



December 2016

## **Parent Handbook**

We are delighted you have chosen Tot Time Child Development Centers, Inc. to fulfill your child care needs. Caring for your child is a responsibility we take very seriously. It is our goal to provide a safe, enjoyable atmosphere that emphasizes development of the whole child – mind, body, and spirit. Tot Time programs and schools are located in Chester and Montgomery counties. We have been serving the community since 2012. We take pride in our teachers and staff who are dedicated to providing quality care and education for our children.

Please take time to read this handbook, as it will answer many of the questions you may have concerning our policies and procedures. Our goal is to supplement your parenting efforts and support you in your role as a working parent. We encourage you to become an active participant in our school activities and programs. If you have any questions, concerns, or problems, feel free to talk to your child's teacher or program manager. We want the best for you and your child.

### **Philosophy**

We believe that children learn and grow when they are provided with a caring and accepting environment. Our goal is to help children develop habits of observation, questioning, and listening. In order to develop a positive self-image, we believe children should be free to express their individuality. We teach the children that every choice has a consequence so that hopefully they will make positive choices. We encourage the children to use their intellectual and creative abilities. We hope that they will develop friendships as they learn the “golden rule” – to treat others as they would like to be treated. It is our greatest wish for the children in our program to become the best they can be both now and in the future.

### **Mission Statement**

Our goal is to provide young children a safe environment in which they can develop emotionally, physically, intellectually, and socially. We promote a positive atmosphere where parents, teachers, staff and children interact with mutual respect and caring.

### **Enrollment Policy**

Enrollment in the Tot Time Child Development Centers, Inc. is open to children who are enrolled and attend the school district in which our program operates. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender or disability. Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed emergency contact form, signed fee agreement, registration fee, immunization records and signed Parent Handbook receipt. The Fee Agreement is not meant to serve as a contract guaranteeing service for any duration. Tot Time reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time with or without cause. However, continued enrollment at Tot Time is contingent upon the parent's and

child's adherence to the policies and procedures of Tot Time as outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

### **Center Hours**

Early Learning Centers are open from 6:30am to 6:00pm Monday through Friday. Parents will receive advance notification should there be a need to change our normal hours of operations.

### **School District Program Hours**

Before care operates from 7:00am to the start of the school day.  
After care operated from the end of the school day until 6:00pm.  
Kindergarten Enrichment operates during school hours and opposite your child kindergarten class.

### **Registration**

A non-refundable registration fee will be charged upon enrollment. This fee is used to defray the administrative/technology costs associated with each child.

### **Required Records**

*Tuition Agreement:* The director will present an agreement at the time of enrollment. This agreement will state your child's name, program, start date, rate of tuition, services tuition includes as well as payment schedule. Both custodial parents are required to sign this form. Adherence to this agreement is a condition of enrollment. The program manager will update this agreement periodically.

*Emergency Contact Form:* This form must be completed prior to your child's enrollment. This information is vital in case of an emergency in which we cannot reach the parents by phone. Any person picking up a child from Tot Time must be named on the emergency contact form. This form will allow Tot Time to provide emergency care, minor first aid and transport a child to the hospital in the event of an emergency. Please see the program manager to update this form if any addresses or phone numbers change. Custodial parents must review and re-sign the form every six months.

*Health Appraisal:* This form is to be completed by a licensed physician and returned to Tot Time within 30 days of enrollment. Updated health appraisals are required annually for children enrolled in our Early Learning Centers. Health appraisals are required upon enrollment to our School District Programs and again in 6th grade. Parents who choose not to have their child immunized based on religious or philosophical beliefs must provide a letter stating this and that letter will be kept in the child's chart.

*"Getting to Know You" Form:* This form is to be completed by the parent to help our teachers learn more about your child. It asks specific questions regarding your child's family, personality, likes and dislikes as well as special needs.

### **Tuition Policy**

All custodial parents are required to sign a Tuition Agreement prior to enrollment of their child in Tot Time. A non-refundable registration fee (see above) is required at enrollment. Early learning center weekly payments are due on Monday for the current week of care. Late fees will be assessed if payment is not received by the close of business Tuesday. School district payments are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month for the months of September through June (10 months). Tuition for the month of June will be prorated based on the number of days school is open. Tuition that is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month will incur a \$50 late fee. Your child will not be permitted back into the program until payment is received in full including late fees. Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate permanent dismissal from the program.

There is no credit given for vacations, child illness, suspension or closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather or acts of God. Check, money order or major credit cards are acceptable forms of payment. Receipts or statements will be issued upon request. All tuition payments should be mailed to the corporate office, given to your center director or paid via automatic deduction set up through Tuition Express. Checks should have your child's name written on the memo line, school your child attends and be made out to Tot Time. Please do not give payments to your child's teacher.

There will be a \$50 fee charged for tuition checks returned by the bank for any reason. Parents will be responsible for re-issuing a second check. If a parent has two checks returned in one school calendar year, they will be required to make all future tuition payments with a money order or credit card.

Parents of a subsidized child must complete all required paperwork on time to continue enrollment at Tot Time. Parents of subsidized children are also required to sign a fee agreement, agreeing to be personally responsible for the payment of tuition.

Tot Time offers a multiple child discount when more than one sibling is enrolled for full time care. The youngest sibling pays the full tuition rate and each additional child's tuition is discounted 10% per child. Discounts are only applicable when tuition payments are made on time. The full tuition rate, plus any additional late fees will be charged when tuition payments are late. The sibling discount will be discontinued permanently if payment is late twice.

### **Arrival Procedure**

Parents are required to sign in their child each day. Children are to be escorted by their parent to their classroom. Children are required by law to be supervised at all times while in the school building. Parents should notify the child's teacher of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. These special instructions include but are not limited to: early pick-up, alternative pick-up person, health issues over the

previous night which need to be observed and/or any general issues of which the child care providers should be aware to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

### **Pick up Procedure**

Parents are required to sign out their child each day. Once a parent enters his/her child's classroom, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on school premises. The parent may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms and/or playground. Parents are required to handle all business issues prior to entering child's classroom and are required to directly exit the building once they have picked up their child. You may briefly discuss your child's day with his/her teacher at pick up, however, if you feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. For the safety of the children, the staff is required to ask for government issued photo ID from any person not recognized at the time of pick up. All changes and/or additions to the Emergency Contact Form must be made in writing and be dated and signed.

### **Late Pick Up Fee**

Schools close promptly at 6:00pm. If an emergency situation prevents a parent from picking a child up by 6:00 p.m., the school must be contacted as soon as possible. **A late fee of \$1 per minute, per child, will be charged if a child is not picked up by closing and is payable directly to the staff member(s) who stayed with your child.** More than 3 late pick-ups in one school calendar year will result in dismissal from the program.

### **Teachers and other staff**

All our teachers and staff have been carefully interviewed and selected on the basis of educational background, experience, attitude, and most importantly, love of children. Teachers and assistants supervise children by sight and hearing at all times. Staff are required to undergo a bi-annual physical exam and provide criminal record clearance by the State Police, child abuse history clearance by the State Department of Human Services as well as FBI fingerprinting before beginning work. All our staff members are first aid and CPR certified. Staff are not permitted to be caregivers to children enrolled in Tot Time after business hours. Please do not ask anyone employed with Tot Time to baby-sit your children.

### **Parent Involvement**

Parents are welcome in the program at any time! The school director is always open for comments, questions or suggestions. There are numerous opportunities throughout the year for parents to volunteer. We encourage parent participation in Back to School Night, family picnics and holiday shows and graduations. The best learning environment for young children includes those which have close ties between school and home.

### **Student Dress Code**

School district programs will abide by the dress code set forth by the respective school district. Children attending the early learning centers should be dressed for fun and play. Clothing should be appropriate to the season and include outerwear in the winter. (hats, mittens, boots) Please label all your child's belongings. Closed toe shoes must be worn year round. Children should not wear jewelry to school except small stud earrings. Tot Time is not responsible if jewelry is lost or broken if worn to school.

### **Nutrition**

Tot Time incorporates nutrition and exercise in our curriculum. We encourage parents to pack healthy snacks and lunches that include plenty of water. Limiting juice and sweets and ensuring protein at each meal are good ideas for all children. Eating a variety of healthy foods provides the energy a young child needs to get through a busy day. For more information visit [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org).

### **Intervention Services**

While all children grow and develop in unique ways, some children experience delays in their development. Children in Pennsylvania with developmental delays benefit from a state supported collaboration among parents, service practitioners and others who work with young children needing special services. Our program is open to any services your child may require.

### **Curriculum**

Tot Time curriculum goals align with the Pennsylvania's Early Childhood Standards for Learning. Early childhood is a time of exploration and discovery. Young children become engaged in learning experiences when given materials that are hands-on. This gives them a wide and varied number of ways to learn about the world and develop socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively. Our teachers recognize that each child has a unique set of abilities and needs to learn at their own pace. Children at Tot Time are given opportunities to make choices and to develop independence and confidence. All children deserve the opportunity to learn, grow and develop through play. Teachers use observation skills to take note of how the structure is valued so children know what to expect; however, staff make changes as needed to support the needs of the group as well as the individual. Teachers will utilize class time to ask children open-ended questions thus encouraging skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking. Classrooms are designed with centers set up for small group interaction which gives children the opportunity to engage with each other, practice self-regulation and show empathy and respect to peers. Teachers work in partnership with parents by communicating with on a regular basis to monitor their child's progress.

### **Homework Policy**

Tot Time will provide a time and place for homework every afternoon. Homework time will last approximately 30-45 minutes typically with younger children finishing in 30 minutes and older children needing 45 minutes. Homework Help is optional and parents will be given the opportunity to opt out of it at the beginning of the year. We recommend parents check homework for accuracy and completion as our staff will supervise and assist however they do not always have time to check.

### **Child Service Reports**

Children attending our school district program will receive a Child Service Report in January to those parents who have children attend the program more than 20 hours a week. CSRs are done in November and May in the early learning centers. These reports are required by the Department of Public Welfare and address your child's growth and development in the context in which services are being provided.

### **Individualized Education Plans**

As part of our involvement in the Keystone Stars Program, parents of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) or Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) are asked to provide us with a copy. By providing us with a copy of your child's IEP/IFSP we can work together to ensure that the guidelines outlined in the plan are put into practice during our care.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences will be offered when Child Service Reports (CSR) are distributed. At this time you will discuss your child's Developmental Assessment/CSR. This assessment is designed to assist teachers in observing, recording, and understanding your child's skills, knowledge, behaviors, and accomplishments. Parents are encouraged to attend Parent-teacher conferences when offered.

### **Day's off & Holidays**

A yearly holiday schedule will be distributed to parents at the early learning centers each summer. School districts will offer a day-off program for many days the respective districts are closed. This list will be distributed at the beginning of the school year. Parents of school age children should visit our website to electronically register for the day-off programs throughout the school year. There is an additional fee for these days.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

The school age programs follow the inclement policy outlined by the school district in respective contracts. If the school district opens with a delay, the before care program will open with the same delay (i.e. in a 2 hour delay the program will open at 9:00 a.m. instead of 7:00 a.m.) If the district closes early due to inclement weather, Tot Time will make every effort to stay open until our 6pm closing time. If we must close early, parents will be notified by phone call and email. If the district closes altogether,

it will be at the discretion of Tot Time whether to close or open a day off program. This decision is always made in conjunction with the respective school districts. Early learning programs may be closed in the event of severe weather. Decisions to close are made by the CEO and based on the conditions in specific areas. Please check MyFoxPhilly.com or Tottimekids.com for school closings.

### **Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect**

Under the Child Protective Services Act, child care workers and teachers are considered mandated reporters and are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of Tot Time are considered mandated reporters according to the law. The employees of Tot Time are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Not providing appropriate meals including a drink for your child
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- Failure to attend to the special need of a disabled child
- Sending a sick child to school over mediated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside.
- Children who exhibit behaviors consistent with an abusive situation

### **Stakeholders**

Stakeholders are those groups or individuals who are significantly impacted by the children/families who are served and who have the potential to impact our facility. A list of Stakeholders will be available at the parents request to view.

### **Parent Code of Conduct**

Tot Time expects the parents of enrolled children to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect at all times. One of the goals of Tot Time is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of Tot Time but is the responsibility of each and every parent or other adult who enters the center. Parents will be expected to behave in a manner, which fosters this ideal environment. Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on agency property thereafter.

- Swearing/Cursing: No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on school district property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not.
- Threatening of Employees, Children, other Parents or adults associated with Tot Time. Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. Parents must be responsible for and in control of their behavior at all times.
- Physical/Verbal Punishment of Your Child or Others' Children at the center: While Tot Time does not necessarily support or condone corporal punishment of children; such acts are not permitted on the school district property. While verbal reprimand may be appropriate it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Parents are strictly forbidden to discipline any child other than their own. If you see a situation between children that warrants an adult taking action please bring it to the teacher's attention immediately.
- Smoking: Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot of the school district. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot.
- Confrontational Interactions with Employees, other Parents and associates of Tot Time: While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of Tot Time or the parents of the other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

### **Discipline Policy**

Tot Time believes that keeping children busy and actively engaged decreases the frequency of behavior problems in the classroom. Transition activities help the children move smoothly from one activity to another. Our caregivers are instructed to use only positive guidance and redirection. Setting consistent, clear, understandable limits fosters the child's ability to become self-disciplined, which is our ultimate goal. We encourage our staff to try to ignore negative behavior as much as possible (since much of it is an effort for attention) and focus their attention on the children who are doing what is appropriate. Hopefully this will draw the child into the group and thus avoid the need for frequent discipline. When these methods do not work, a short "time out" may be used for children who continue to disturb others or are at risk of harming themselves. Children are born with enormous creativity! We feel that too much discipline (correcting a child for every little thing) destroys their spirit. By teaching the child that each choice they make has a direct consequence, they will begin to learn to be responsible for their own actions. A negative choice will result in a negative consequence. Tot Time prohibits corporal punishment of any kind, cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse. If a behavioral problem presents itself, every attempt will be made to remedy the situation. However, dismissal of a child for behavior problems will be at the sole discretion of Tot Time corporate office.

### **Dismissal Policy**

Tot Time reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause. Tot Time will also dismiss any child whose parent is prohibited from entering agency property. Refunding of tuition and issuing account statements are at the discretion of the corporate office. Any past due balances must be paid within 15 days of dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the email address indicated in the child's file. Any balances remaining after 30 days will be referred to a collection agency. Families who are dismissed from a school are prohibited from entering the school or attending any of our other locations.

### **Notification of Changes in Schedule/Withdraw from Program**

If there is to be a permanent change in your child's scheduled days of attendance, please notify your director/program manager. Director's will do their best to accommodate such requests however changes are subject to enrollment and may not be able to go into effect immediately. School district parents should communicate any permanent changes in writing to your child's school. If your child is absent or not attending our program on a scheduled day, please call the program's direct phone at your child's school and leave a message. We require a minimum of 2 week written notice for withdraw from the program or unused tuition may not be refunded. Parents must email their director or office manager with a withdraw date.

### **Care Action Plans/Medication Policy**

Tot Time will administer both prescription and non-prescription medications when care action plans are provided and follow the instructions below:

- All medication must be in the original labeled container
- A Doctor's note stating the dosage amount and duration medication must be administered must accompany all prescription and non-prescription medication (including Tylenol, Advil, Benadryl, etc.)
- Daily written permission of custodial parent to administer medication

All medication and paperwork must be given to the director or assistant director. Please do not leave medication in your child's bag.

### **Incident Reports**

Incident Reports are sent home if your child incurs an injury while in our care. Parents will be called if an injury is moderate to serious in nature. This would include but is not limited to a cut that bleeds, a contusion, a fall from any classroom or outdoor play equipment. Minor scratches and scraps will be reported daily. Should a serious injury or illness occur and hospital emergency treatment is necessary, the child will be transported by ambulance accompanied by the teacher or senior staff member. The child's parents will be called immediately and can make arrangements to join the child at the hospital.

### **Health Policy**

Tot Time follows the American Academy of Pediatric guidelines for deciding when to keep your child home in the event of illness. As a parent, you can help prevent the spread of infectious diseases by keeping your contagious child home from school until

he/she can no longer spread illness to others. Children should be kept home when they have:

- Diarrhea or stools that contain blood or mucus or cannot be contained in a diaper
- An illness that caused vomiting unless the vomiting is known to be caused by a condition that is not contagious
- Mouth sores with drooling unless caused by a non-contagious condition
- Impetigo (a skin infection with erupting sores) until 24 hours after treatment has been started
- Pink eye until treatment has started
- Scabies (an itchy skin condition caused by mites) until 48 hours after treatment has commenced
- Head lice until child is treated and is bug and nit free (this may differ from school district policy)
- Conditions that suggest the possible presence of a more serious illness, including fever, sluggishness, persistent crying, irritability or difficulty breathing

Unfortunately and despite our best efforts to clean and sanitize, it is likely some infections will spread in child care settings. Frequent hand washing will help curb the spread of disease. All toys and equipment are cleaned daily as regulated by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning guidelines.

### **Questions/Complaints**

Should you have a question or concern regarding the program your child attends, employees, or procedures feel free to contact the Corporate Office at 610-272-8085.

**SIGNATURE PAGE:**

I/We \_\_\_\_\_, the parents of \_\_\_\_\_, have received, read, had the opportunity to ask questions about, understand and agree to abide by the policies set forth in the Tot Time Parent Handbook.

Furthermore, I/We agree to abide by the policies set forth in the manual.

I/We understand that the policies described in the Parent Handbook are not conditions of enrollment, and the language does not create a contract between Tot Time and the parents. Tot Time reserves the right to alter, amend, or otherwise modify these guidelines, in its sole discretion, without prior notice.

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Date