

# Kids Kottage Learning Center



## Parent Handbook 2010—2011



## Our Mission

Our mission is to accompany the children entrusted to us on their journey of growth and exploration. Kids Kottage will be a place where all children will be able to identify with their culture through cross-cultural learning activities and a multi-cultural staff. We will continually strive to provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment that encourages the development of each child. Your child's early development begins at home, Kids Kottage is here to assist families with balancing home and work responsibilities by providing your child with an environment rich in warmth, love, learning and play.

Our commitment is to:

- Provide a state of the art facility and an affordable early childhood program that will promote academic achievement and success,
- Create an environment that values its employees and respects their dignity, while encouraging professionalism and growth,
- Create partnerships with the families and communities we serve,
- Build a strong organization that will enable us to provide outstanding services.
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## **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

Kids Kottage is a state of the art facility. We strive to create and maintain a "home away from home" atmosphere in which the children feel valued and are treated with respect. Our program is designed to provide childcare of the highest quality, ensuring a secure, caring, supportive and nurturing environment. We understand that each child is special and respect each child's heritage. We encourage the development of ethnic pride, self-confidence, and the joy of learning. We are dedicated to forming strong and positive partnerships between our families, staff members and the communities we serve.

We believe that a child's day must include gentle guidance, personal attention, and developmentally appropriate practices and activities. Children learn best in a warm, nurturing, safe environment in which individual and cultural differences are valued.

We provide a program that ensures positive growth in cognitive, social, emotional, creative and physical development. Our program promotes positive self-discipline, self-image and cooperation in each child.

## **STATE LICENSING**

Kids Kottage Learning Center, Inc. is licensed by the State of New Jersey, Division of Youth and Family Services, Bureau of Licensing. Licensing is reviewed annually and renewed every three years. The current licensing manual is located in the Director's office. You have the right to review the manual at any time.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Within Kids Kottage, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of Kids Kottage who have a "need to know" in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as Kids Kottage strives to protect everyone's right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and health related information of anyone associated with Kids Kottage.

Outside of Kids Kottage, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of Kids Kottage, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

## **VIOLATIONS OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY:**

Kids Kottage takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the agency. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children,

families and employees associated with Kids Kottage. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents for information which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

### **PRE-ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Each child is required to complete a pre-enrollment packet of information. This packet is to be returned to the center's office one week prior to the child's first day of attendance. All children are required to have a complete up to date immunization record on file at Kids Kottage. This is per our licensing regulations. If you have chosen not to have your child immunized, please ask the center director for an immunization waiver form. Immunizations may be waived for certain reasons. Please discuss this with the center director to determine whether you have the right to be enrolled and not have your child immunized. Parents are required to have a waiver on file in place of an immunization record, so that the center can maintain compliance with licensing regulations.

All children are required to have a physical examination form filled out by a licensed medical professional, in order to attend Kids Kottage. The Physical Examination Form, indicating the child's fitness to attend Kids Kottage, must be completed by a licensed healthcare professional and returned to the Center Director prior to child's first day of enrollment.

### **ENROLLMENT**

Enrollment at Kids Kottage is open to children from six (6) weeks through twelve (12) years. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability; and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, pregnancy or disability.

Parents can apply for enrollment of their child in Kids Kottage by completing the Registration Application and paying the \$75.00 Annual Registration Fee. The Registration Fee is non refundable.

Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed enrollment application, signed fee agreement, registration fee, deposit, immunization records and signed Parent Handbook receipt.

Continued enrollment at Kids Kottage is contingent upon the parent's, emergency contact persons' and child's adherence to the policies and procedures of Kids Kottage as outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

Parents are required to notify Kids Kottage immediately, should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter change.

### **SCHEDULING CHANGES**

Upon initial enrollment of your child, you will be asked to designate your child's attendance schedule. Switching of scheduled days is prohibited. Additional days may be added based on the rates quotes on the tuition schedule. Parents are required to let the Directors know at least 24 hours in advance if they are planning to bring a child for an additional day. Additional days will be granted based on enrollment and availability.

Children enrolled in the Before and After School Program may come to the center for a full day when their public/private school is not in session for an additional fee. Parents should schedule these extra days in advance with the Directors to ensure availability.

### **TUITION:**

All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a Tuition Agreement prior to enrollment of their child in Kids Kottage. Parents Are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence are to be addressed.

### **MONTHLY TUITION PAYMENTS**

Monthly tuition is due and payable in full on/or before the first of each calendar month. A \$35.00 late charge will be assessed for any payment after the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month (including weekends and holidays). If tuition payments are not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, access keys will be disabled and you will need to speak to a director regarding payments before you child can attend classes.

### **BI-MONTHLY TUITION**

Bi-monthly tuition is accepted only through Tuition Express. In order to have the option of paying on the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, parents/guardians must sign up for automatic payments to be debited from a credit card or checking account.

### **TUITION CREDITS**

There is no credit given for scheduled school holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather or acts of God.

Non payment of tuition is ground for immediate dismissal from the program. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment of Kids Kottage.

### **CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES**

Kids Kottage does accept child care subsidies. Parents of a subsidized child must complete all required paperwork on time to continue enrollment at Kids Kottage. Parents of subsidized children are also required to sign a tuition agreement, agreeing to be personally responsible for their contribution of tuition and full payment of tuition in the event they become ineligible to receive child care subsidies. Also, parents must make up the total difference of the monthly tuition,

i.e. if tuition payments are \$1000.00 per month and the subsidized amount is \$800.00, parents must pay the \$200.00 difference.

### **RETURNED CHECKS**

A \$35.00 insufficient funds fee will be charged for any return checks or direct debit. A \$35.00 late charge will also be applied if the check is returned after the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month making the tuition payment late.

### **SIBLING DISCOUNT**

Kids Kottage offers a multiple child discount for one or more siblings enrolled during the same school year. The youngest sibling pays the full tuition rate and each additional child's tuition is discounted 10%.

### **VACATION**

Kids Kottage is open year round. After twelve (12) months of continual attendance, families may take one (1) week of vacation as a tuition credit. After two (2) years of continual attendance, families may take two (2) weeks vacation as a tuition credit. All vacation requests must be made in writing and pre-approved by the Directors at least two (2) weeks in advance. Tuition credits are non-refundable and non-transferable. In addition, the credit can not be accumulated, year to year. Additional time is granted under extreme emergencies, i.e. death and the need to travel out of country.

### **HOLIDAYS**

The center will be closed in observance of various holidays throughout the year. The center will provide you with a listing of all holiday closings.

### **EMERGENCY CLOSING AND INCLEMENT WEATHER INFORMATION**

In the event of an emergency closing, delayed opening and/or inclement weather, all announcements will be made on Kids Kottage's voice mail (1-609-371-0439 option 14) between 5:30am - 6:00 am.

Should the school need to close in the middle of the day, the school staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick up arrangements can be made. Staff will notify the parents or emergency contact person at the time of the call; of the pick up location should the children need to be evacuated from the child care center. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicted. Should the center need to close for any reason, tuition will not be refunded.

### **DISENROLLMENT**

Initial and continued enrollment will be at the discretion of Kids Kottage based upon the best interest of the child, the expectation that he/she will benefit from the program, and the welfare of the other enrolled children. Kids Kottage reserves the

right to withdraw a child from the program as deemed appropriate or necessary without advance notice.

Parents will be refunded any unused tuition within two weeks of the dismissal. An agency check will be mailed to the address indicated in the child's file. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the child's file within one week of the dismissal.

### **WITHDRAWAL**

Two weeks written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason. If the proper notice is given, any unused tuition and deposit will be refunded within thirty days of the withdrawal. If the required notice is not given, parents will be charged tuition for two additional weeks and will not have their deposit refunded.

### **PARENT'S RIGHTS TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS**

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at Kids Kottage, as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) Kids Kottage must be provided with a **Certified Copy** of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

**In the absence of a court order** on file with Kids Kottage, **both** parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Kids Kottage can not, without a court order, limit the access of a one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, Kids Kottage suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. Kids Kottage staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the Center Director, and are allowed in the child care facility only at the discretion of the Center Director. An employee of Kids Kottage will accompany visitors at all times, throughout the center.

Kids Kottage will dismiss any child whose parent is prohibited from entering upon agency property. Due to the parents' right to immediate access policy, as well as state and federal regulations, Kids Kottage can not have a child at the agency when the child's parent is prohibited access. Kids Kottage will not agree to any request to

maintain a child's enrollment even if the parent agrees to stay out of the center. Such an agreement is a violation of the law and will not be entertained.

### **COURT ORDERS EFFECTING ENROLLED CHILDREN**

In cases where an enrolled child is the subject of a court order (ex... Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) Kids Kottage must be provided with a **Certified Copy** of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

**In the absence of a court order on file with Kids Kottage administration, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law.** Kids Kottage can not, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself, where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, Kids Kottage suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued.

If conflicting court orders are presented, the most recently dated court order will be followed.

Once presented with a Protection from Abuse Order or a Restraining Order, Kids Kottage is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in affect. Employees of Kids Kottage can not, at the request of anyone, except the issuing judge, allow a Protection from Abuse Order and/or a Restraining Order to be violated. Kids Kottage will report any violations of these orders to the court.

### **ARRIVAL PROCEDURES**

Upon arrival at Kids Kottage, the parents or the adult dropping the child off must sign the child into care on the computer located in the reception area. All authorized parents/guardians will be assigned a unique code to enter the building using a keyless entry system. Children are required to be escorted by their parent or the adult dropping them off, to their designated classroom or assigned area of the building with the supervising staff member. To ensure that the Center has a clear transfer of responsibility, make sure that a staff member is fully aware of your child's arrival each day. Children are required by law to be supervised at all times while in the child care facility. Parents are required to help children put away their outerwear and get settled for the day. Kids Kottage encourages parents to spend time with their children in the morning to make for a smooth transition. If there is anything that the staff can do to assist with the morning routine, please do not hesitate to ask.

At arrival, parents are required to follow the Medication Policy if a child must receive medication during the course of the day.



Parents are required to notify the child's teacher or Center Director of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. The parent must present the special instructions in the form of a letter and verbally discuss them with either the classroom teacher or Center Director. 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 concern which the child care providers should be aware to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

### **NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE**

Parents are required to inform the center by 9:00 am if a child will not be at the center on a scheduled day. This will enable the center to more effectively maintain appropriate ratios and help the classroom teacher effectively plan for the day.

If your child is ill, we request that you notify the center director not only of the absence, but also of the nature of the illness. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the Directors, so that the parents of the children in the school maybe notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared.

Kids Kottage will take all measures necessary to protect your child's

Parents who know in advance that a child will be late, are required to notify the center by 9:00 am; so we can maintain the appropriate number of employees to ensure that ratios are met.

### **PICK-UP AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES**

Parents or other authorized adult are required to sign their child out of care on the computer located in the reception area. Once a parent signs their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on agency premises. To ensure that the Center has a clear transfer of responsibility, make sure that a staff member is fully aware of your child's departure each day. The parent may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms and/or playground. When picking up children at the end of the day, feel free to spend time and talk with our teachers about your child's day. Be sure to read all notices in your child's cubby and on the parent message board located in your child's classroom.

Parents or persons designated to act "in loco parentis" are required to sign any incident/accident reports from the day at pick-up. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you or other authorized adult at pick-up.

### **LATE PICK-UP**

The center closes at 7:00 pm. A \$20.00 late fee will be charged for the first 15 minute period. In addition, a \$10.00 fee will be assessed for each addition a 15 minute period.

### **PERSONS APPEARING TO BE IMPAIRED BY DRUGS/ALCOHOL AT PICK-UP**

The staff of Kids Kottage will contact local police and/or the other custodial parent should a parent appear to the staff of Kids Kottage to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The parent's right to immediate access does not permit the agency from denying a custodial parent access to their child even if the parent is or appears to be impaired. However, Kids Kottage staff will delay the impaired parent as long as possible, while contacting the other parent, the local police and Child Protective Services.

Any other authorized person who attempts to pick-up a child, and appears to the staff of Kids Kottage to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be denied access to the child. The staff of Kids Kottage will contact the child's parents, local police and Child Protective Services to notify them of the situation.

### **EMERGENCY CONTACT/CONSENT FOR CHILD CARE RELEASE**

At enrollment, parents will be presented with an Emergency Contact /Consent for Child Release form. Parents are encouraged to include on this form any, and all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick-up their child from Kids Kottage. In an emergency situation the child's parents will be called first. If they can not be reached staff will call the persons listed on this form until someone can be reached.

Should the staff contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list.

Parents do need to be listed on the Emergency Contact Form in the Primary Release section. In the Non-Parental/Guardian Release section parents do not need to be listed. The nature of the parental relationship affords the parents (in the absence of a court order indicating otherwise) the right to pick-up their child.

Parents will be asked to determine which persons (if any) on the Emergency Contact/Consent for Child Release Form has the right to act "In Loco Parentis." In Loco Parentis status affords the pick up person the right to discuss confidential information about the child's day including but not limited to, incident/accident reports, and behavior issues. In the absence of this designation the people on the Emergency Contact/Consent for Child Release Form are only afforded the right to pick up the child. Staff is not permitted to discuss the child's day with them.

The persons on the Emergency Contact/Consent for Child Release form will be required to provide a password and photo identification prior to the agency releasing the child. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

All changes and/or additions to the Emergency Contact/Consent for Child Release form must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form.

Kids Kottage reserves the right to refuse/ban any person listed on the Emergency Contact/Consent for Release Form for any reason, including but not limited to violations of the policies/procedures contained herein. It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent(s) to inform each person on the Emergency Contact/Consent for Release Form of the policies/procedures contained herein.

### **MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT**

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any **suspicion** of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of Kids Kottage are considered mandated reporters, under this law. The employees of Kids Kottage 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. We at Kids Kottage take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff of Kids Kottage can not be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

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 needs of a disabled child
- ◆ Sending a sick child to school over medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside.
- ◆ Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

## **PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

Kids Kottage requires the parents of enrolled children at all times, to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of Kids Kottage 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 Kids Kottage but, is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the center. Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment.

### **SWEARING/CURSING:**

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on agency property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

### **THREATENING OF EMPLOYEES, CHILDREN OTHER PARENTS OR ADULTS ASSOCIATED WITH KIDS KOTTAGE:**

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In today's society Kids Kottage can not afford to sit by idly while threats are made. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the agency will not assume the risk of a second chance.

### **PHYSICAL/VERBAL PUNISHMENT OF YOUR CHILD OR OTHER CHILDREN AT KIDS KOTTAGE:**

While Kids Kottage does not necessarily support nor condone corporal punishment of children, such acts are not permitted in the child care facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or Center Directors.

Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or Directors' attention. At that point, the

teacher and/or Directors will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, teachers and/or the Directors' are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our agency have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the center.

**SMOKING:**

For the health of all Kids Kottage employees, children and associates, smoking is prohibited in the building.

**VIOLATIONS OF THE SAFETY POLICY:**

Parents are required to follow all safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed not as mere inconveniences, but to protect the welfare and best interest of the employees, children and associates of Kids Kottage. Please be particularly mindful of Kids Kottage's entrance procedures. We all like to be polite. However, we need to be careful to not allow unauthorized individuals into the center. Holding the door open for the person following you may, in fact, be polite; however that person may not be authorized to enter the premises. Security procedures are only as strong as the weakest person in our organizational chain. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any breaches to the Center Directors.

**CONFRONTATIONAL INTERACTION WITH EMPLOYEES, OTHER PARENTS OR ASSOCIATES OF KIDS KOTTAGE:**

While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of Kids Kottage 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.

Kids Kottage reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause.

Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include but are not limited to:

1. Lack of staff to maintain appropriate Staff to Child Ratios as determined by State Licensing Regulations.
2. The need to maintain compliance with Licensing Regulations.
3. Staff deems the child to ill to attend.
4. Domestic Situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff or other children enrolled at Kids Kottage if the child were to be present at the center.
5. Parent's failure to maintain accurate, up to date records.
6. Parents' failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion.

Parents will be reimbursed tuition for days when their child is refused admission to the program.

## **CURRICULUM**

Kids Kottage is a state of the art facility that provides childcare of the highest quality. We understand the importance of appropriate educational experiences and their role in the success of guiding children on his or her path to "developing the future". We believe that a child's day must include gentle guidance, personal attention, and developmentally appropriate practices and activities. Children learn best in a warm, nurturing, safe environment in which individual and cultural differences are valued.

Our curriculum team has developed a program that includes activities that both challenge and encourage children to grow and learn at his or her own pace with attention to each child's differing needs and interests. Our activities and classroom structures have been carefully designed to meet the developmental capabilities of each child. We initiate learning through a play-based, thematic and multicultural manner. Children have the freedom to select from different learning stations in their classrooms. Each classroom's learning stations include: Music, Science, Math, Library, Art, Manipulatives, Dramatic Play, Woodworking and Sensory. We recognize that young children learn through hands-on experiences and believe that your child's development will be enhanced by our approach of making the learning process fun. Our program ensures positive growth in cognitive, social, emotional, creative and physical development. Our curriculum promotes positive self-discipline, self-image and cooperation in each child.

## **NAP/REST TIME**

Kids Kottage rest policy is based upon State licensing requirements. All children, under the age of five who remain at the center for four or more consecutive hours are required to rest for 30 minutes. Children are never told they must sleep. After 30 minutes, children that are awake are given the opportunity to select quiet activities to occupy themselves while their classmates rest.

Mats or cots are provided for each individual child. Families are responsible for providing a clean crib-sized sheet and a small blanket clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. Sheets and blankets are returned to you at the end of each week for laundering. Please be certain to return your child's freshly laundered bedding at the start of each week.

## **BIRTHDAY/HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Birthdays are special occasions for the family and the classroom community. If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday and send a special treat please arrange this ahead of time with your child's teacher.

## **COMMUNICATION AND PARENT PARTICIPATION**

It is our function as teachers to support and facilitate the development and education of your children. We need your input and value your suggestions and observations. Because you are the expert when it comes to knowing your child, we appreciate your perceptions, feelings and observations about your child. We welcome parents to participate in the center's daily activities, special events, volunteer to share a special talent with your child's class, join us on a field trip as a chaperone or just stop by for a visit during the day.

### **ORIENTATION**

Every September, Kids Kottage hosts an informative orientation meeting for families of children enrolled. Parents and/or guardians have the opportunity to meet and talk with members of the current staff. Staff members explain and give examples of the curriculum, activities, and learning outcomes. Attendance at this important meeting is strongly recommended for both new and returning families.

### **WEB CAM/ON-LINE VIEWING**

Children's view is a webcam service that allows parents to view their child's daily activities and classroom online using a secure password. This service is included in your monthly tuition.

### **DAILY INFORMATION SHEETS**

Each day parents of our infants and toddlers will receive "All About Me" detailed reports of their child's eating, sleeping and developmental activities. Pre School through School Age classes will post Kottage Chat sheets for parents.

### **NEWSLETTERS**

Monthly newsletters are provided to all families. Our newsletters include: center activities, upcoming special events, center reminders, health and safety tips, etc.

### **SCHOOL PICTURES**

Individual and class pictures will be taken during the year by a professional photographer. Parents will have the opportunity to purchase their children's portraits.

### **GRADUATION**

Our Pre-K and Kindergarten classes will participate in a graduation ceremony in June. Please see the Directors for more information.

## **LESSON PLANS**

Lesson plans are posted weekly on the parent board in each classroom. The weekly plan lists detailed activities that the children will participate in. These include the weekly theme, sensory experiences, art, math, science, language, motor skills as well as stories, songs, and other activities.

## **PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parent/teacher conferences will be offered two times during the academic year to discuss the development and progress of each individual child. Conferences also provide an opportunity for you to share your child's interests and home activities. A parent or teacher may request additional conferences at any other time during the year. We feel open, two-way communication is an essential part of our partnership with you.

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

Annually we ask all of our families to complete a program evaluation. Your participation in the questionnaire enables us to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of our program, to make improvements as needed, and to monitor how efficiently we are meeting all of our family's needs. Your cooperation is appreciated.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Kids Kottage's approach to discipline requires positive and developmentally appropriate techniques that ensure a child's physical and psychological safety. We use a variety of positive guidance techniques including problem solving, making choices, cooperation, and redirecting behavior in a positive manner. Our goal is to help children develop and internalize a sense of autonomy, self-control, and cooperative behavior. Our staff speaks to children at their eye level and actively listens to both their verbal and non-verbal messages. We model appropriate behavior, and set an example for children to follow. Under each staff member's guidance children learn to solve their conflicts and disagreements. The classroom rules and consequences are always age appropriate, definable, enforceable and consistent. We focus on the behavior, not the child. We validate children's positive behavior, promote confidence in their ability, and may ignore a child's negative behavior if it is considered not to be harmful to themselves or others.

At times we may find it necessary to separate a child from a situation to ensure the safety of all the children. If this occurs, a staff member will remove the child from only that particular area of the classroom and remain with the child to discuss the behavior. Staff will redirect the child until he/she has regained his or her self-control. When the child feels in control he/she may return to all areas of the room.

Kids Kottage discipline policy does not permit hitting, abusive language, or ridicule. Discipline will not be associated with withholding outdoor activities, food, rest, or emotional response.



## **TOYS FROM HOME**

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and loss, children are not permitted to bring in toys from home, unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum.

Children in classrooms with nap/rest time are permitted to include with their bedding supplies, one plush/non-musical toy with which to nap/rest. This toy is to be placed with the bedding supplies and use of it will only be allowed at nap/rest time.

## **APPROPRIATE CLOTHING AND EXTRA CLOTHES**

Children are engaged in various activities during the course of the day; some of these activities can be messy, and/or athletic in nature. Additionally, children are engaged in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children are required to be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable clothing.

Coats, hats, gloves, scarves and winter boots must be provided in the winter months. It is not necessary for the children to wear their winter boots to school. Teachers will change the children into their winter boots when they go outdoors.

Children are not permitted to wear open toed, and/or open backed shoes. The most appropriate type of shoes for participation in school activities are rubber-soled, sneakers/tennis shoes.

Children ages 3 years through 5 are required to have one (1) seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the center at all times. Children under 3 years of age are required to have two seasonably and size appropriate, complete changes of clothing at the center at all times. A complete change of clothing includes: shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes. Teachers will post reminders for parents to update changes of clothing as the weather begins to change.

All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. This includes: coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and boots. Kids Kottage is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Kids Kottage frequently supplements the in class curriculum with off premise field trips. Parents are required to give written permission for their child to attend each field trip. Notification of a field trip will be sent home in advance of the trip, with all pertinent trip information including, destination, date, time, reason for trip, cost, and mode of transportation. Accompanying the notification paper, teachers will include a permission slip to be filled out, signed, and returned to the teacher prior to the date of the trip. The field trip permission slip must be filled out completely and accurately, and all trip costs must be paid in advance in order for your child to attend.

If parents wish to attend the trip with their child, they should discuss attending with the classroom teacher or Director. Kids Kottage provides all required supervision for all field trips, but always invites and welcomes parents to attend.

Parents will not be permitted to transport any child, other than their own, on a Kids Kottage sponsored trip.

If your child is not scheduled to attend on the day of a field trip and you wish for your child to participate in the trip, please discuss this with your child's teacher at least three days prior to the date of the trip. Your child will be permitted to attend if required ratios can be maintained with his/her addition to the class. An additional day fee of as well as the cost of the trip and signed permission slip will be due prior to the date of the trip.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY** **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Kids Kottage follows all health/communicable disease policies as outlined in the American Academy of Pediatrics Model Health Policies and Procedures Manual. A copy of this manual is on file with the Center Director and is available upon request for review.

Parents are required to pick up an ill child within one (1) hour of notification by phone. If a parent is reached, but can not pick their child up within one (1) hour, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the emergency contact list once a parent is reached. If a parent can not be reached, the staff will begin to call the people listed on the emergency contact form, until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the contagious period for a specific illness are based on the recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children must present a doctor's note stating they are no longer contagious and can return to the program. Kids Kottage reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the nurse or designee believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

Children excluded from the program due to a fever may not return to the program until they are fever free, without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours. If your child is sent home due to a fever, he/she is not permitted to return to the program the following day at a minimum. A fever is defined as a temperature reading on a thermometer of at least 100.5° degrees Fahrenheit or more as taken under the arm.

Children are required to be excluded from the program for loose bowels or diarrhea which occur 3 or more times in a 24 hours period of time. Children may return to the program when normal bowel movements resume.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the center. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with faculty on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the directors, so that the parents of the children in the school maybe notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. Kids Kottage will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. You are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not) the reason for your child's absence from school.

### **Excludable Communicable Diseases**

**Respiratory Illnesses:** Chicken Pox, German Measles\*, Hemophilus Influenzae\*, Measles\*, Meningococcus\*, Mumps\*, Strep Throat, Tuberculosis\*, Whooping Cough\*

#### **Gastro-Intestinal Illnesses:**

Campylobacter\*, Escherichia coli\*, Giardia Lamblia\*, Hepatitis A\*, Salmonella\*, Shigella\*

#### **Contact Illnesses:**

Impetigo, Lice, Scabies

**\*Reportable diseases, as specified in N.J.A.C. 10:122-27, 10 (a)**

If your child is exposed to any excludable disease at the Center, it will be posted for your notification. If we are aware that a child in the Center has a communicable disease or infection, we will contact all the families to indicate that their children may have been exposed and to inform them of possible symptoms to watch for.

### **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION**

The staff of Kids Kottage will administer medicine to the child upon written authorization by the parent or guardian. Written authorization including dose and time medication is to be administered must be made by completing the "Authorization to Administer Medicine" form located in the Nurse's Office. All medications must be stored in the locked medication box or refrigerator located in the Nurse's Office. **State Law requires that all prescription medication must be in its original container; be labeled with the full pharmacy label (if prescription medicine); be in such condition that the name of the medication and the directions for use are clearly readable on the container (if non-prescription medicine); have the child's first and last name clearly appear on the container; include directions to administer the medication; and, be administered to the child with written parental**

permission and as stated on the label directions or as amended by written notice of a physician. Medication must be taken home at the end of each day. Medication not taken home at the end of the week will be discarded.

### **CHILDREN WITH SEVERE ALLERGIES**

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide a signed copy of the "Authorization For Emergency Care for Children with Severe Allergies" form, detailing any allergies, food or otherwise, from which their child suffers, at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. This form must be completely filled out by the child's physician and parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and must be updated every six months, or more frequently, as needed. In addition to this form, parents must provide a copy of any additional physician's orders and procedural guidelines relating to the prevention and treatment of the child's allergy. This form can be obtained by request from the Nurse or the Directors.

Parents must also execute a "Release and Waiver of Liability for Administering Emergency Treatment to Children with Severe Allergies" form. This form releases Kids Kottage from liability for administering treatment to children with severe allergies and taking other necessary actions set forth in the "Authorization for Emergency Care for Children with Severe Allergies" form, provided Kids Kottage exercises reasonable care in taking such actions.

Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction must be provided in accordance with the Medication Policy detailed herein.

### **BITING**

Kids Kottage recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through 2 ½ year old classrooms. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their children may be bit, or will bite another child. The staff understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations which, provoke, or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. The staff will not punish, or harshly discipline children in the younger classrooms for biting behavior; they will simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior.

Children older than 3 years of age, may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. For children in this age group who bite, the staff will use the discipline procedures outlined in the discipline section of this handbook, as well as observe the child to determine what provokes or elicits this inappropriate behavior. If the child continues to bite, we reserve the right to remove the child from the center. The safety of all of the children in the program is of the utmost concern of Kids Kottage.

Parents will be notified by incident/accident report that a biting incident occurred during the course of the day. The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is considered to be confidential and can not be disclosed. The staff of Kids Kottage can not discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other party. It is recommended that any child involved in a biting incident be seen by their family physician if the parents are concerned about communicable diseases possibly resulting from the biting incident.

### **FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS**

Kids Kottage conducts monthly fire and emergency/evacuation drills. Parents, staff and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation, parents may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into the program. Parents may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe-zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real fire/emergency situation, the director or designate will inform each classroom teacher that the school will be closing. At this time any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone of the situation.

Parents wishing to sign their child out of the program during a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation are expected to have patience with the staff as they are trying to maintain order during an often hectic and dangerous situation. If the center is in the midst of a fire/emergency drill, parents will be required to wait until the drill is completed and the staff and children are returned to the building to sign their child out of the program. If the center is having a real fire/emergency situation, parents will be asked to wait until the director or designee has accounted for all staff and children and gives the staff permission to release children. Once again, it is important for parents and staff to work together, remain calm, and cooperate with the fire/emergency personnel and center administration during these important and critical situations.

### **ALTERNATE SAFE LOCATION**

Should the administration of Kids Kottage or any emergency services personnel determine the building which houses the child care agency to be dangerous to be occupied, the staff and children will be taken by East Windsor Township Police Department to a designated safe location. Once the children are assembled, the staff will begin contacting parents or emergency contact persons for pick up.

## **INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTS**

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident during the course of the school day, a staff member will complete an Incident/Accident Report. The Incident/Accident Report will be put in the child's cubby.

Parents or persons designated to act "in loco parentis" are required to sign any incident/accident reports from the day at pick-up. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pick-up. However, should 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. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day.

Should a person other than the parent or one designated to act "in loco parentis" pick-up the child, a parent or person designated to act "in loco parentis" must sign the Incident/Accident Report and return a copy to the center director within 24 hours.

## **FOODS**

### **Breakfast, Lunch and Snacks**

A healthy breakfast (for children arriving before 8:30 am), and a nutritious snack for both mid morning and mid afternoon will be served family style for all children in our toddler through Kindergarten classrooms. The staff will accompany the children during meals and snack and engage them in meaningful conversations. We use this opportunity to assist the children as they learn to pour their own juice or milk from child sized containers. If your child has special dietary restrictions or food allergies, please indicate on your child's enrollment form.

Families are required to provide a nutritious lunch for their child. Any uneaten lunch will be sent home in your child's lunchbox so you will know just how much your child has eaten each day.

Kids Kottage offers an optional hot lunch program at an additional cost. Please see the Director for menu selections and more information.

## **FOOD GUIDELINES:**

- For special occasions such as cultural activities or birthdays, perishable food brought from home to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package. Baked goods may be made at home if they are fully cooked, and are made with freshly purchased ingredients. Please be sure there is enough for all children in the child's class.
- Round firm foods that might lodge in the throat of a child less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include whole grapes, hot dogs, popcorn, peanuts, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

- Please do not send glass bottles, candy, gum, soda, or "junk food" items. These foods will remain unopened and will be sent home at the end of the day.
- Lunch brought from home should be nutritious and well balanced. An insulated lunch container with a thermos is preferred. We also have a microwave for heating foods and a refrigerator for keeping drinks cold.
- For lunch, we recommends  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup milk, 1 serving of lean meat, fish, poultry, cheese or protein, 2 fruits and/or vegetables, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  slice of bread or starch alternative.
- All food items must be labeled with your child's name. Kids Kottage does not permit children to share or exchange food items.
- For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide written notification, on your child's enrollment form, of any allergies (food or otherwise), with instruction for treatment should a child have an allergic reaction. Please refer to the Health and Safety Policies contained herein for further information.

#### **INFANT THROUGH TODDLER AGE GROUPS:**

Children enrolled in the infant through toddler classrooms must have all food items for consumption prepared and labeled each day the child is in attendance. This includes formula/breastmilk bottles, baby food, snacks, and juice bottles. Be sure to prepare one more bottle than you think your child will consume in a day to assure that your child won't run out. Prepared bottles must be stored in the designated refrigerator and will be warmed in a water bath prior to feeding. No bottles will be microwaved. All bottles must be taken home by the parents each night to be washed.

Parents must provide and label all utensils and bowls necessary for feedings. Children will not be fed directly from baby food jars, nor will the staff use previously opened baby food. Staff will mix baby cereal just prior to feedings. All unused food remaining after a feeding will be discarded.

Staff will complete a daily chart for each child detailing for the parent what the child ate, when, and how much.

Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come to the center during the day to feed their child. Appropriate, private feeding locations will be made available. Please discuss your desire to come to the center to breastfeed your child with the classroom teacher.

#### **PRE SCHOOL AND OLDER CLASSROOMS:**

Kids Kottage offers children a morning snack and an afternoon snack. Kids Kottage serves breakfast for children arriving at the center before 8:45 am.

All meals are served family style, with the children sitting at tables, to promote good manners, eating habits and socialization skills. Staff will encourage children to eat their main entrée first, followed by healthy snacks.

Kids Kottage prohibits any food item in glass containers (except Baby food in the infant classrooms). These can be safety hazards for the children and staff.

Lunches containing milk, cheese, yogurt, and/or other food items requiring refrigeration should be placed, by the parent, in the refrigerator designated for your child's classroom's use. To locate which refrigerator is designated for each classroom, ask your child's teacher.

All food items provided in your child's lunch must be labeled with your child's name.

### **FIREARMS AND WEAPONS**

At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of Firearm, Ammunitions and/or Weapon on agency property for any reason. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the program.



PARENT/GUARDIAN RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
OF PARENT HANDBOOK

I/We, acknowledge that I/We have received a copy of Kids Kottage Learning Center's Parent Handbook and have been given the opportunity to read the manual and ask questions about and understand the policies contained therein. 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 Kids Kottage and the parents. Kids Kottage reserves the right to alter, amend, or otherwise modify these guidelines, in its sole discretion, without prior notice.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited October, 2007

# Welcome



**Dear Families,**

Welcome to Kids Kottage Learning Center, Inc. We employ a team of childcare professionals that are truly committed to providing childcare of the highest quality, ensuring a safe, secure environment and the finest educational experiences. We look forward to sharing in the intellectual, physical, emotional and social development of your child.

This parent Handbook serves as a guide and provides general information about Kids Kottage Learning Center's programs, policies and procedures. Please discuss any questions regarding this handbook with the Directors.

Thank you for choosing Kids Kottage. Together we can make this a great experience for everyone. We look forward to getting to know you and your child.

Please complete and return the Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment and Receipt page of this handbook (located at the end) and return with your completed Enrollment Packet prior to your child's enrollment date.

Sincerely,

Linda Smart and the Kids Kottage Family

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