



# Noah's Ark Child Care Center

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*A Non-Profit Organization* ★ 491 East Industrial Park Drive ★ Manchester, NH 03109

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## PARENT HANDBOOK

*Noah's Ark Child Care Center is a non-profit organization  
whose mission is to provide quality early childhood education  
and accessible, affordable support services  
for families, staff and the community.*

## **Welcome to Noah's Ark Child Care Center!**

It's our goal to provide your family and your child with a positive child care and early childhood education experience. We strive to make Noah's a place where children, parents, and staff feel comfortable, and where children are safe, nurtured, and educated in a caring environment. Together, teachers, parents, and children can make this environment a reality.

The following information is provided to help answer any questions you may have regarding our policies and procedures. Communication is the key to a high-quality program. Please stop by the office at any time you have questions or concerns. If you are unable to drop by in the morning or evening, give us a call at lunch or during your break.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to care for and nurture your child!

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## INTRODUCTION

### *In the beginning. . .*

Formerly the child care center at the Parish of St. Francis on Brown Avenue in Manchester, Noah's Ark Child Care Center's story starts with the City of Manchester's purchase of the Parish property in 1999 to allow for expansion of the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport. The Parish, planning to relocate to Litchfield in June of 2000, notified parents that the child care center would not be part of that move.

Together, then-Executive Director Maryann Magoun, and then-Director Karen Sullivan worked with an extraordinary group of volunteers, parents and staff to establish Noah's Ark Child Care Center, a non-profit center, to continue to provide support and care for local families and children. The child care center at St. Francis opened under its new name on February 11, 2000, with plans to find a permanent location.

Choosing 491 East Industrial Park Drive, Noah's current home, as the new location for the Center showed creativity and foresight. An aging warehouse in a busy industrial park wasn't exactly a natural choice, but it was a good one. What better way to continue meeting the needs of the community than to bring high-quality, affordable child care to the workplace by moving it in next door?

With the help of the New Hampshire Community Loan Center\*, Providian Bank and the building's former owner, Robert Singer, Noah's "Ark in the Park" became a reality. After renovating one half of the building and performing an amazingly seamless move without interruption of service on December 31, 2000, the Center began the new year in its new home. The New Hampshire Community Loan Fund's continued support helped Noah's Ark Child Care Center purchase its portion of the building in March 2002.

Our child care program is licensed and regulated by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Licensing Bureau. A copy of current regulations is available online. Our facility and food program are also regularly inspected by the Manchester Health Department and Manchester Fire Department. As a non-profit organization, Noah's Ark is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of parents and community members who serve the Center in a volunteer capacity.

Today, Noah's Ark Child Care Center continues to grow and thrive. Children ages six weeks through kindergarten learn and play in our nine classrooms. We serve a wonderfully diverse group of families from Manchester and the surrounding area. This diversity has been our greatest strength. Parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, friends, staff and colleagues play a part in nurturing and educating our Noah's community. If you think you can help in any way, we welcome you to get involved. All of our children will benefit!

*\*The New Hampshire Community Loan Center is a non-profit organization that lends funds and assistance to community initiatives that help low- and moderate-income families gain access to housing, services and employment opportunities.*

## ***Our Philosophy***

We believe all children pass through stages of development at their own rate. To us, your child is a unique person who needs love, security, guidance, acceptance and encouragement on his or her journey toward independence.

This philosophy ensures the quality care, nurturing and development of the whole child. We provide an environment which promotes the emotional stability, social acceptance, physical wellbeing and developmental capabilities of each individual child. We respect each child, and encourage respect in them for adults, peers, the environment, the community and above all, themselves.

Our goal at Noah's Ark is to provide the highest quality child care and early childhood educational programming for infants, toddlers, preschool and school age children of the greater Manchester and southern New Hampshire community.

We recognize the challenges facing working families in our community, and Noah's Ark strives to work closely with parents to coordinate our efforts with theirs to address the needs of all of our children.

## ***Confidentiality Policy***

At Noah's Ark, we respect the privacy of all of our families. Any personal information you share with our staff will remain confidential. The members of the Board of Directors sign a confidentiality agreement that states all financial and personal information is confidential. In addition, your home, business and personal telephone, address, cell phone and e-mail information will not be shared with any other businesses or companies. We may ask permission to include your information in class directories, and center wide e-mail contact lists. You will be asked to give your permission for the release of these items in the parent contract at the end of this handbook.

## ***Licensing***

Noah's Ark Child Care Center is licensed by the State of New Hampshire Bureau of Child Care Licensing (license #5384). Copies of our licensing reports are in the office and posted in the foyer.

## ***Tax ID#***

The Noah's Ark Tax ID # is 02-0510860. Because we are a non-profit organization, donations made to the Center are tax-deductible.

## ***Waiting List***

We understand that quality, affordable child care is a challenge to find. We maintain a waiting list for all age groups at our Center. We strongly recommend including a deposit when putting your name on our waiting list, as those families with a paid deposit and registration fee will be considered prior to those who have not made a financial commitment. In addition, because we strongly believe in supporting our Noah's families, we will hold places for new siblings of children already in attendance with a non-refundable deposit of the first week's tuition for the new baby.

## **OUR STAFF**

Our dedicated team of teachers is made up of experienced early childhood educators. We pride ourselves on the longevity of our team of teachers and staff. This provides the stability required to foster and encourage each child to trust, grow and develop. Our teachers and staff use their skills to evaluate the needs of the group and each individual child, and then adjust activities accordingly.

### ***Ratios***

At Noah's Ark, we strive to exceed the State of NH requirements for staff to child ratio. Beginning in the infant room, we average a 3:1 ratio (state requires 4:1). As children move up through the rooms, those ratios change with the age of the children, but always with the best interests of the children and the highest quality of care.

Throughout your child's time in the infant and young toddler rooms, your child will have a primary caregiver within the staff of that room. While your child will be cared for by all staff, the primary caregiver will get to know you and your child, and will adapt to your child's individual schedule.

In all classrooms, children will have a lead teacher as well as associate teachers and child care assistants.

### ***Training and Qualifications***

Our staff is led by the executive director, an assistant director and lead teachers who have extensive experience and training in early childhood education. We provide on-going training for all staff and require staff to participate in at least 18 hours of professional development each year, in compliance with state regulations. In addition, we continue to provide training to our staff in first aid, CPR, water safety and medication administration.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Our hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 6:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m., year-round.

### ***Holidays***

Noah's Ark is closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Floating holidays may be observed around Christmas or 4th of July. Noah's Ark closes at 3:00 pm on Christmas Eve. **Weekly tuition remains the same regardless of holidays or closures.**

### ***Weather Closures***

Our practice has been to remain open, regardless of the weather. However, in the event of a major storm, we will broadcast closings, as well as late openings and early closings, on **WZID 95.7 FM (wzid.com) and WMUR-TV (wmur.com)**. Parents may also follow Noah's Ark Child Care Center's Facebook page and subscribe to Nixle cell phone alerts by texting NOAHSARK to 888777.

In the event of an emergency which requires the Center to close during normal operating hours, parents will be contacted by telephone on an individual basis. Parents will not be financially compensated in the event of a closing and tuition rates will not change.

## **ENROLLMENT INFORMATION**

### ***Full- and Part-Time Policies***

At Noah's Ark, we offer a unique child care option in scheduling. Children may be enrolled on a full-time basis (5 days per week) or on a part-time basis (2 or 3 days per week). We do not offer a half-day program. Part-time enrollment means that specific days are chosen for your child to attend. These scheduled days must be paid for, regardless of attendance, to reserve the space for your child.

### ***Drop-In Policy***

Children who are registered at the Center on a part-time basis may take advantage of our Drop-In policy. In the event you need child care on a day when your child is not scheduled, you are welcome to inquire as to whether there is space on that day. The rate for drop-ins is the daily rate for part-time children according to the age group. Sibling discount does not apply to one day drop-ins.

### ***Before & After School Programs and School Vacations***

We offer both before-school and after-school care for school-age children (up to age 8) as well as children enrolled in our kindergarten program. Rates for these programs are in our fee schedule.

Our kindergarten follows the Manchester School District calendar. There will not be class on school vacation days, however, we do offer care for school-age children as well as our kindergarteners on these days. We require advance notice if you plan to have your child attend on these days, as space is limited.

### ***Summer Enrollment/Extended Leaves***

**Families wishing to reduce summer attendance from full- to part-time must provide notice by May 1 of your plans and the date you are planning to return to a school year schedule.** In order to hold your child's space for the fall and maintain payroll and benefits for staff, we require payment at the part-time rate of two days per week according to your child's age group whether or not he or she attends.

This policy also applies to extended leaves, such as maternity leave, which may not fall during the summer. For extended leaves, a leave date and a re-start date must also be decided and adhered to in order to facilitate scheduling.

### ***Withdrawal Policy***

We require two weeks written notice and full payment should you decide to terminate your child's care with us. Any outstanding payments must be made before the family's departure, or a collections agency will be hired to pursue the balance of the payment owed, and charges for the agency will be billed to the family.

### ***Termination Policy***

Although we strive to meet the needs of all children and families in our Center, there are instances in which we must discharge a child from our care. Cases that would warrant such action include, but are not limited to:

- a) Continuing problems which negatively affect other children at the Center, such as threats or violence directed toward children, staff or self;
- b) Non-payment, with no action taken toward making a payment plan, for three consecutive weeks;
- c) Failure to follow Noah's Ark policies and procedures;
- d) Failure of parent or guardian to follow correct admission procedures, especially as they relate to submission of required forms;
- e) Repeated tardiness at pick-up.

We will make every effort to rectify these problems before discharging a child. This may include, but is not limited to: meeting with lead teachers, meeting with administration, or a hearing of your case by the Board of Directors. You have the right to appeal to the Board regarding termination of child care services.

## **TUITION**

Tuition is based on a child's chronological age and scheduled days attending the Center. The fee schedule is posted on the Parent Information bulletin board and is available in the office. Tuition includes:

- Morning and afternoon snacks
- Catered lunch, prepared according to USDA guidelines.
- Whole milk and 100% fruit juice.
- Baby wipes for the infant and toddler rooms.

Rate increases are effective July 1, with the adoption of a new annual budget. The Board of Directors makes every effort to have minimal tuition increases while maintaining the high level of care for our children.

### ***Registration Fee***

A family registration fee will be charged annually on July 1. Re-registration and updating family and contact information occurs every July in compliance with NH State licensing requirements. We will notify you in advance of re-registration.

### ***Payment Methods***

We accept cash or checks. Payment may be given directly to the administration or left in the payment box located adjacent to the front door. Checks should be made payable to NACCC. You may also inquire with your bank or credit union about paying Noah's Ark online with an automatic payment each week, similar to the online payment of other household bills.

### ***Payment Policies***

**Tuition is due by Friday in advance of the following week's child care services.** If you choose to pay monthly, payment is due on the 1st of each month, in advance. As our costs remain fixed, the weekly tuition fees remain the same whether your child attends the Center or not. You are responsible for the agreed tuition fee regardless of your child's attendance. To hold your child's space, tuition is required to be paid in full during absences or vacations.

### ***Returned Check Policy***

A fee of \$15.00 will be assessed for any check returned for insufficient funds.

### ***Late Payment Fees***

- If tuition is more than five business days late, a charge of \$25 will be added to your statement.
- If more than two weeks of tuition goes unpaid, you will receive a probationary letter and must meet with the administration to determine a payment plan.
- If tuition is unpaid for three consecutive weeks, with no action taken toward making or following a payment plan, your child may be dismissed from Noah's Ark.

### ***Sibling Discount***

If you have two or more children enrolled in our facility, you will receive a 10% discount on the second child and a 15% discount on each additional child. **The sibling discount does not apply to one day drop-ins.**

### ***Tuition and Tax Statements***

Annual tax statements will be provided. These statements will reflect a year-to-date summary of payments. In addition, weekly statements will be produced for each family and will reflect weekly tuition fees and payments towards the balance.

## **SECURITY**

Noah's Ark Child Care Center is committed to ensuring the safety of your children. The front office is always staffed to be sure that visitors are attended to as they arrive at the Center. Our Center is equipped with multiple panic buttons that are linked directly to the Manchester Police Department and strobe lights in every classroom that can silently alert teachers to any potential problems with a single touch. Twenty-three closed circuit security cameras allow our administrators to supervise the parking lot, building perimeter, hallways and inside classrooms. The Center routinely conducts emergency preparedness drills, and our highly-qualified teachers always have the children's safety at the top of their minds.

Our security measures are only as good as we all allow them to be. With that in mind, parents and guardians are asked to follow several procedures and rules to ensure the safety of the center and, ultimately, the children.

- Children must be dropped off and picked up through the main entrance.
- Each parent or guardian is issued a card key for access to the building. Parents must report lost card keys immediately to the office. A replacement card key will be provided at a cost of \$5.
- Parents who habitually ask to be "buzzed-in" without a card will have their existing card key deactivated and a new card key issued at a cost of \$5.
- Please do not hold open the security doors for anyone behind you. Although it may not seem polite, the safety and security of the children is paramount.
- Parents must not share card keys with other parents or with friends or family members who come to drop-off or pick-up their children on their behalf. These

individuals must check in with the office to sign the visitor log, present proper identification, and will then be provided access to your child's classroom.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE INFORMATION**

### ***Parking Lot***

Our parking lot offers a limited amount of parking for both staff and parents. Please drive with particular care and always be aware of small children getting in and out of vehicles. **Our speed limit in the lot is 5 MPH!** For health, safety, and legal reasons, the Center must ask that children not be left in vehicles, that cars not be left running in the parking lot, and that keys be removed from vehicles. Please also be respectful of the handicap parking spaces and do not use them unless you have a valid permit issued by the State of New Hampshire. **Our lot is patrolled and tickets will be issued to vehicles illegally parked in handicapped spaces.**

### ***Dropping Off and Picking Up***

Arriving and departing can be a stressful time for both you and your child. Please keep in mind that the staff are used to dealing with all types of behavior, and will usually have your child involved in the day's activities within minutes of your departure.

**The Center opens at 6:45 a.m.; please do not drop off your child before then.** If staff members are in the building prior to 6:45, they have come in early to prepare for the day.

You must accompany your child into the classroom each day and notify the teacher that you have arrived. Sign your child in on the sign-in sheets located in each room. Please note the time and initial each day.

When you come to pick up your child, you must also sign them out with your initials and time of departure. When picking up your child, be sure staff is aware that he or she is leaving, check your child's folder for notes and check their cubby for artwork or projects.

Once your child is ready to go, you must monitor and help reinforce our policy that children stay with an adult at all times. Children must never run around in the Center, or out of the Center, unaccompanied. Cars are constantly arriving and departing, and we do not want your child to be at risk of a serious accident. Please guide children safely to your vehicle.

### ***Alternate Pick-Up Contacts***

Upon enrollment, we require submission of a list of people authorized to pick your child up from the Center. **Only escorts authorized in writing will be allowed to pick your child up from the Center.** We will require **photo identification** from an alternative escort for your child. The Center reserves the right to act in the child's best interest, in the event of an unauthorized or incapacitated escort, or an alternate pick-up failing to show proper photo identification.

**Divorce and Separation Note:** Our Center wants to serve all families in the best possible way, especially during difficult transitions. If shared custody agreements are in place, we would appreciate a written notice of your family's plan to make arrivals and departures for your child/children seamless. Unless we have a legal document, the Center cannot presume that one parent has more or fewer rights than the other.

### ***Late Pick-Up***

**We close promptly at 5:45 p.m. and children must be picked up on time. A late departure fee of \$1.00 for every minute per child will be charged.** For example, if you are

10 minutes late picking up two children from the Center, your late fee will be \$20. The late fee is billed immediately and payment is due in the office at drop off the following day. If you know you are running late, the staff and your waiting child will appreciate a phone call, but note that late fees still apply. Our staff is scheduled until 5:45 p.m. and staff members have obligations after the Center closes. Repeated tardiness at pick up may result in discharge from the Center. ***(Please refer to our Termination Policy on page 9).***

## **THE CLASSROOMS**

### ***Our Ark***

Our Ark has classrooms for children ages six weeks through kindergarten. Generally, the following guidelines are used for placing children in age-appropriate classrooms. Ages may vary depending on each child's individual development and needs.

- Lambs..... 6 weeks - 9 months
- Ducks ..... 9 months - 15 months
- Cubs ..... 15 months - 24 months
- Penguins ..... 2-year-olds
- Tigers ..... 2 ½ to 3 ½-year-olds
- Monkeys ..... preschool/3-year-olds
- Bears ..... preschool/4-year-olds
- Pandas ..... pre-kindergarten/4- and 5-year-olds
- Owls ..... Kindergarten/ 5- and 6-year-olds

### ***Placement Policy***

Decisions about your child's placement take into consideration his or her social, emotional and developmental needs. In our preschool programs, we also look at what is academically necessary for your child. Please feel free to discuss any placement concerns with your child's teacher and the Directors.

### ***Classroom Transitions***

As your child develops and matures, he or she will transition from one classroom to another. Our Center generally has large moves in January, at the beginning of the summer, and the beginning of the school year. However, if it benefits your child's development, we may make those moves at other times. During transition times, your child will spend one to two weeks prior to the move visiting his or her next classroom and getting to know the staff. The staff will also orient parents to the new classroom by bringing them into the new room and introducing them to the new staff. This is a time when individual classrooms will explain their policies and procedures as well as to give you a welcome packet. Teachers also tell each other what they should know about the children, including important information such as allergies and medications. We hope to make these transitions as smooth and stress-free as possible. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help you or your child make the transition.

## ***Curriculum***

Noah's Ark offers a developmentally appropriate curriculum in a center-based environment, designed to meet the individual needs of each child. Our curriculum is planned and implemented by our lead teachers, and overseen by administration. We understand that young children are sensory learners, and use our vast knowledge and experience to promote programs that foster self-esteem while stimulating and challenging each child in academics, music, art, social/emotional development and motor skills.

## ***Nap Time***

Naps are an important part of our day, and help with growth in all areas of development. In our youngest classrooms, children's individual nap schedules are followed and infants can nap whenever is necessary, as we understand that babies are different in this way. As children get older, we begin a more traditional nap schedule with quiet time after lunch. Each room has nap mats for each child. A special item such as a small stuffed animal or blanket makes the transition from your home to ours much easier. We encourage children to bring one favorite cuddly item and/or blanket that will fit easily in their Noah's backpack for naptime. Children are given the opportunity to nap or rest quietly. After a period of time, children who are unable to nap are given a quiet activity.

## ***Diapers and Toilet Training***

Parents will provide diapers, pull-ups and training pants as well as any diaper creams for changes. Noah's Ark will provide wipes for all children. We strongly recommend communication with your child's physician about toilet training. Children usually indicate readiness to be introduced to toilet training. We will not force children to sit on the toilet or a potty chair and we will not punish a child who has an accident. Close communication and continuity between parents and staff is critical in this area. If you are looking for resources to help parents in this area, please stop by the office to check out our parent resources.

## ***Clothing***

Each child should keep a spare set of seasonal clothing at the Center. All clothing and outerwear should be labeled with the child's name in permanent marker. Children are given the opportunity to participate in messy or wet activities indoors and outdoors. Parents are requested to send their children in comfortable and easily laundered clothes. Clothing and footwear should be weather and size appropriate, allowing for freedom of movement in both indoor and outdoor activities. Flip flops, Crocs and clogs are not a safe choice for school shoes and are not allowed. Please dress children in clothing appropriate for the season, as we play outdoors every day if the weather is not too severe. Please include: waterproof boots, waterproof mittens, a hat and snow pants in winter. Boots are still important for the wet spring weather and muddy ground. In the summer, include a swimsuit, towel and water shoes for water play. In addition to a full change of clothes, extra socks and underwear must be in each child's backpack. Smocks are provided for arts and craft activities, but enthusiastic, budding artists still manage to soil their clothes occasionally, so special or dressy clothes should not be worn to school.

## ***Toys from Home***

We request that toys from home NOT be brought to school. They are difficult to share and frequently become broken or misplaced. On scheduled "Show and Tell" days, any toys brought

from home will be returned to the child's backpack for safekeeping upon completion of the group's Show and Tell time. We do encourage children to bring any books from home that they wish to share with their classmates. Please label them with the child's name! Noah's Ark is not responsible for lost or damaged items from home.

### ***Discipline***

Discipline is demonstrated in a positive manner. We believe in respect for the child and encourage respect in them for adults, peers, the community, the environment and above all themselves. Discipline is dealt with on a child's developmental level and demonstrated in a positive, non-punitive manner. Under no circumstances will we use corporal punishment, withhold food or belittle a child. Please feel free to discuss your feelings with the teachers and/or the directors. It is important that a child receives consistency in this area.

### ***Birthdays***

Birthdays are special events and we look forward to celebrating with your child. Parents are encouraged to bring a special snack on that day. Party favors and goody bags are not necessary.

Please be sure to check with your child's teacher to get the correct number of snacks needed and to be informed of any restricted food items due to food allergies in the class.

Please discreetly place invitations for any off-site parties in a child's folder, or ask the lead teacher for assistance in distributing them, so as not to cause hurt feelings.

### ***Lost & Found***

We realize that from time to time items can get misplaced. We will make every effort to get things back to their rightful owners. You can help us by being sure to LABEL all belongings with your child's name. Should we have some unclaimed items, we will put them out by the sign out sheets in each room or on the bench in the front hallway.

### ***Photo Release***

Photographs of the children participating in our programs may be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures, social media or other publicity materials. As part of your registration packet, you will be asked to sign a form for permission to photograph your child. Should you request that your child not be photographed, we will respect your wishes and move your child to another activity while photos are taken.

### **FOOD**

Lunch and snack menus are posted each month on the Parent Information bulletin board. If your child strongly dislikes a particular meal, feel free to "brown bag" for the day. We will always have a healthy snack alternative for those last-minute food aversions.

**Infants:** Noah's Ark provides formula (Sam's Club brand of Enfamil), Gerber rice and oatmeal infant cereal as well as Gerber fruits and vegetables. Parents need only supply clean and labeled bottles on a daily basis. If you choose not to use our formula, you will need to supply breast milk or formula in labeled bottles. Breakfast is served only in the Lambs and Ducks rooms. Infants requiring breakfast must arrive before 8:30 a.m.

**Special Diets and Food Allergies:** Please discuss any specific dietary concerns with your child's teacher and the Directors.

**Regular Diets:** Lunch is supplied by the Center and is geared to youngsters' tastes, offering a variety of well-balanced meals. Whole milk is offered with the meals.

**Snacks:** Healthy snacks and 100% fruit juice are offered in the morning and after naptime in the afternoon.

## **HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

### ***Child Health Records and Requirements***

As required by the NH Bureau of Child Care Standards and Licensing: "Documentation of immunizations shall be on file for each child on the first day the child is in attendance at the child care agency in accordance with He-P 301.01 and RSA 141-C:20 and 21. Immunization records also need to be submitted every time your child receives a new series of shots. A child health form or an equivalent record of physical examination shall be on file at the child care agency for each child within 60 calendar days of the date of admission.

For children ages 5 and under, physical examinations shall be updated annually from the date of the admission physical.

For children ages 6 and older, child care agencies shall have on file a copy of the most recent physical examination record or physical examination update which is on file in the child's school provided the examination was completed within the past two years."

### ***Absences***

Please notify us by phone when your child will be absent from the Center, as well as share the reason for and duration of the absence. Should your child be absent without a call, the Center will call you at your emergency contact numbers to verify the absence.

### **Health and Illness Policy**

A variety of communicable diseases occur among young children, especially when they first begin attending a child care center. Because of the possibility of a disease spreading to other children and staff, we require that the children with the following contagious conditions be kept home for the times recommended by the State Division of Public Health Services:

**Chicken Pox:** The child must remain home until six days after the rash begins and/or all of the blisters are dried up and crusted over.

**Conjunctivitis:** (Thick, greenish yellow drainage from reddened eyes). Very contagious--requires antibiotic eye ointment or drops. Child may return to the Center when treated for at least 24 hours and eyes are clear of drainage.

**Diarrhea:** An increased number of stools compared with the child's normal pattern with increased stool water and or decreased form. Child may return to the Center when stools have returned to normal.

**Fever:** If your child awakens in the morning with a fever of 100 degrees or higher, please keep him or her home. Temperatures during the day will be evaluated on an individual basis. Parents are notified if it is necessary for them to come to pick up the child.

**Head Lice:** Child may return to the Center after specific treatment is completed and lice and nits are completely removed from the child's hair.

**Impetigo:** Child may return to the Center when treated for at least 24 hours or if the area is able to be fully covered while being treated.

**Rashes:** Any undiagnosed rash that persists for more than 3-5 days or seems to be spreading may need to be seen by the child's doctor.

**Scabies:** (A contagious infestation of the skin. Often noted between fingers, behind knees, inner elbows and body creases.) Child may return to the Center when the appropriate treatment is given--usually within 24 hours.

**Strep Throat:** Must be treated with prescribed antibiotics for at least 24 hours before the child can return to the Center.

**Vomiting:** Child may return to the Center 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting.

**When returning to the Center, a note may be required from your child's doctor specifying the nature of your child's illness and permission for the child to return to group care.**

### ***When to Keep Your Child Home***

When ill, children are much more comfortable in their home environment. **If your child shows any signs of illness** (vomiting, diarrhea, elevated temperatures, earache, sore throat, etc.) **please keep him or her home.**

Out of consideration for the other children at the Center, we ask that you do not medicate your child and then send him or her to school. Medication will only mask the symptoms of the illness; it will not decrease the exposure of the illness to the other children.

We understand that taking time off from work can be difficult, but our overall concern must be for the health and well being of *all* children in attendance.

Please be assured that we will do our utmost to maintain a healthy, sanitary environment for your child - your cooperation and assistance is most appreciated. If you question whether your child should be with other children, please call and speak with us before you bring him or her to the Center.

**If a child has been exposed to a communicable disease, Noah's Ark should be notified IMMEDIATELY.** If appropriate, the Center will notify parents of all children known to have been exposed while at the Center. Please know that this will be done in a confidential manner. Children who are ill with a communicable disease should be kept at home until they are no longer contagious. As time goes by, your child will build up his or her immunities, thus lessening their chances of "picking up everything."

### ***Illness at School***

The general health of each child is checked daily by staff. Although we make every effort to keep children at the Center during scheduled hours, there are occasions when children become ill and need to be sent home. Parents will be notified if their child becomes ill during the day. Parents must make arrangements for sick children to be picked up within the hour. Every effort will be made to make the child as comfortable as possible while waiting for the parent to arrive.

If your child has an under the arm temperature of 100°F or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness, they will be sent home. Signs of possible illness include unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, uncontrollable coughing or wheezing, vomiting or diarrhea.

## ***Medication Policy***

**We will NOT administer prescription or non-prescription medication unless it is accompanied by a written authorization from the parent AND a licensed health practitioner.** Prescription medication in its original container labeled with specific instructions, date, and physician's name will be given, with the label sufficing for the physician's note. Most pharmacists will happily accommodate a request to split a prescription into two labeled bottles to keep one at home and one at the Center. Any creams or medications need to be in their original containers. "Authorization to Administer Medication" forms are located in each classroom and all medical information will be kept confidential. Please ask your child's teacher for help with these forms.

## ***Emergency Health and Accident Plan***

**You will be notified immediately in case of any emergency involving your child.** Your child will be taken to the hospital via ambulance should his conditions warrant. Parents or legal guardians will be responsible for fees incurred. It is very important to keep us informed of any change of address and work or home telephone numbers.

## ***Accident and Incident Forms***

Occasionally children do have minor injuries resulting from incidents during play. We will treat your child with basic first aid measures and report any injury/incident to you in person or phone call and document it on an accident/incident form. These forms will outline the events that took place to cause the injury as well as what treatment was given to your child. Parent or legal guardians are required to sign and return any accident or incident reports. If we do not receive your signed accident or incident report within seven days, we will regard your failure to submit the signed report as an agreement to the care your child received and/or to our staff's response to the incident. Copies of these forms are available in the office.

## ***Medical History***

Please inform Noah's Ark if your child has any allergies, is on any regular medications, or has any medical conditions that may be pertinent to the care of your child. Any significant or life-threatening allergies or conditions require an action plan from the child's medical provider.

## ***Mandatory Reporting***

Noah's Ark is committed to a safe, nurturing environment for children to grow and learn in a positive manner. Should we recognize signs of child abuse or neglect coming into our Center, the State of New Hampshire and the Division of Child, Youth and Families mandate our staff to file a report; they will review the report and assist the family.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### ***Parent Folders***

Each classroom has an area with folders for each child. In this folder, you will find a daily note about your child's activities, as well as how they ate, slept and played. The staff in your child's room will gladly talk to you if you need clarification about anything or want more information about the day.

### ***Bulletin Boards***

Outside each classroom, you will find a bulletin board with staff photos, monthly calendars and other helpful information. Be sure to check these monthly. In addition, our Parent Information bulletin board is located in the main hallway. This serves as a central place to notify parents of events happening at the Center as well as posting of menus and fee schedules.

### ***Newsletters***

Each classroom will send home a monthly newsletter detailing events of the month and letting you know of special happenings in the room

### ***Web Site and Social Media***

Noah's Ark communicates important information online, through its web site and a Facebook page. All documents sent home also are posted at [www.noahsarknh.org](http://www.noahsarknh.org), including event notices, snack and lunch menus and classroom newsletters. Follow us on Facebook for updates and reminders.

### ***Parent Conferences***

Conferences with parents shall be scheduled at the request of the individual parents, teachers or administration. Annual conferences are scheduled for the kindergarten students and optional conferences are held in the pre-kindergarten program.

Please keep us informed of any special events or problems that might be affecting your child. In addition, we encourage you to call whenever you have a question or concern about your child, the program, or when you just want to see how they are doing that day. If you have anything to discuss that will take more than a minute or two, the teacher may need to arrange to call you back at a mutually convenient time.

### ***Grievance Procedure***

If at any time you have a question or concern regarding the care given at the Center, please speak first with your child's teacher or the Center director. Families have the right of written appeal with regard to settlement of controversy or disagreement with the decision of a Director. The Director will be given a copy of the written appeal and will set up a meeting with the Board of Directors. The decision of the Board will be final.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

### ***Center-Wide Events***

Our sense of community at Noah's Ark is enhanced by a year-long calendar filled with Center-wide events. These events bring us together as a community, help parents get to know each other, and celebrate the wonderful milestones, achievements and goals of our children.

Some examples of these events include: School Spirit Week (January), Valentine's Day (February), Week of the Young Child (April), Easter bonnet parade, Mother's Day tea party (May), Kindergarten graduation (June), Father's Day celebration (June), ice cream social (July), Family Fun Fair (fall), Halloween costume parade (October), Thanksgiving feast (November), holiday open house (December), and a biennial art show.

In addition, we have fundraisers, book fairs and community events throughout the year. Check the Parent Information bulletin board regularly for upcoming events.

### ***Board of Directors***

As a non-profit child care center, and per our founding bylaws, we are governed by a Board of Directors. This is a volunteer Board made up of parents and members of the community. The Board holds monthly meetings, but may also hold additional committee meetings for projects that require additional time commitment. If you are interested in joining our Board of Directors and participating in policy decisions, fundraising, and being involved in the future growth of the Center, please contact the administration or any Board member.

### ***Visitation***

Parents are always welcome to drop in, and are encouraged to spend time at the Center when they can. Please keep in mind that once you arrive your child naturally regards you as the foremost authority figure. To make the time pleasant for all, please help the teachers and your child by continuing to follow the guidelines and practices that the teachers use for all the children throughout the day. If you are unsure of what is appropriate, don't hesitate to ask, the teachers will be happy to help.

### ***Volunteering, Donations and Fundraising***

Noah's Ark accepts donations and relies on fundraising to support our programming and to enhance our learning environments. If you have items or services that you are interested in donating to the Center please contact the office. In addition, we hold several fundraisers throughout the year. We are always looking for volunteers to help with these events. Monetary donations may be made at any time and may be designated for any purpose by the donor. Donations are tax deductible.

## PARENT CONTRACT

**Please sign and return this form acknowledging that you have received, read and understand the procedures contained in the Parent Handbook.**

\_\_\_\_ I have read, understand and agree to abide by the policies outlined in the Noah's Ark Child Care Center Parent Handbook.

\_\_\_\_ I agree to the release of my address, phone and email within the Center for the purpose of class directories and Center-wide e-mail notifications. *(This information will only be used for Center purposes and will not be shared with any outside parties.)*

\_\_\_\_ I agree to the photo release of my child for bulletin boards at the Center, newsletters, area newspapers and media outlets, Noah's Ark web site, social media, teacher projects and other Center-related public relations and marketing tools.

### **Information as you would like it to appear in a class directory:**

Child Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s) Name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

Address

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Director's  
signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

***Please sign, detach, and return this page to the Center office with your annual family registration fee. Please keep the manual for future reference.***

***Initial and date below for annual updates:***

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