




# Early Childhood Education **PARENT HANDBOOK**

Updated 12.05.23



Building relationships  
that nurture the development  
of every child and family.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Philosophy .....	3
Inclusion .....	4
Affirmative Action .....	4
Licensing .....	4
Hours .....	4
Ages Served/Licensed Capacity .....	4
Admission/Demission .....	5
Drop-in/Extended Day .....	6

## DAILY LOGISTICS

Arrival and Departure .....	7
Parent Teacher Communication .....	8
Child Assessment and Screening .....	8
Conferences .....	8
Program Evaluation .....	9
Visitation .....	9
Naps/Rest .....	9
Bringing Toys .....	9
Field Trips .....	9
Outdoor Conditions .....	10
Clothing .....	10
Food .....	10-11

## HEALTH, MEDICAL AND ACCIDENTS

Healthcare Summary .....	12
Immunization .....	12
Allergies/Special Diets .....	12
Sick Children .....	13
Injuries .....	14
Medication Policies .....	15
Individual Health Plan .....	16
Inclusion and Accommodations .....	16
Diapering .....	16
Toilet Training .....	17
Dietary Supplements/Formula .....	17
Assessment Resources .....	17

## GENERAL POLICIES

Communications .....	18
Celebrations .....	18
Parent Permission .....	18
Behavior Guidance .....	19
Pet Policy .....	20
Applications to Other Schools .....	21
Grievance Procedure .....	21
Data Privacy .....	21

## AGENCY LOGISTICS

Parking .....	22
Insurance .....	22
Building Emergencies .....	22
Fire/Tornado Drills .....	22
Hazardous Conditions .....	22
Closures due to Weather .....	23

## ABOUT ST. DAVID'S CENTER

Agency Description .....	24
Getting Involved .....	24

## MALTREATMENT OF MINORS MANDATED REPORTING

Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect .....	25-26
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# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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## PHILOSOPHY

Early learning paves the way for learning at school and throughout life. What children learn in their first few years of life – and how they learn it – can have long-lasting effects on their success and health as children, teens, and adults (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development).

**Our philosophy reflects what we know about how development unfolds optimally and is shaped by the following core beliefs:**

- **Strong, positive relationships** – built through warm, sensitive, responsive interactions – provide the foundation for a child’s long-term social, emotional, and cognitive development.
- **Social-emotional development is the foundation** for all other areas of learning, so we focus on identifying and expressing emotions, preparing children to solve social conflicts, discerning right and wrong, and understanding the needs of others.
- Your child’s success in school and in life depends on this solid foundation and **rich learning opportunities that promote all areas of development**, including language, literacy, and communication; mathematics; science and technology; and creative arts.
- **The uniqueness of each child is a gift** to every member of a classroom community. In our inclusive program, children of all abilities learn alongside each other, honor similarities and differences, and build empathy for others.
- **When developmental concerns arise, early intervention is critical** to long-term success. The brain is simply developing too fast to miss an opportunity to intervene and – by building and strengthening skills in children and parents – change a child’s trajectory.
- **Our teacher-designed environments** – our classrooms in the building and outdoors, motor room and gyms, playgrounds, and state-certified school forest – engage children in exploration and encourage play in nature.
- **Partnering with families** each step on your parenting journey, through its joys and challenges, is paramount to us. We are grateful for your trust and for the opportunity to support you in the most important role of your life.

**We are honored that you have chosen St. David’s Center for your family’s early childhood education. For more information on our approach, services, and organization, visit [stdavidscenter.org/preschool](http://stdavidscenter.org/preschool).**



## INCLUSION

St. David's Center has a long-term commitment to providing developmentally appropriate, inclusive, educational services for young children in an accessible and nurturing environment. Inclusion means children of all abilities – including in the areas of communication, mobility, sensory processing, medical history, and social-emotional development – learn, play, and work together. Our program reflects the diversity of children in the community, and we know programming for children with diverse abilities has a positive influence on all children. This model is supported by several resources, including Hennepin County and philanthropic support.

## AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

St. David's Center maintains an open enrollment policy that does not deny enrollment to any child on the basis of religion, ethnic background, color, disability, lifestyle, or income.

## LICENSING

St. David's Center is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (651-431-6031) to operate an early childhood education program for toddlers and preschoolers. Parents may view our childcare program plan, our educational goals and objectives for children, and our grievance policy at any time.

St. David's Center will not advertise or otherwise promote childcare arrangements between families and staff at St. David's Center that are not within the scope of the licensed programs. Furthermore, St. David's Center does not support and is not responsible for staff or their actions when providing any services outside of their scheduled work hours.

## HOURS

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program:

Six-Hour Schedule: 9:00 a.m.– 3:00 p.m.

Full-Day Schedule: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Extended-Day Schedule: 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

## AGES SERVED

Toddlers: 16 months - 3 years

Mixed-Age Preschool: 3 - 5 years

## LICENSED CAPACITY

Toddlers & Preschool: 145 children



## ADMISSION / DEMISSION

St. David's Center is committed to the provision of appropriate placement for each program participant. The organization will not discriminate against participants on the basis of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, developmental disability, or income. St. David's Center reserves the right not to admit a potential participant or demit a current participant if it is determined the individual cannot be adequately served through the organization's programs.

For further information about the application and reapplication process, please visit our website at [www.stdavidscenter.org/preschool/enrollment](http://www.stdavidscenter.org/preschool/enrollment), and look for the applicable link.

The criteria for demission or denial of admission are as follows:

### **Inappropriate Placement**

An inappropriate placement may occur when a participant has needs or behaviors requiring additional resources beyond those that can be provided within the limitations of space, staffing, and funding by St. David's Center. Lower staff-participant ratios that require extensive specialized intervention may make a participant's program prohibitively expensive or unfeasible.

### **Lack of Program Participation/Cooperation/Chronic Absenteeism**

Demission may occur if there is a consistent or chronic lack of cooperation and participation in program services or if there is a consistent or chronic lack of attendance in center-based programs (for reasons other than medical or emergency) on the part of the participant.

### **Missing Healthcare Paperwork**

Each child who enters our program must have a complete copy of the following:

- Immunization records (to be updated annually and signed by your child's pediatrician).
- A Healthcare Summary (to be updated annually and signed by your child's pediatrician).
- Allergy/asthma paperwork, if applicable.
- Medical or Developmental Care Plans, if applicable.

Failure to submit the information to the ECE program specialist, prior to the child's start date, or lack of follow-up regarding the plan for paperwork completion, may result in the denial of admission into our program.

### **Financial Reasons**

Demission may occur if there is consistent or chronic non-payment of parent fees on the part of the family.

Demission may result when one or more of the following occur:

- An account is more than 90 days past due.
- No payments have been received for more than 90 days.
- No contact has been made by the family to set up a payment plan.

If these conditions are present, admission for the next program year may not be confirmed until an account is paid in full or arrangements have been made to clear the balance due. These arrangements should be made through the finance department.

## DROP-IN CARE

Drop-In Care is a service offered on a limited basis to families of children currently enrolled in Early Childhood Education. Drop-In Care is available when space permits from 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

To maintain the quality of our Drop-in Care, there are limited spots available per classroom. Reservations must be made in advance, and requests are never guaranteed. It is possible for a room to have no drop-in spaces available on a specific day.

### **The following restrictions apply:**

- Drop-ins are not available during the first two weeks of the fall and summer sessions.
- The child must be currently enrolled in our Early Childhood Education Program.
- Drop-ins are not available on out-of-center field trip days.
- Requests must be made in an email at least two days (48 hours) prior to the requested date. Our rates increase for late requests. Requests can be made by emailing the program specialist.
- St. David's Center reserves the right to charge a late fee for children left beyond their arranged drop-in time.
- In order to accommodate the demands for Drop-In Care, there is a maximum approval of twice per month, per child. If you need additional care more than twice per month, please work with the ECE program specialist.

Questions about Drop-In Care may be directed to the ECE program specialist.



# DAILY LOGISTICS

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## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

**Building Access:** The main door to our lobby will be unlocked during our business hours, but to enter the rest of our building, parents will need to enter a security code. Each family will be issued a code via letter before the first day of school. If you have not received this code by the first day of school, please contact the front desk. If someone other than a parent is picking up your child, it is your responsibility to share the code with them. Do not give this code to your child. If you forget your code, please bring your ID to the front desk, and they can give it to you.

**Escort of Children:** Parents (or adult substitutes) are required to escort their child to and from the classroom, rather than the school entrance. It is very important to be sure your child is in the teacher's care before leaving and that the teacher is aware you are dropping off or picking up your child. A verbal or non-verbal communication with the classroom teacher is required for all drop-offs and/or pick-ups. Parents must sign their children in and out on the classroom sign-in sheet to ensure the safety of their child. Attendance sheets are used during fire drills and whenever the class leaves the room. This is critical during all transitions. Please close all gates and doors behind you.

**Arrival:** Children in the Extended-Day Program may not be dropped off before 7:30 a.m. For the Full-Day Program, children cannot be dropped off before 8:00 a.m. The Six-Hour Program begins at 9:00 a.m. Each family can make their own arrival routine. Please make every attempt to be prompt to ensure a smooth transition and that children do not miss valuable instruction time.

**Departure:** It is important to be prompt in picking up your child within the hours contracted. We are staffed according to prearranged attendance. The pick-up times are as follows:

- Six-Hour Program: 3:00 p.m.
- Full-Day Program: any time before 5:00 p.m.
- Extended-Day Program: any time before 5:30 p.m.

### Here are some important things to note about arrivals and departures:

- Please make sure you connect with a teacher, so they know your child has arrived or departed.
- Please always sign in and out on the clipboard outside your child's regular classroom. (This can be where you drop off your child's lunch.)
- Please check the signs outside the classroom to see where your child should be dropped off.

**Leaving with Another Person:** We must be notified if your child is going home with a person, other than a parent, who is listed on your child's emergency cards. In addition to advance notification, we require written authorization if the person is NOT on your child's emergency card as someone authorized to pick up your child. Photo IDs will be checked in these circumstances.

**Leaving Children in Cars:** When picking up your child, please do not leave children waiting in your car in the parking lot. This is a significant safety concern.





**Incapacitated Adults:** Your child's safety is our top priority. St. David's Center staff will not release a child to anyone, including parents, who are exhibiting signs of intoxication or drug use. This includes the smell of alcohol or other substances, displays of erratic behavior, or the mention of recent intake of drugs or alcohol. If any signs are present, another individual must pick up the child. There are no exceptions. Should there be difficulties complying with this policy, St. David's Center staff will contact the local police, who will determine if the individual is safe to drive.

**Late Fees:** St. David's Center reserves the right to charge a late fee (\$10.00 per 15 minutes) for children left before or beyond their contracted time.

**After Hours Charges:** Please remember St. David's Center closes at 5:30 p.m. sharp. We cannot legally operate after 5:30 p.m. under our license. Parents will be billed \$20.00 per 15-minute unit that a child is at school after 5:30 p.m. For example, \$20.00 would be billed for a child picked up between 5:31 p.m. and 5:45 p.m., and \$40.00 would be billed for a child picked up between 5:46 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Charges will continue to accrue at the rate of \$20.00 per 15 minutes until the child has been picked up.

**Valuables:** Do not leave purses and valuables unattended in your car in the parking lot. Do not leave pets unattended in cars on hot or cold days.

**Carpools:** We are not responsible for carpools or the safety of the participants

## PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

It is important for the wellbeing and development of each child that their parents and teachers are able to communicate important information clearly and with trust and that such information will be kept confidential. Our goal is to keep parents well-informed about their child's day at St. David's Center, and we encourage you to share pertinent information about your child for that day at arrival or departure.

If you have a message for your teachers, please feel free to email them, write a note, or verbalize it to staff at arrival or departure. Your child's primary teachers will communicate with you through daily notes sent from COR Advantage. If you would like to set up a time to connect with your teacher, always feel free to make additional requests. Emailing teachers to set up a time to meet is the most effective way to connect with them, as they are in ratio with children for most of the day.

## CHILD ASSESSMENT & SCREENING

Teachers use the context of the everyday classroom to document children's growth. Classrooms also use COR Advantage to assess the developmental level of each child. Teachers document development in the following areas: Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development and Health; Language, Literacy and Communication; Mathematics; Creative Arts; Science and Technology; and Social Studies. The documented information is shared with parents during conferences two times per year. Parents or teachers may request additional conferences at any time.

Information regarding assessments will remain confidential between teachers, supervisors, and your family.

## CONFERENCES

Conferences are times for parents and teachers to communicate expectations, goals, and concerns. We invite parents to be part of the goal-setting process. There are days set aside in the fall and spring to conduct conferences, however, teachers may set aside conference times outside of these days and outside of their regular classroom time if they choose. A sign-up sheet with available conference times will be posted outside the classroom. A phone or virtual conference can also be scheduled to accommodate families. Additional conferences can be scheduled any time the parent or teacher deems it necessary.



## PROGRAM EVALUATION

Each spring we ask families with children enrolled in the Early Childhood Education Program to give us feedback about the program and the services we offer by completing a Family Questionnaire. This information gives us the opportunity to respond to emerging needs of parents and improve services for our children and families. The results of this annual questionnaire are shared with families, staff, and the board of directors.

Throughout the year, staff are asked to evaluate the program structure, leadership, trainings, enrollment support, volunteers, and substitutes. The information gathered on the staff survey helps identify needed changes and improve support to the staff and the families they serve.

## VISITATIONS

There is an open visitation policy at St. David's Center. Parents are encouraged to visit their child's classroom at any time. You may drop in or call beforehand, as you wish. We also strongly encourage parents to assist in the classroom, help on field trips, and get involved in school activities. The State of Minnesota Licensing Guidelines prevent us from allowing child guests in the classroom for an extended visit. If you want to visit a classroom other than the one your child is in, you must make an appointment to do so through the supervisor of your child's classroom.

## NAP / REST

St. David's Center requires a nap/rest period for each child in the Six-Hour, Full-Day, and Extended-Day Programs. A child will have a daily rest period that will not exceed 30 minutes if the child does not sleep. Families should provide a blanket, crib sheet, and small pillow (if desired) for their child's cot, which must be taken home weekly for washing by the parent.

## BRINGING TOYS

Except for security items (teddy bears, etc.), which may be used during rest time, we prefer children do not bring toys and other objects to school unless requested (e.g., for Show and Tell). These items can be disruptive to the classroom routine and can sometimes interfere with the child's ability to play in a group.

## FIELD TRIPS

St. David's Center will periodically conduct out-of-center field trips. For their child to participate, parents will need to give written permission in advance of each trip. Buses will be the transportation for most field trips.

Teachers will communicate about scheduled field trips through parent newsletters, lesson plans, and signs posted outside the classrooms. For safety reasons, children, staff, and chaperones are expected to wear St. David's Center t-shirts for all field trips. You cannot switch your child's scheduled days to attend a field trip. Please make an extra effort to put the field trip dates and departure times on your calendars.

Many times, the bus needs to leave promptly at 9:00 a.m. If you arrive at school with your child after the bus has left, we will give you directions to the location of the field trip, and you can drive your child there. Due to full enrollment in classrooms, there will not be another room for your child to join while waiting for their class to return from the field trip. Parents are encouraged to participate in field trips when space is available. We are not able to include younger or older siblings. Due to the requirements of the field trip chaperone, children under the age of 15 will not be allowed to chaperone.

## OUTDOOR CONDITIONS

All classrooms have scheduled outdoor time and will go outside daily, weather permitting. St. David's Center follows Childcare Weather Watch and DHS guidelines for safe outside temperatures. Outdoor play is determined to be unsafe when the temperature and/or wind-chill is below zero degrees Fahrenheit or the temperature and/or heat index is above 100 degrees Fahrenheit. St. David's Center may also choose to limit outdoor play based on cautionary temperature or weather conditions.

In addition, we monitor air quality daily to determine if outside play needs to be limited. St. David's Center staff utilize one uniform source to determine weather conditions and air quality.

## CLOTHING

Please send appropriate outdoor clothing with your child.

1. Children should be dressed in comfortable, washable clothing that allows for participation in active and messy play activities (e.g., sand play, painting, cooking, etc.).
2. Outer clothing must be marked with your child's name.
3. We require an extra change of clothing be kept at school. The clothing must be marked and seasonal.
4. Snow pants, boots, mittens, and a hat should be worn during the winter.
5. Since we encourage independence, make sure all clothing, especially mittens, boots, and outerwear, are large enough and easy for the child to put on by themselves.
6. In the early fall and spring, please indicate to your child's teacher when you would like your child to wear their coat.
7. For safety reasons, we recommend children wear rubber-soled shoes. We also recommend children not wear flip-flops.
8. Please avoid sending children in scarves, necklaces, and sweatshirts with strings to avoid any potential choking/strangulation hazards.
9. Teething necklaces, bracelets, or anklets are not permitted, as they pose a potential choking/strangulation hazard.

## FOOD

The State of Minnesota Licensing Guidelines require children have nutritious meals that follow USDA meal pattern requirements. This includes items from the protein, grain, and fruit and vegetable groups. For the meals you provide, please make sure to follow these meal requirements.

We use a positive approach to food. Our goal is to have children enjoy a snack and lunch that is based on a social experience, with opportunities for exposure to different foods and interactions.

### Snacks

Your child will be served a nutritious mid-morning snack and/or mid-afternoon snack at school. A typical snack might include cucumbers and pita bread/cream cheese, mangos and cottage cheese, and/or a banana and cereal. Milk or water will be served with snacks and lunch. 1% milk is provided for preschoolers and whole milk is provided for toddlers. The weekly snack rotation menu for the year is available for all families upon enrollment and is also available upon request.

### Lunch

Children will need to bring a cold lunch. Be sure to label your child's lunch bag with their first and last name. Also, since we cannot refrigerate lunches, if you are sending perishable food, please put a freezer or cold pack in the lunch bag. Please send food that does not require heating. If it is a pre-warmed food (e.g., soup), it is helpful to send it in a thermos to keep it warm until lunchtime.

## Breakfast

Children are encouraged to eat breakfast at home, as programming begins at 7:30 a.m.

## Food Safety

Items considered choking hazards are not allowed in the lunches of children under the age of 4 years old. We are not able to serve children under 4 years of age items that cannot be swallowed whole because of the dangers associated with potential choking. This means we will not serve any of the following items in the center for snack or from your child's lunch:

- Hot dogs.
- Raw peas.
- Raw carrot rounds.
- Hard pretzels or chips.
- Rice cakes.
- Whole grapes.
- Popcorn.
- Chunks of nut butter.
- Marshmallows.
- Chunks of meat larger than can be swallowed whole.
- Raisins and fruit snacks (under 2 only).



## Water Bottles

St. David's Center allows reusable water bottles or cups to be used during the day. If possible, please supply a water bottle to be kept at St. David's Center. Each water bottle or cup will be cleaned, rinsed, sanitized, and filled with fresh water daily. Each water bottle or reusable cup must be labeled with the first and last name of your child and stored with the teacher storage. This means water bottles or reusable cups will be out of the reach of children and will be offered at regular intervals throughout the day and when a child asks for a drink. Single-use cups will be available for children who do not have a water bottle.





## HEALTH, MEDICAL AND ACCIDENTS

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St. David's Center health policies are reviewed quarterly by our nurse consultant, who is also available to staff for consultation about any medical concerns involving a child. Parents will be informed if any such consultation has been requested.

### HEALTHCARE SUMMARY

Parents are required to submit a Health Care Summary, filled out by the child's physician. This form must be submitted annually and must be submitted before your child can start school.

### IMMUNIZATION

Parents are required to submit immunization records or conscientious exemption forms. These forms must be submitted annually and must be submitted before your child can start.

Since immunizations aren't required by the state, there could be times your child is exposed to other children who are unvaccinated. Staff will follow protocols put in place by the Department of Health regarding any outbreaks which could lead to potential exclusion.

### FOOD ALLERGIES / SPECIAL DIETS

If your child has food allergies or a special diet, it is required to have the appropriate paperwork and medication on site before your child can attend.

With parent permission, food allergies are posted in the classroom so that all staff is aware of them and follows policies regarding children's food allergies. Due to the severe allergies of some children, you may be asked to eliminate certain foods from your child's meals at St. David's Center.

**Note:** Because we are a large center with multiple programs, we cannot ensure our shared spaces are completely allergen-free for children with food allergies. Therefore, we rely on quality teacher training, good communication, consistent care plans, and having the necessary medications available.

Thank you for your help with this!



## SICK CHILDREN

### Keeping Sick Children at Home

Deciding whether to keep your child home from school is often a tough call. Here are some guidelines to follow to help maintain your child's health and encourage a speedy recovery, as well as protect the wellbeing of other children in the program.

Your child will be sent home or should stay home if they have any of the following symptoms:

- A fever of 100 degrees or more. If the child has had a fever of 100 or more axillary (101 orally), the child must stay home for 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal without fever reducing medications.
- Vomiting or diarrhea. If the child has vomited two times or had diarrhea three times, the child must stay home until 24 hours after the last episode. On first episode of vomiting or diarrhea, teachers and staff will use their best judgement on contacting parents.
- A rash that has an unknown cause or may be disease-related. Check with your family physician before sending the child to school.
- Any child who has unexplained lethargy beyond the usual morning fog. This is often one of the first signs of illness.
- Any child who has significant respiratory distress. This should be treated at home or at your clinic/hospital.
- Any child who is not able to participate in childcare program activities with reasonable comfort. This includes children who are unable to go outside, as we can't keep one child inside while the other children are outside.
- Any child who requires more care than the program staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in care. If a child becomes ill at school or we discover that any of the above conditions have not been met, parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child. If we are unable to reach a parent, we will contact one of the child's emergency contacts.

If your child becomes ill while attending the program, we will attempt to notify you at once using the contact number you've provided on the sign-in sheet. We expect you to pick up your child within the hour. As we await your arrival, we will have your child rest in a quiet, supervised area. If we are unable to reach you, we will move on to the phone numbers provided on your child's emergency card.

If your child is sick, please email your child's teacher to report the illness. If you have any questions about the above information or illness, please call your family physician.

### Communicable Diseases

Parents are required by state law to notify us within 24 hours (excluding holidays and weekends), if an enrolled child contracts an infectious or contagious illness such as chicken pox, strep throat, scarlet fever, measles, conjunctivitis (pinkeye), pinworms, head lice, etc. St. David's Center will then notify other parents, in writing, of the possible exposure of their children that same day.

The Commissioner of Health will be notified of any animal bites or reportable diseases.

## INJURIES

### Minor Injuries

Minor injuries will be treated by staff with basic first aid procedures. All staff are trained to administer basic first aid. Parents will be informed of all injuries

### Serious Injuries/Emergency Medical Aid

If a serious injury/illness occurs that requires emergency medical aid, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Every attempt will be made to notify the parent at once. 9-1-1 will be called to administer additional first aid and to possibly transport the injured child to the nearest hospital or another health facility as deemed appropriate.
2. In the event of a serious injury, it is conceivable a child may have to be sent to a hospital for emergency care before a parent can be reached..
3. If a child is transported to a hospital, a staff person will accompany the child and stay with them until a parent arrives.

### Accident Reports

Parents will receive a written accident report for any accident and are asked to sign and return a copy of the report for the school's file. If the accident requires a trip to see your child's doctor or dentist or a hospital's emergency room, you must notify your classroom teacher within 24 hours so we may notify the Department of Human Services.



## MEDICATION POLICIES

Due to the general risk and liability with medication administration, our staff will only be able to administer medication if absolutely required and with adequate parent and/or doctor instructions and permissions. Please read below for the list of requirements.

### **Please read below for the list of requirements.**

1. Prescription medication (e.g., Epipen, pink eye drops, asthma medication, etc.) may be given **ONLY** with a completed form, along with signed doctor and parental consent and a doctor's written instructions.
2. Prescription medication must arrive properly labeled, in the original, currently-dated prescription bottle and/or box, with the child's full name, the name of the physician, the name of the medication, the dosage, and the frequency of administration.
3. Non-prescription medication (e.g., some skin creams, Tylenol, Ibuprofen, etc.) may only be given with a completed form\*, along with a parent signature. A doctor signature is not necessary.
4. Non-prescription medications must arrive in their original containers, along with clear written instructions and the child's first and last name written on the container.
5. No expired medications shall be administered and will be returned home. If your child requires medication regularly at school (e.g., Epipen or Benadryl), it will be your responsibility to ensure when the medication expires, new medication is immediately brought to school.
6. Do not send medication in your child's lunch box or backpack. Always hand it directly to your child's classroom teacher or office staff.
7. Always ensure your child's teacher is made aware of ANY medication needs.

\*Non-prescription and prescription medication authorization forms can be obtained from the ECE program specialist. We will not be able to administer medication without the completed required paperwork.

Sunscreen, bug spray, and lotion should be provided to your teachers with your child's first and last name labeled on them. Please apply sunscreen before coming to school each morning. Please do not send any aerosol sprays. These items should be delivered to the teachers (not left in your child's cubby) and will remain at school.



## INDIVIDUAL HEALTH PLAN

If applicable, an Individual Health Plan (IHP) will be provided once your child's Health Care Summary has been submitted and must be returned and signed by a physician prior to the first day of school. If you know you will need an Individual Health Plan for severe allergic reactions, reactive airway disease, or other circumstances, please contact the ECE Program specialist to receive your paperwork early.

Upon enrollment and as needed, it is the parents' responsibility to notify St. David's Center of any allergies or other medical conditions and needs of the child. The staff will attempt to accommodate these needs whenever possible. We will work with the parent and nurse consultant to make an Individual Health Plan (IHP) for the child. Completion of additional paperwork describing the child's allergy and/or medical condition may also be required. A doctor's signature may be required on some paperwork.

## INCLUSION AND ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE ROOMS

St. David's Center has inclusive classrooms that cater to all learning styles. Teachers structure their classrooms with different activities that honor the uniqueness of every child. Children have access to resources that support their individual and collective needs throughout the day. For example, if a child needs space from the group, we have areas available for them to take time away and decompress. Also, during structured or unstructured activities, if their bodies feel wiggly, they can choose a fidget, stretchy band, or wiggle seat. Inclusive classrooms allow all children to be successful by giving them access to resources that accommodate how their bodies feel.

Some common resources found in our classrooms include:

- Alone Zones (calming spaces).
- Noise-canceling headphones.
- Stretchy bands.
- Chew tubes.
- Wiggle seats.
- Cube chairs.
- Rifton chairs.
- Weighted lap blankets.
- Small fidget items.
- Bubbles.



## DIAPERING

1. Parents are responsible for providing their child's diapers. Only disposable diapers may be used. We cannot accept cloth diapers due to sanitation and contamination precautions.
2. Please bring enough diapers for each day, or you may store diapers at school, and teachers will notify you when they are running low.
3. All changing tables will be placed within a maximum distance of three feet from a sink.
4. Diapering areas will have a foot-operated diaper pail and sanitizing spray that is used after each use. The diaper table is covered with examination table paper that is changed after each diapering.
5. Specific diapering procedures will be posted in all diapering areas and followed by all staff diapering children.
6. The application of diaper rash ointment will require a medication authorization form. No homemade creams are allowed. This must be labeled with your child's first and last name.



## TOILET TRAINING

Typically, starting between ages 3 and 4 years, children are toilet-trained and in underwear. If you would like additional resources about our philosophy or helpful tips to use at home, please ask your teachers.

## DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS / FORMULA

1. Parents are responsible for providing their child's formula. Dry formula can be stored at the school, or parents can bring pre-mixed bottles each day. Parents are expected to prepare and transport formula and baby food according to the Health Department's recommendations.
2. Bottles must either be sanitized using the three-sink method, or parents may send formula prepared in bottles. Empty bottles must be sent home each day.
3. Formula is refrigerated at all times, except when the child is feeding.
4. Once opened, formula must be refrigerated immediately, labeled, and used the same day, unless otherwise specified by the manufacturer's direction. It must not be left out of the refrigerator beyond feeding time. Formula remaining in a bottle after the feeding must be thrown out and not used for another feeding.
5. Written dietary instructions must be obtained from the parent.
6. The child's feeding schedule must be posted.
7. Each bottle must be labeled with the child's name.
8. We are unable to heat bottles with a bottle warmer or microwave.

## ASSESSMENT RESOURCES

If you have any concerns regarding your child's development, please discuss them with your child's teacher. Staff will be happy to watch for any signs of developmental concerns and, if necessary, assist in making a referral. St. David's Center has a developmental consultant, mental health therapists, speech therapists, and occupational therapists on staff who can provide assessment or ongoing therapy as needed on a fee basis.

If you or your child's teachers have concerns, the teachers will work with you to request an assessment, which could be done by St. David's Center therapy services. The results of the assessment will help us ensure your child receives the best tools for their developmental journey. We ask that you partner with your child's teacher for this process to be most successful.

Inclusive classroom enrollment can only be successful when appropriate supports are in place. Additional tuition may be necessary, depending on a child's needs. If your child is receiving additional supports or services, we will work with you to gather more information to ensure your child has a successful classroom experience. a successful classroom experience.



# GENERAL POLICES

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## COMMUNICATION

We value high levels of communication between staff and families. If you need to communicate with your child's teacher, please feel free to email or call. We recommend setting up appointments if you have any questions or concerns, as it can be difficult for teachers to step away from the classroom to have these conversations without prior notice.

We use a variety of methods to communicate with families including emails, the Kaymbu for Families app, classroom and picture updates, lesson plans, conference information, and agency newsletters.

Please share any specific information we should know about communicating with you and your family. Traditionally, information will be shared with both primary guardians/parents.

We send important ECE and agency updates via email. Please be aware, if you unsubscribe from these emails, you will not receive these updates.

If for any reason you are having difficulties with communication with a staff member, we ask that you raise your concerns in a respectful way directly with the teacher. If they are unavailable, you may reach out to that staff member's supervisor to ask for support. If conflict continues, please reach out to the director for additional support in navigating a conversation or topic. We may be able to provide context for a situation, clarify a message sent or received, or set up a meeting to facilitate more direct and open communication.

## CELEBRATIONS

St. David's Center's philosophy is to provide an inclusive environment for all children and families who receive services in our programs. We will refrain from putting together events or parties that are not representative of our diverse community's beliefs and traditions. This philosophy extends to celebrations (holidays and birthdays) in the classrooms. Please communicate with your child's teacher if you have specific preferences regarding your child and the celebration of holidays.

**Holidays:** It is acknowledged that not all children in a classroom may celebrate the same holiday or tradition (e.g., wearing costumes on Halloween). Parents and children may wish to share their family traditions by coming to the classroom to talk about their own traditions or share a food associated with a tradition. It is expected that parents and staff work together to create educational opportunities and celebrations that are developmentally-appropriate for all children in the classroom and allow every child to feel included and represented.

### **Birthdays / Celebrations**

For birthdays, each classroom will have their own developmentally-appropriate way of celebrating. Please communicate with your child's teacher at the beginning of the school year or summer to learn what options are available. All classrooms allow children to bring a birthday treat to share with their class if you wish. Please see your child's classroom teacher if there is another celebration in which you would like to share a treat. All treats brought to your child's classroom must be whole fruits or commercially-made and packaged, with the ingredients list attached. In order for all children to be included, please communicate with your child's teacher regarding any special classroom allergies or restrictions.

## PARENT PERMISSION

Occasionally, groups of children may be involved in a public relations activity. Written parental permission is included on the Permission Authorization Form. Parents will be informed of any such activity. Children will not be involved in any research projects without written parental permission.

## BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

St. David's Center promotes a positive approach to managing the behavior of all children. We use the following techniques daily: prevention, positive redirection, modeling, limit-setting, problem-solving, and behavior management. Redirection occurs when a staff person intervenes during conflict and asks a child to choose an alternate constructive activity. Redirections do not need to be noted on a daily log.

In rare cases, children may be separated from the group for safety purposes. Separation occurs when a child is removed from the group and is temporarily unable to participate in the program activity. No child may be separated from the group unless St. David's Center has tried less intrusive methods of guiding the child's behavior, have found those ineffective, and the child's behavior threatens the wellbeing of the child or other children in the center. All separations from the group must be noted on a daily log (Minnesota Rules, 9503.0055, sub 4 and 5). If a child is separated from the group three times or more in one day, the child's parent shall be notified, and notation of the parent notification shall be indicated on the log.

Individual Behavior Support Plans will be developed for children who have persistent behavior challenges.

It is always the goal to limit or even eliminate the use of suspensions and expulsions. Exclusionary measures are only considered after the previously-listed strategies and supports are attempted and only as a last resort.

Supports that may be utilized prior to suspension or expulsion include classroom observations, reflection, and behavior plans with supervisors and inclusion specialists; coaching with the curriculum specialist; paraprofessional support (if available and/or appropriate); and services like referrals for pediatric therapies, therapeutic preschool programming, or additional evaluations or assessments. We may also consider having the child switch rooms or teachers, change or shorten their schedule, or find an alternate placement. In these cases, an upfront and ongoing conversation with parents must be had to partner with the family in the child's growth and development.

Some behaviors St. David's Center's ECE is unable to manage over a sustained period of time include incidents of running away from teachers and staff and physical aggression toward property, staff, or other children. These are serious safety concerns and may indicate that the current environment is not meeting the needs of the child and more appropriate placement is needed.

Any decision is made in the child's best interest and done in consultation with the child's parents/guardians. If a child must be suspended or expelled, St. David's Center staff will aid the family in accessing services and finding an alternate placement. We believe it is our responsibility as adults and educators to set and find the best programming for children, and, when they show signs of struggling, that we help find programming that best serves each child. As a program, we will review any special needs the child may have, as well as any implicit and explicit bias our staff may have.

This policy complies with all federal and state civil rights laws.

If you would like a copy of the full Behavior Guidance Policy, please contact the director.

## PET POLICY

Although the majority of the time, a pet visit can be a positive experience, this isn't always the case. We are aware some children are afraid of and/or allergic to animals.

### **These are our guidelines regarding pets:**

1. All pet visits must be prearranged with your child's classroom teacher.
2. The pet owner must fill out a Pet Visit Form, available at the front reception desk, verifying the animal is up to date on its vaccinations and is in good health.
3. The completed Pet Visit Form and vaccination records or certificate of health must be returned to the front desk 24 hours prior to the pet's scheduled visit.
4. The front desk and the supervisor for your child's room will be notified in advance of the visit.
5. All pets must be checked in at the front desk on the day of the visit.
6. All pets should be brought into the building in a portable kennel. If the animal is not transportable in a kennel, individual plans will need to be made for the animal to visit the classroom. (If the animal is on a leash, for example, we will find a time when the hallways are not filled with children.)
7. Additional restrictions and suggestions for a positive pet visit are included on the Pet Visit Form.
8. There are certain pet breeds that are not allowed in the building. Please contact the director for more information about specific breeds.





## APPLICATIONS TO OTHER SCHOOLS

St. David's Center staff will complete application forms for other schools in accordance with that school's guidelines. We will not call or write other schools to make recommendations, but we are willing to answer questions posed to us by other schools to the best of our ability with the parent's permission.

## GRIEVANCE POLICY

In the event a conflict situation occurs, the following procedure is recommended: Initially, talk to the person who is directly involved, e.g., the teacher in your child's classroom. If necessary, you can talk to the classroom supervisor, who may set up a meeting. If the problem is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you may request a meeting with the program director.

## DATA PRIVACY

St. David's Center for Child and Family Development obtains and uses information about each child to assist in the planning of our educational program and in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Human Services Childcare Licensing Division. Access to such information by third parties is limited and controlled in accordance with legal rights of Data Privacy.

Federal and state law allows parents and legal guardians to inspect and review official records, files, and data related to their child. This includes all material that is incorporated in the cumulative record.

### **Access to records is limited to the following:**

- Parent or legal guardians of children.
- Authorized St. David's Center personnel, such as directors, supervisors, teachers, assistant teachers, and aides.
- State or federal agencies as required by law, including the Hennepin County Community Services Department.
- Accrediting organizations, licensing, and the health consultant.
- Other third parties, such as school district special education staff, with written permission from the parents or legal guardian.

Parents and guardians have a right to ask what records are kept on their child.



## AGENCY LOGISTICS

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### PARKING

St. David's Center has onsite parking available for both staff and clients. Parents of the Early Childhood Education Program have priority in the main parking lot. Please be respectful of handicapped spaces. St. David's Center's parking lot cannot be used as a meeting place for carpools or city buses.

**Note:** Because of the nature of our school day, high volume times tend to be 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. We ask for your patience during these busier times.

Due to many children walking in the area, please drive slowly in our parking lot.

In all circumstances, parents should not leave children unattended in cars or in the parking lot. Please accompany your child across the parking area to and from school. Please do not leave your car idling while dropping off your child, as this generates pollution and creates a possible safety hazard.

### INSURANCE

St. David's Center holds \$5,000,000 of comprehensive, commercial, general liability insurance for the center.

### BUILDING EMERGENCIES

St. David's Center has reviewed and updated our emergency procedures. The Emergency Preparedness Plan articulates our response to emergency situations, anticipates constituent needs, and outlines agency responses. The plan addresses evacuation of the building, evacuation of the area, and situations requiring sheltering in the building. If an emergency occurs (e.g., an extended power outage) and it is determined that conditions in the building would be hazardous for children and staff, attempts will be made to contact all parents through phone calls and emails using the phone and back-up numbers provided. It is important this information be kept up to date. Your cooperation in these types of situations is vital. For more information about the Emergency Preparedness Plan, please contact the Early Childhood Education director. In the case of a power outage, ECE will be closed.

### FIRE / TORNADO DRILLS

St. David's Center operations staff conducts monthly fire drills. Tornado drills occur once per month from April through September. All rooms will be checked by a designated staff person during every tornado drill, fire drill, and school-wide event to ensure no child has been left in a room unattended. Lockdown drills are conducted three times per year. Children are not informed of what the drill is for, and if they ask, teachers communicate they are practicing being safe.

### HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS

If parents see hazardous or dangerous conditions in the building or grounds, we ask that they please notify the staff at the front desk. St. David's Center staff are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all program participants and visitors.

## CLOSURES DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER AND UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES

During inclement weather, the decision to close, start programs late, or close early is a difficult one to make, with no easy answer. This decision will be made by the CEO, COO, the director of facilities and risk management, and the members of the executive leadership team as determined by the CEO. Our priority is the safety of our children, families, and staff.

The decision to close will be made as early as possible but only after enough time has passed to fully weigh all relevant weather information. If an early-morning decision is required, the decision will be made by the leadership team and communicated to all St. David's Center staff by 5:30 a.m., at which point further information will be communicated to parents via one or all of the following, as deemed necessary:

- TV Networks (KSTP, WCCO, KMSP (FOX 9), KARE 11).
  - Sign up with KSTP, WCCO, KMSP (FOX 9) or KARE 11 to receive text alerts if St. David's Center has a weather-related closure.
- St. David's Center's Facebook page, Instagram, and website, [www.stdavidscenter.org](http://www.stdavidscenter.org).
- An email to parent(s)/guardian(s).
- A text message through Kaymbu.

Some of the circumstances under which closures will be considered are as follows:

### Extreme Cold

"Extreme cold" is defined as a combined air temperature and wind chill of -35 degrees, based on the [NOAA wind chill chart](#). The rationale for a closure due to extreme cold is the high risk of frostbite in case of evacuation, fire, relocation, or similar circumstance.

### Severe Snow and Wind

"Severe snow and wind" is characterized by snow falling at a rate of one inch per hour during typical commuting hours, sustained over three or more hours, with winds over 25 mph. The reason for closures due to severe snow and wind is the increased danger for commuters traveling to/from St. David's Center.

When making closure decisions, we consider the safety of our families and staff, as well as the licensing requirements for student-teacher ratios.

### Other Extreme Conditions

We will be closed if buildings and/or grounds are compromised due to torrential rain/flooding, dangerous thunderstorms, tornadoes, or similar conditions. The reason for these types of closures is the increased danger on – or decreased functionality of – St. David's Center's premises. Further procedure information can be found in our Emergency Preparedness Plan.



# ABOUT ST. DAVID'S CENTER

**Mission:** Building relationships that nurture the development of every child and family.

**SERVICES & IMPACT**

- Early Childhood Education**  
200 children of all abilities, ages 18 months to five
- Early Intervention & Treatment**  
3,630 children with developmental or behavioral needs, ages birth through adolescence
- Community-Based Disability Services**  
270 individuals with enduring special needs, ages 2 through adulthood
- Parent & Professional Training & Consultation**  
200 parents and professionals

**Vision:** Tomorrow's strong, healthy, vibrant society in which every member fully contributes to its success.

St. David's Center  
Childhood Development

## AGENCY DESCRIPTION

St. David's Center is a regional leader in child and family development, working to create a healthy, vibrant society in which every member fully contributes to its success. We offer therapeutic, educational, and support services, including mental health and pediatric therapies, autism treatment, home visiting, an inclusive preschool, and disability services.

Over 4,000 children and families access these services at our two early intervention centers in Minneapolis and Minnetonka, more than 30 partner sites, and hundreds of homes across the community.

## GETTING INVOLVED

Nearly all programs at St. David's Center rely on charitable support.

Here are ways you can participate:

- **Volunteer:** We often need volunteers to support projects and events. If you are interested in volunteering – on your own or with a group of friends or colleagues – contact [volunteer@stdavidscenter.org](mailto:volunteer@stdavidscenter.org) to learn about opportunities.
- **Attend:** Stay tuned for information throughout the year about St. David's Center events, including our parent education series, annual gala, and fall festival.
- **Learn:** Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to learn more about St. David's Center, and read [our blog](#), written by St. David's Center staff.
- **Give:** Your gift to St. David's Center supports our multi-disciplinary approach, our commitment to innovation, and our ability to extend our reach in the community.
  - Give today via check, through stock donation, or online at [stdavidscenter.org/donate](http://stdavidscenter.org/donate),
  - To learn about more ways to give (including through AmazonSmile and corporate matching), [click here](#).



# MALTREATMENT OF MINORS MANDATED REPORTING

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As a licensed childcare center, all staff are mandated reporters and required to report any suspected abuse, neglect, or maltreatment of minors.

## **What to Report**

Maltreatment includes egregious harm, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, substantial child endangerment, threatened injury, and mental injury. For definitions, refer to [Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03](#). Maltreatment must be reported if you have witnessed or have reason to believe a child is being or has been maltreated within the last three years.

## **Who Must Report**

All staff who work in a licensed childcare facility are mandated reporters and are legally required (mandated) to report maltreatment. In addition, people who are not mandated reporters may voluntarily report maltreatment.

## **Where to Report**

If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.

Reports concerning suspected maltreatment of children, or other violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules, in facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, should be made to the Licensing Division's Central Intake line at 651-431-6600.

Incidents of suspected maltreatment of children occurring within a family, in the community, at a family childcare program, or in a child foster care home, should be reported to the local county social services agency at 612-348-3552 or local law enforcement at 952-939-8500

## **When to Report**

Mandated reporters must make a report to one of the agencies listed above immediately (as soon as possible but no longer than 24 hours).

## **Information to Report**

A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the maltreatment (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected maltreatment occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

## **Failure to Report**

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been maltreated and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor.

In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from a position allowing direct contact with, or access to, persons receiving services from programs, organizations, and/or agencies that are required to have individuals complete a background study by the Department of Human Services as listed in Minnesota Statutes, section 245C.03.

## **Retaliation Prohibited**

An employer of any mandated reporter is prohibited from retaliating against (getting back at):

- An employee for making a report in good faith.
- A child who is the subject of the report.

If an employer retaliates against an employee, the employer may be liable for damages and/or penalties.

## Staff Training

The license holder must train all mandated reporters on their reporting responsibilities, according to the training requirements in the statutes and rules governing the licensed program. The license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

## Provide Policy to Parents

For licensed childcare centers, the mandated reporting policy must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment and must be available upon request.

*The following sections only apply to license holders that serve children. This does not include family child foster care per [Minnesota Statutes 245A.66, subd. 1](#).*

## Internal Review

When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care.

The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:

- Related policies and procedures were followed.
- The policies and procedures were adequate.
- There is a need for additional staff training.
- The reported event is similar to past events with the children or services involved.
- There is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

## Primary and Secondary Person or Position to Ensure Reviews are Completed

The internal review will be completed by the ECE Program director. If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, the ECE Program's senior leadership will decide who will be responsible for completing the internal review.

## Documentation of the Internal Review

The facility must document completion of the internal review and make internal reviews accessible to the commissioner immediately upon the commissioner's request.

## Corrective Action Plan

Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan to correct any current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder.

