. If an emergency should arise, you will be contacted immediately. The staff is trained in First Aid and CPR. Stepping Stones program follows the recommendations of "Infectious Diseases in Child Care Settings" published by the Department of Health. If there has been an exposure in the center, notification will be posted by the sign-in/out sheets.

Here are some examples of illnesses that affect children:

DISEASE	INCUBATION	SYMPTOMS	TREATMENT	RETURN TO SCHOOL
Chicken Pox	10 - 21 days, usually 14-16	Starts as red bumps then turns to small blister-like sores that fill up with fluid, fever, itching	Discuss this with your physician. NO aspirin unless directed by physician.	When all sores are dry and scabbed and no new blisters or sores have started within 24 hours (usually by 6 <sup>th</sup> day after rash began)
Cold Sores	2-14 days	Fever blisters on lips, face or mouth	Call your physician to see if medication is necessary	No exclusion, unless sores do not heal or they become infected
Colds (Respiratory Infections)	1 - 10 days	Runny nose, sneezing, chills, tiredness, fever, muscle aches, sore throat and cough	See physician for high fever, persistent cough or sore throat	Until fever is gone and child is well enough to participate in routine activities
Diarrhea	Varies by germ. 1 day - 4 weeks	Increased number of loose, watery stools, nausea, stomach pain, vomiting, fever	Wash hands thoroughly w/soap and warm running water after using toilet and before eating food. See physician if the conditions persist	Until diarrhea has stopped or written physician's permission required if caused by an infection
Fifth Disease	4 - 21 days, usually 4 - 14 days	Rash causing intense redness of the cheeks ("slapped cheek") that often later move around the body	None, but pregnant women that are exposed need to consult with physician	None if other rash causing illnesses are ruled out
Head Lice	7 - 10 days	Itching of head and neck or scratch marks, small white particles often found behind ears or back of neck	Lice killing products and removal of the nits. Vacuum home & vehicles, wash clothing & bedding	When all nits have been removed
Impetigo	1 - 10 days	Typically begins at break in skin (ex. Insect bite, cut, etc.) Small pus-filled sores with yellow crust	Contact your physician	When child has been treated with antibiotics for at least 24 hours and sores are drying and improving
Pin Worms	2 - 8 weeks	Rectal itching especially at night, irritability and disturbed sleep	Contact your physician	24 hours after treatment has started
Measles	8-12 days	Begins with fever, watery eyes, runny nose and cough. Red blotchy rash appears in 3 to 7 days	Must be reported to a physician	4 days after rash appears
Pink Eye Conjunctivitis	1 - 12 days	Red, watery, burning or itching eyes, thick discharge	Contact your physician. Avoid contact with the eye drainage	When child has been seen by physician and until 24 hours after treatment begins or the physician has cleared child for readmission
Ringworm (Body)	4-10 days	Flat, spreading, ring-shaped lesion. Center may be clear with red, raised edges	Contact your physician	24 hours after treatment has been started
Ringworm (Scalp)	10 - 14 days	Small, scaly patches on scalp with mild redness, swelling, itching or pus filled bumps. Infected hairs become brittle and break	Contact your physician	24 hours after treatment has been started
RSV Infection	2 - 8 days, usually 4 - 6 days	Similar to mild cold. Cough, watery eyes, runny nose, nasal stuffiness & sneezing	Contact your physician	Until fever is gone & child is well enough to participate in routine activities
Scabies	2 - 6 weeks	Rash, intense itching in the folds of skin	Contact your physician	24 hours after treatment has been started
Scarlet Fever Strep Throat	2 - 5 days	Sudden onset of fever, swollen glands, sore throat. Fine red rash (raised)	Contact your physician	At least 24 hours after treatment begins and child is without fever for 24 hours

## PROCEDURE FOR ADMINISTERING MEDICATION

The Minnesota Department of Human Services requires that the following procedures be in place if it is necessary for your child to receive medication at licensed centers. All medication should be given at home unless it is absolutely necessary for it to be given during center time. If medication is to be given during center time, this procedure must be followed:

1. Written directions from your doctor including: the child's name , name of the medication, the illness or diagnosis, exact time to be given, possible side effects, the physician's signature.
2. Authorization for administering the medication must be signed by the parent or legal guardian, giving Head Start permission to give it.
3. The medication must be in a labeled prescription bottle with the doctor's name, the name of the medication, the dosage and the starting date.
4. The person assigned to administering the medication will closely watch for side effects. If side effects are noted, staff will notify the parent immediately, so that they can notify the doctor.
5. All medication will be stored in a locked cabinet at all times when not in use. If it is to be refrigerated, it will be stored on a shelf away from food and out of children's reach, and in a locked container.
6. A log will be kept to include the child's name, date, dosage and time administered. All logs will be kept on file and side effects and follow up recorded for the child's file.
7. If there are any questions regarding the medication administration policy or record keeping, please contact the Health Coordinator at the Head Start office.

## MEDICATION

By signing the permission form, and upon receipt of this handbook, you are giving permission for staff at this center to administer syrup of ipecac, sunscreen and insect repellent when necessary, syrup of ipecac will only be administered when determined necessary by the Minnesota Poison Control Center. Non-prescription and prescription medication can only be given to your child if it is in its original container, with the child's name on it. Expired medication or medication prescribed to another person will NEVER be given. Permission to administer medication slips are available in all the classrooms and must be signed by parent/guardian before medication may be administered.

## PICK UP/DROP OFF

If you or someone else brings your child to the center, please ask them to take the child right to the teacher or teacher aide. **NEVER** send a child into the center alone. The teacher's responsibility will begin only when the child reaches the classroom: **ALWAYS BRING YOUR CHILD INTO THE CLASSROOM.**

When you bring your child into the classroom and pick your child up, it is very important that your complete the sign in/out process for your classroom and tell the teacher that your are taking him/her.

Children will only be released to those people indicated on the enrollment forms. If anyone picking your child up appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while attempting to pick up your child, the program will not release your child until his or her health and safety is assured.

## **SIGN IN/SIGN OUT**

You must sign your child(ren) in and out every day. This will ensure that we have an accurate attendance count in the case of an emergency. We also use our sign in/sign out sheet to complete billing, so in order for you to be properly billed, it is important to sign your child in and out every day.

## **STEPPING STONES CANCELLATION POLICIES**

In the event that adverse weather conditions force Stepping Stones to close, an announcement of the closing will be reported to the local radio station. If a severe storm develops during the course of the day when your child is at the center, please try to pick up your child as quickly as possible or contact the center regarding anticipated arrival time. We are concerned for your child's safety as well as our staff. Non-scheduled closing such as snow days and power outages will be charged as regular days.

We will be closed on the following holidays: Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, and the Fourth of July. We will have a registration or sign-up sheet to determine if we will be open on Christmas Eve Day and New Year's Day.

## **VACATION ABSENCES**

We understand that families plan vacation time. We will hold your child's place at the center for one week (Monday through Friday) per year at no charge. Please notify us in advance of your vacation plans. These days may be used all at once or here and there throughout the year. If your child is ill, you may apply a vacation day for that day.

## **BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE**

Behavior Guidance policies can be found in a separate document. Please ask our director for a copy of our behavior guidance policies.

## **FUND-RAISERS**

Each family will be asked to participate in about 3 fund-raisers throughout the year. All proceeds will go directly to the purchase of equipment or necessary materials for the center.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

The information that is contained in each child's file and the information that a family shares with Stepping Stones employees is not released to agencies or persons outside of the program without the written consent of the family. The only time an agency would be contacted without a family's consent is if a staff person suspected child abuse or neglect within the family. If a staff person suspected abuse or neglect was occurring, by law they are required to report their suspicions to the appropriate agency that mandates them.

The child's parents have access to their child's file but no other child's file. Information regarding a child or family may be shared with consultants and other staff if the information is needed for that person to adequately do their assigned duties and serve the family.

**Stepping Stones will obtain written permission before any research, experimental procedure, or public relations activity shall occur.**

## PROBLEM SOLVING

Most questions and concerns at the Stepping Stones are solved through open communications. Every effort is made to find out all the facts before making a judgment. First ask your questions and concerns of the individuals who are directly involved.

If your questions are not answered in these communications, call our office and speak to the director. The director's number is on the first page of this book. The director will respond as soon as she is possibly able to do so. The decision of the director is final.

Centers are licensed by:

MN Dept. of Human Services  
Division of Licensing  
444 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155-3842  
Phone: (651) 296-3971  
Fax: (651) 297-1490

WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REVISE OR RESCIND THE CONTENTS OF THIS HANDBOOK AT ANY TIME.

## ENROLLMENT AND TUITION POLICIES

At the time of enrollment, there will be a \$25 non-refundable registration fee. This fee is assessed each time a child(ren) is re-enrolled, should you ever withdraw from the center. An enrollment packet is given to the parent to be completed and returned before your child's first day at the center. We recommend that your child(ren) visit the center before the first day of attendance.

The center must be notified immediately whenever there is a change of home or work phone numbers, address, medical information including new immunizations, persons authorized to pick up your child(ren), or enrollment schedules. Forms can be obtained in the office.

In case of separated or divorced parents, the center policy agreement is with the fee-paying custodial parent. A copy of the most recent court order must be kept in your child's file.

If your child receives any special education services, we must have a current IEP or IFSP on file.

Your child's file is kept in the Director's office and is accessible to staff. We do not share information from your child(ren)'s file with other parties without your permission. The State Department of Human Services periodically inspects files to make sure they are complete.

If you receive childcare funding from the county or another outside source, your co-pay is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month or the 1<sup>st</sup> day of attendance in each month at the center. Any hours or charges not covered by the service agreement are the parent's responsibility to pay for these hours immediately. Weekly childcare payments are due by Friday. There is a \$30 NSF fee on all returned checks.

There will be no outstanding childcare balances unless arrangements have been made with the director. At the time of enrollment, we require a credit card to be placed on file. We will need the credit card number, authorized user name, and the expiration date to be current. Please see the signature page to list this information.

We will accept credit cards as a means of payment. If your childcare bill is not paid in full at the end of each week and no arrangements have been made with the director, your account will be assessed a \$30 service fee and we will debit the credit card listed on file for the amount of daycare owed.

If you leave Stepping Stones with an outstanding childcare balance, late fees will be assessed of \$10 per week outstanding. If not paid within two weeks, the account will be turned over to conciliation court. Any legal fees and late charges will be added to the balance.

If you decide that your child(ren) will not attend Stepping Stones and wish to withdraw from our program, you must give a 2-week written notice. Should you choose to not complete those 2 weeks, you will still be charged for them. We reserve the right to dismiss a child/family from our center without any notice when deemed necessary.

Our rates are based upon a 10-hour day. Please see the rates page if your child(ren) is in attendance more than 10 hours per day. If your child is present more than 10 hours a day, you will be billed an additional \$2 per hour.

Tuition rates are adjusted annually. Parents/guardians are notified in advance of any tuition increase.

Current tuition rates for Stepping Stones are:

**Infant Rates:**

\$31 a full day or \$15.50 a half day

**Toddler Care** (under 22 months)  
\$24 a full day or \$12.00 a half day

**Preschool & School-Age Care:**  
Summer Care & Holidays  
\$23 a full day or \$11.50 a half day

**Before & After School Care:**  
\$6 per day charge regardless of the amount of time attending

**Night Care:**  
All ages except infants - \$27 per night, with drop-in care at \$30 per night  
Infants - \$35 per night, with drop-in care at \$38 per night

**Weekend Care:**  
All ages except infants - \$27 per day, with drop-in care at \$30 per day  
Infants - \$35 per night, with drop-in care at \$38 per day

We determine a full day to be 5 hours or more. There is a five full day/week minimum for regular day hours, four full day/week minimums for night hours and a two-day/weekend minimum for weekend hours. If you wish to use your any of your vacation time to meet this minimum requirement at any time, you may do so. Please let the director know. If your child is already enrolled for care during regular hours/days, they can roll over their day minimum to include night and weekend. This needs to be scheduled with the director at least the week before the change, otherwise, is treated as drop-in care and not counting towards the day minimum.

If parents have failed to fill out the pre-sign for the week-day hours within the appropriate time frame, the hours their kid(s) are here that week will be considered drop-in and will be billed an extra \$5 per day, per child. We can not guarantee that we have an opening for the child(ren) for that week as well. Any changes that occur in the parent's schedule are not a problem if the center is notified as they occur so we can accommodate to the changes. We understand that emergencies come up as well and will do our best to help with those changes.

**Childcare assistance is welcome.**

A late fee of \$15 for the first 15 minutes is charged if pickup is after 6 pm. After 15 minutes, there will be a \$1 per minute charged to your account.

There is no guarantee of availability for drop-in care for nights and weekends.

## HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of Stepping Stones Parent handbook.

I agree to comply with the policies and procedures of Stepping Stones as set forth in the parent handbook. I also acknowledge that these policies and procedures may be changed, interpreted, withdrawn, or added to by the Director of Stepping Stones at any time and without prior notice to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director's Signature

I authorize Stepping Stones to debit my credit card in the event that we have not paid our childcare bill in full each week.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Credit Card Account Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Expiration Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
CVV2 # (the last 3 digits on the back of your credit card)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Billing Address & Zip Code