**Institutional Policy**

***Summary***

This handbook serves to encompass the intents and goals of the educators of the Step by Step Daycare Incorporation. It will affirm our mission statement and give the reader a clear understanding of our policies regarding all aspects of our operation.

The guidelines will highlight the objectives of our facility in conjunction with the requirements of the New York City Bureau of Child Care. Due to their dynamic nature, these requirements of the state will be adjusted as soon as they evolve.

**Mission Statement**

Step by Step Daycare Center is committed to providing a quality interactive educational program for all children in its care. As we strive for excellence, our highly trained staff, in collaboration with the parental community, will provide challenging experiences to meet the high performance standards our day care fosters. We actively seek to broaden our perception and understanding of a changing world in an effort to interact with and become active members of a diverse society.

**General Policies**

**Registration**

Before a child is admitted to the care of the Institution, the parent/guardian must register the child as required. To complete registration, the parent/guardian will pick up their package at the front desk and fill out the appropriate forms. The documents to be completed and returned are:

1. Bureau of Day Care Health Record Form (yellow)
2. Registration Form (blue)
3. Income eligibility Form/Lunch Form (white)
4. Physical (return white sheet) with up to date immunization

Also included in the package will be the child’s supply list, the closing dates for the school and any other information related to improving the services offered by the facility. The child is expected to begin school in uniform Mondays to Fridays unless otherwise stated (this is with the exception of children under two years old) as soon as the registration process is complete. The uniform required is green tunic (forest) and yellow (light) and can be found in any local Cookies Department Stores.

**Arrival Policy**

1. All children admitted to the facility must be awake and aware of their surroundings. No sleeping child should enter the Daycare. This safeguards the possibility of a sick child being left at the facility without the knowledge of the care provider or even the parents.
2. Parent/guardian should let the care provider know the condition of their child at arrival; hungry, tired, sleepy, cranky, teething, cuts or bruise, redness, swelling, bumps etc. This helps the provider in quickly ensuring that the child receives what he/she needs.
3. All items belonging to each child must be labeled properly.
4. Parents must sign in their children when they arrive at the daycare

**Pick-up Policy**

Pick up ends each day at **5:30** **pm** for **infants** (allowing staff to de-sanitize the area and the toys) and all others at **6:00 pm.** The following are important to note:

1. ***No child*** is allowed off the premise with someone who is not identified by the parent as an authorized escort unless verified by the parent.
2. Only the persons given permission (names found in child’s file, registration (blue) form) will be able to make the pick-up.
3. Should circumstances call for another other than those stated to pick up the child, the parent or guardian has to notify the Center by ***email or a written note*** stating the name of the person designated. That individual must arrive with a valid picture ID which will be appropriately logged.
4. After 6:05 pm, if not contacted by the parent/guardian, the care giver will try to contact the persons on the registration form in an attempt to get someone to pick up the child. If that proves futile, the care giver will leave the child at the nearest precinct as dictated by the Bureau of Child Care.
5. The late arrival for pickup will incur a cost of **$5/ 15 minutes** payable at time of pick-up.
6. Parent/guardian must sign out their child(ren) before leaving the daycare.

**Financing/Fees**

Owing to the instability of the economy, the institution is well aware of the struggles faced by well-meaning parents/guardians. With this in mind, Step by Step has endeavored to keep the cost at a minimum.

An initial ***non-refundable*** cost is also required to cover registration and insurance charges. We are accepters of the ACD and other private vouchers.

This pricing regime will only change if the lesser charges affect the viability of the organization.

**Health Policy**

1. Each child’s hand must be washed on entering the daycare. This allows for everyone to start on the same footing and reduces the spread of infectious diseases.
2. Practice good hand washing techniques after toileting, before and after meals and whenever necessary.
3. Open windows and doors at intervals to allow for air exchange. Take the children out for walks whenever the weather permits.
4. Parents/guardians are encouraged to replace snacks with fresh fruits, vegetables and drinking water.
5. Parents/guardians are asked not to allow their children to wear beads or jewelry to the center. These are choking hazards and the daycare will not be held responsible.
6. Practice universal precautions with respect to blood and body fluids.
7. Clean surfaces with 1 to 10 bleach water solution before and after meals or when necessary.
8. Wash washable toys in bleach water as per Bureau of Child Care Policy
9. Exterminate facility at least once per month.
10. Practice good housekeeping, i.e. keep facility clean and ordered.
11. Maintain up to date physicals of both the staff and the children at the facility.
12. If a child is absent for three or more days the parent/guardian must provide the daycare with a doctor’s certificate. Any illnesses lasting less than three days may be called in.
13. Separate the belongings of each child in order to reduce the risk of cross contamination.
14. Maintain at least two feet of space between each child’s face during nap. Utilizing the head to toe format will provide this coverage.
15. Use running water at all times for care.
16. Clean cots with bleach solution when necessary.
17. Discourage outside traffic within the facility.
18. Use disposables as much as possible.
19. Isolate sick children from the others until a parent/guardian arrives to remove them from the facility.
20. Dispose of garbage appropriately. Garbage bins should be covered at all times.

**SNACKS/PARTIES**

We encourage our parents to provide healthy snacks for their children. Instead of candies, sweet biscuits, donuts etc, try replacing them with fruits, vegetable, whole wheat crackers and water.

Please also note that this is a **nut free** school as there are children here with **severe allergies** to these items. This means that no food or snack that enters the building must be made of any nuts. These include, but not limited to peanuts, almonds, walnuts, etc.

Birthday parties are held at 1:30 pm for 3K and 4K and 3:00 pm for all other students. Parents are reminded not to include snacks with nuts (M&Ms, chocolate bars, etc) in the goody bags.

**Lost Child Policy**

Please see the appropriate document

**Infant/ toddler**

Step byStep is now licensed to accept infants and toddlers 6 months and over. The children will follow the protocol already discussed for regular students and after school children. Additionally, their development will be monitored and their motor, speech and cognitive skills evaluated. This will assist the parent/guardian in early intervention should it be required.

If an infant/toddler becomes ill and cannot attend school, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the care center and provide a doctor’s certificate if the child has been absent for three or more days.

There will be a sick child policy agreement that will be signed by the parent/guardian.

**After-School children**

After-School children are a welcomed part of the institution. The process for admittance is as follows:

1. Perform the relevant registration process for the child(ren) submitting all documents as with the regular attendees of the daycare.
2. Each parent/guardian of an after-school child is to provide the necessary information for pick up if applicable. This information must include;

* child’s name
* name of school
* class and teacher’s name
* time for pick-up

1. If a child is not being picked up (i.e. the child is allowed to get to the daycare by themselves), the daycare personnel must be made aware.
2. After-school children bare expected to be respectful, cooperative and they must participate in the activities scheduled in the afternoons, which involves homework completion.
3. A snack will be provided for each child

**Summer Activities and Trips**

In order to enhance the cultural awareness and foster well-rounded characters, we at Step by Step are committed to continually provide the avenues for such developments. This means that summer is a time that is spent exposing our young minds to quality events/trips that will meet our requirements.

Trips are planned each week to locations and sites all over the state. This includes trips to the zoos, cinemas, bowling, Sesame Place, museums, puppet shows, library, tennis, summer barbeque etc. This is in addition to their daily remedial activities (math, art, literacy, etc) fashioned according to the child’s age and need.

Parents are encouraged to prepare for such events as some will cost require a minimum fee.

**Staffing** *(as per Article 47 of the Bureau of Day Care)*

The staff employed at Step by Step are of the highest quality and are trained and licensed individuals who are committed to imparting sound education to the children. Each class is furnished with at least a trained teacher and an assistant if the need arises.

All members of staff are approved by the Bureau of Child Care and are being trained continuously by the Bureau in aspects that are relevant to the facility.

Each staff member is expected to perform as professionals and adhere to both the internal and external regulations governing child care. They must also provide the necessary class lesson plans on time determined by the Director (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly).

***Staff Daily Activities***

* Breakfast is to be served by the designated teacher between 8:30 am and 9:00 am each morning
* Morning devotion takes place between the hours of 9:00 am and 9:30 am. Include the recital of the Lord’s Prayer at this time.
* Teachers and their assistants must remain with their group at all times. In an event that any one has to leave, please inform your colleague who will temporarily supervise the group until the second teacher returns.
* All children must be supervised when going to the bathroom
* Children must be properly attired (tucked in, laced shoes, clean face and hands) before they are sent home each evening
* All blankets/sheets must be sent home on Friday and parent/guardian are to be encouraged to return clean blankets/sheets on Monday

**Our Track Record**

Step by Step Day Care Inc has been in business for over twelve years and has shown its caliber in its graduates who often times than not are accepted in Charter Schools in the area. Our students have excelled in these new environments and inadvertently have been our advocates.

We are proud of their achievements and take encouragement from them as they boost our spirit of commitment.