



# PARENT HANDBOOK

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*~WELCOME TO THE APPLE ORCHARD FAMILY CHILDCARE~*

**INTRODUCTION**

As a working parent, you face the difficult challenge of balancing the demands of work with the needs of your family. Finding high quality childcare that is flexible to your work schedule is one of the most difficult tasks you will face.

**PURPOSE AND GOALS**

My goal is to provide a safe and secure environment where love abounds and where children can explore and learn from the world around them.

**PHILOSOPHY OF LEARNING**

My philosophy is that a warm and nurturing environment is made rich by hands on, play-learn opportunities. Children learn about themselves and their environment through their surroundings. From birth, babies are marvelous learners; immediately investigating the sights, sounds and feel of the world. Long before walking and talking, they are exploring their own bodily powers and what the world has to offer. Though much of a very young child's play, learning is self-motivated and self-directed. It is still necessary for caregivers to stimulate the child through individualized play-learning experiences in an enriched environment.

Children of all ages are given opportunities to learn through experiences with stories, songs, art, science, dramatic play, sensory materials and math activities. A preschool program designed for Family Childcare will also be provided for children age 2+ if the child is indeed ready for preschool.

**PARENT PARTICIPATION**

Occasionally I will invite parents to some special events each year such as their child's birthday party or special holiday parties. Additionally, you may participate by helping with a field trip or in any way you like. I'm always open to your suggestions and ideas.

**AGES SERVED AND OPERATING HOURS**

My childcare program is a year-round, full-day program serving children from 12 months to 5 years.

My operating hours are Monday – Thursday from 7am to 5:30pm, Friday from 7am to 5:00pm.

All families have CONTRACTED TIMES. Late fees will be charged for unauthorized early drop off times and authorized late pick-up times. One dollar per minute for the above occurrences will be charged and due within 24 hours. Additional five dollars (\$5) per minute will be charged if your child is picked up after closing time.

**INFANT CARE**

Infant care is a very specialized kind of childcare. It takes parents and caregivers working together in order to provide the very best care for your infant and for your infant to have a positive daycare experience!

Before attending daycare, infants MUST be trained to take milk/formula from a bottle. This all starts at home before your baby attends daycare. All breastmilk bottles MUST be premade. We are happy to make formula bottles for your infant; please leave three bottles and a can of formula. We will wash bottles daily. We will also let you know when your baby is ready to graduate to the next size bottle nipple for both breastfed and formula fed babies.

All infants are required to have the following: Bottles, two changes of clothing, diapers, pacifier, sleep sack, pack 'n play and all bedding for pack 'n play.

Once your infant reaches the following milestones, they will graduate to toddler care which means a drop in tuition. The following milestones must be met for this to occur: first birthday, walking, off the bottle and successfully using a sippy cup, able to successfully nap on a nap mat and able to feed themselves 100%.

### **HOLIDAYS AND CLOSURES**

The Apple Orchard Family Childcare will observe the following holidays: the daycare will be closed, and tuition will be required:

- New Year's Day
- National Family Childcare Providers Day (The Friday before Mother's Day)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve Day (Hours will be 7:00-Noon)

Holidays that fall on Saturday will be celebrated the Friday before. Holidays that fall on Sunday will be celebrated the Monday after. If there is any change in this schedule, written notification will be given in advance.

Regular tuition fees apply regardless of the observed holiday.

I also have two (2) paid sick days per year to use in the event I become ill. These will be used only in extreme situations and may not be used at all. I will use my absolute best judgment in the use of these days. These days also will not be carried over from year to year.

### **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

We love to celebrate birthdays at The Apple Orchard! Everyone should be celebrated on their special day! You may bring treats from home however.....NO CUPCAKES PLEASE! They are extremely messy and typically children do not eat them. We also allow lunch to be provided by the parents for all the children....pizza and Chick-fil-a are popular choices!

### **DETAILS REGARDING TUITION/REGISTRATION FEE**

A Registration Fee equal to one week's tuition will be required at the time of enrollment at The Apple Orchard Family Childcare. This fee may ONLY be applied to your child's first week of

care. If for ANY REASON your child does not attend The Apple Orchard, this fee is forfeited. The fee is used to secure your child's spot at The Apple Orchard. The tuition prices are for children in care 10 hours or LESS per day! The Apple Orchard DOES NOT care for children more than 10 hours per day. All tuition must be paid via our Brightwheel app. All tuition is due NO LATER than noon on Thursday. The day could change if there is a holiday in a particular week. Childcare will not be provided if tuition has not been paid in full and/or mutual arrangements have not been made between the parents and the provider. If tuition is not paid on time, a late fee of \$20 will be assessed for each day payment is not received. Payment may be made weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. If you decide to change your method of payment for any reason, I must have AT LEAST two week's written notification.

### **CONTRACTED HOURS**

Each family enrolled at The Apple Orchard Family Childcare has contracted hours. That means you have a specific drop off time and a specific pick up time. All early drop off fees and all late pick up fees will be based on these contracted hours. Contracted hours are important to keep us within ratio. Enrollment of your child MAY be based in part to what your contracted hours are. \$1 per minute for unannounced drop off time will be charged and \$1 per minute for unannounced pick up time. If a parent has a situation where they need to drop off early or pick up late (NOT after daycare hours) please ASK Ms. Julie ahead of time so we can make arrangements on our end.

### **DISENROLLMENT**

Children may continue in my care if their presence remains a positive experience for themselves and the rest of the group. If a child is not adjusting to group care, a meeting will be called. At that time, concerns will be addressed with the parents and a plan to solve them will be sought. If no workable plan is possible, I will have to ask for the child to be removed.

If a parent continually goes against my policies, shows disrespect to myself, other caregivers and other families or if we have a situation where we simply cannot meet eye to eye, it may be necessary to terminate childcare services at that time. The nature of the situation will determine whether immediate termination is necessary at that time.

A three-week written notice is required if you decide to withdraw your child from my care for any reason. Three weeks' tuition may be paid in lieu of notice.

### **FREE DAYS**

Each family will be given five (5) Free Days to be used for vacation days or days your child will not be in attendance. AT LEAST two week's written notice must be given if you plan to use any Free Days. Free Days WILL NOT be used when a child is not in attendance due to illness.

A child must be enrolled in my daycare for at least 90 days before any Free Days may be used unless discussed with me in advance.

Only one family may use Free Days on any given day. All requests for the use of Free Days must be made in writing (or email) and will be honored on a first come/first serve basis. Free Days may not be used when the provider has scheduled vacation, nor may they be used on the day of the provider's paid holiday. Paid holidays are listed above.

Provider will receive 14 Free Days (paid vacation) each calendar year.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Discipline is very important in a childcare setting! There must be clear rules and expectations that are reasonable for children to learn and understand. The Apple Orchard does not exercise Gentle Parenting. If you're not familiar with the true meaning of Gentle Parenting, I'd encourage you to research. Please do not misunderstand; NO ONE at The Apple Orchard will EVER physically discipline your child or belittle your child verbally.

Depending upon the age of the child will determine how we discipline. For example, for a younger child, redirection is typically what works best. For a child over two, they will be taught all our rules and that they need to be followed and respected. For an older child, a break away from play may be what is needed. Or perhaps if a child is having difficulty sharing a toy or is playing with a toy inappropriately the toy may be taken away.

If a child puts their hands on another child or teacher, kicks a child or teacher, pinches a child or teacher, bites a child or teacher or anything else physical, an Incident Report will be sent to the parents via our Brightwheel app.

If inappropriate behavior continues, a conference will need to take place between Ms. Julie and the parent(s). We will put together a discipline plan for your child and the parents and staff will work together to change the behavior. If the parents refuse to work with the staff or if the behavior continues,, this may be terms for termination of childcare services.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

MEDICAL FORMS will always be on file. Whenever a change is made regarding your child's health, I must have written documentation for your child's file.

**HEALTH PRACTICES** at The Apple Orchard are designed to minimize illness. They include many specific procedures regarding sanitation, hand washing, exclusion of sick children, etc. The Apple Orchard Family Childcare is a WELL-CHILD daycare home ~ very minimal exceptions will be exercised in the care of ill children. Please read through these policies very carefully and understand that working together to keep The Apple Orchard a healthy environment is paramount! Not communicating illness with the provider or being untruthful in ANY WAY regarding your child's health (including medication being given to your child before bringing the child to daycare without the provider's knowledge) will not be tolerated in any way and will result in immediate termination of childcare services.

Children do become ill, often at unpredictable and inconvenient times. Working parents often feel stressed when children are ill. But, as we work together, we can minimize illnesses and stress levels. Although it's unpleasant to consider, it's important to plan for sick childcare as children often get ill until their immunity strengthens. Information regarding a child's health or medication condition will be kept confidential. The exception to this rule would be in the event of a serious communicable illness being spread through the daycare home.

If symptoms of illness are present, you should NOT bring your child to daycare. If symptoms develop after you leave your child in my care, I will use my best judgment whether to continue care for the child. Any child who is suspected of being ill or becoming ill shall be immediately isolated from the group and shall be removed from daycare within one hour.

In the event you cannot pick up your child in this time frame, I will call the names listed on the Enrollment Form of people who have agreed to assume this responsibility for you.

MILDLY ILL CHILDREN who can participate normally in the activities of my daycare do not need to be routinely excluded. This could include children with MILD colds or teething.

To prevent illness from spreading, children may be kept out of care until their symptoms or conditions are gone.

A note from your physician may be helpful, however, will NOT be the final determination of your child's attendance in daycare. At the end of the day, Julie Rose and/or a representative of The Apple Orchard Family Childcare will have the final determination whether your child should be included in childcare for medical reasons. Exclusion from childcare may be:

- Fever with a change in behavior (irritable, restless, listless) and/or symptoms of an illness.
- Loose stools with two or more episodes.
- Vomiting with two or more episodes in the previous 24 hours.
- Conjunctivitis, also known as pink eye, with discharge or yellow/green discharge from the eyes.
- Undiagnosed rash.
- Evidence of severe illnesses such as lethargy, unusual sleepiness, prolonged crying, obvious discomfort, difficulty breathing, uncontrollable coughing or wheezing.
- Yellow or green discharge from the nose for more than three days.
- A specific contagious infection such as whooping cough, strep throat, head lice, scabies, chickenpox, impetigo, mumps, measles, ringworm, etc.
- **EAR INFECTIONS** ~ while an ear infection itself is not contagious, the bacteria that causes the infection is. Therefore, children must be on antibiotics for treatment of an ear infection for AT LEAST 24 hours before returning to childcare, regardless of if a fever is present.
- **FEVER FREE FOR AT LEAST 24 HOURS WITHOUT THE USE OF PAIN RELIEVER OR FEVER REDUCER BEFORE RETURNING TO CHILDCARE!**
- Many illnesses require exclusion for AT LEAST 24 hours after treatment has begun. Others may require a longer time of exclusion. I reserve the right to refuse to care for a child who I feel will put others at risk of illness.
- Please notify me when your child is ill so I can be alert to similar symptoms in other children. I will notify you of illnesses that may be present as well.
- If your child becomes acutely ill and requires immediate attention, I will call for paramedic help. Your signature on the Medical Authorization Form gives the hospital permission to care for your child. Notification will be provided when paramedics are attending to your child, unless circumstances allow for earlier notification.
- GI (gastrointestinal) related illnesses such as diarrhea and/or vomiting tend to spread like wildfire. To prevent further spread, children should not attend daycare until 48 hours after their last vomiting or diarrhea episode. Since GI illness can present in different forms, siblings of ill children are required to also be excluded from childcare during these specific outbreaks.

- If your child comes to daycare with a cough and they are unable to cover their cough, it will be necessary to put a mask on them. This would only apply to children age 2 and over.

### **WELL RESTED CHILDREN**

All children need to be able to participate in the activities of a normal daycare day. If your child is not well rested and too tired to participate, it may be necessary for them to stay home. It's very difficult to teach a tired toddler/preschooler.

### **MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM**

Molluscum Contagiosum is a virus we have been seeing more in the past five years. It is a rash that can start anywhere on the body. Please refer to the CDC website for very specific information on this virus. This condition can stay in the body for 1-3 years and can flair up at various times. Upon enrollment at The Apple Orchard, if your child has this condition, it is mandatory to let Ms. Julie know of this during the interview process. The protocol of The Apple Orchard is that, if there are no other symptoms, a child may attend IF AND ONLY IF any and all parts of the rash are covered. Again, BEFORE your child arrives, please contact Ms. Julie to discuss your child's particular situation. If your child has blisters or open sores, the rash is absolutely contagious, so THEY MUST BE COMPLETELY COVERED! Failure to advise Ms. Julie/The Apple Orchard Family Childcare that your child has this condition will result in immediate termination of childcare services.

If one sibling in the daycare is sick, the other sibling(s) must be excluded from daycare as well. It is nearly impossible to keep everyone in one household well.

### **MEDICATION**

Whenever possible, medication should be administered by the parents. When this is not possible, I will give medication according to the following guidelines:

- I will have a medication sign-in sheet that is required by 4C-Cincinnati for me to administer any type of medication to your child.
- The medicine is for a particular occurrence of illness. A prescription filled for a previous illness will not be administered if it is not current.
- Prescription medication must be in the original container. Bearing the prescription number, name of the medication, the date of the prescription was filled, the physician's name, the child's name and the directions for administration. I will not administer after the expiration date.
- Please indicate the exact date, time and dose of medication on our ChildPilot app.
- Non-prescriptive medication must be labeled with the child's name.
- It must be brought in the original container.
- I will administer the medication according to the label directions unless otherwise directed IN WRITING by the parent or a physician.
- I will not administer any medication without authorization from a parent. A dosage spoon, syringe or cup must accompany any medication brought into the daycare home.
- It is MANDATORY that you please notify me at drop-off time or via ChildPilot if your child is on ANY type of medication and what your child is on the medication for.

### **TIRED CHILDREN**

If your child is too tired to participate in the activities of a normal daycare day due to over tiredness, it will be necessary to keep your child home. If your child is brought to daycare and is over tired and unable to participate in the activities of a normal daycare day, parents will be contacted to pick the child up.

### **NON-DISCLOSED INFORMATION**

The Apple Orchard Family Childcare does not discriminate against any child or family due to race, religion or disability. That being said, if a family does not reveal a medical condition (epilepsy, seizure disorder, molluscum contagiosum or any other condition that is important in the care of your child) OR a disorder such as autism, ADD, ADHD, etc BEFORE THE CHILD STARTS CARE, this will be grounds for immediate termination. Your child is in our care for 40-50 hours per week. It is of the utmost importance that we have all information about your child to care for them in the best way possible.

### **NAPTIME/COMFORT ITEMS**

All children aged 5 and under will nap at The Apple Orchard, no exception! Parents will provide a nap mat with an attached pillow and blanket; no pack 'n plays will be used. Your child may bring comfort items to be used at naptime ONLY! We would prefer that all comfort items please stay at daycare and not be taken back and forth from home to daycare.

### **SHOE POLICY**

All children attending The Apple Orchard must either wear gym shoes or Crocs. No sandals, boots (unless they are snow boots worn at appropriate times) or other open toed/foot shoes. Our kids do a lot of outdoor running and other outdoor activities where safe shoes are a must. Please also be sure that your child's shoes also fit them properly and they are easy for your child or caregiver to put on or take off. Unfortunately, if your child does not have proper footwear on, they may not be able to participate in some activities.

### **LUNCHES**

Families have the option of packing their child's lunch each day or having their lunch prepared by Ms. Julie. If you choose to pack your child's lunch, please know we are happy to heat foods for your child. We ask that all food be prepared and ready to serve or heat. We also ask that you have food cut up in a manner that is appropriate for your child to eat. Finally, we ask, for safety purposes, that food not be packed in glass containers. The following foods are EXCLUDED in packed lunches: Candy, Cheetos, Cookies, Marshmallow Fluff, Nutella, Nuts and Popcorn.

### **SUPPLIES**

It is my desire to keep childcare costs at a reasonable level. It has been several years since I have had a tuition increase. However, like everything in our society, the cost to run my business is ever increasing. Each year I conduct a survey among my daycare families, asking if they'd prefer a tuition increase or bring supplies to the daycare. The response has always been the same.....provide supplies!

Each month it will be necessary to bring supplies for the sole use of The Apple Orchard. Currently, the supplies are baby wipes, Clorox wipes, Lysol spray, waterless hand sanitizer,



paper towels and tissues. It will not be necessary to bring all these items each month; usually two of these items is what is required.

If you fail to bring supplies for any month, I will purchase those supplies for you and provide you with a receipt for reimbursement along with an invoice for a \$10 convenience fee which must be paid immediately.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Saying goodbye can be difficult for both you and your child. I would suggest that as you drive to my home, you discuss with your child the fun activities and all the positives about coming to daycare: "oh today is Splash Day, that's going to be lots of fun"! Your body language and attitude about the daycare day may determine your child's attitude about starting their daycare day.

I recommend a speedy drop off and I have found that prolonging the goodbye not only makes it more difficult for your child but can affect the other children in my care as well. I do not wish to rush your goodbye time with your child; you may need to go in another part of my home and privately say goodbye to your child if other children are being affected by your prolonged presence.

### **PICKUP TIME**

Pick-up time is often hectic, with many parents arriving simultaneously to collect their children. Once you arrive at my home, you are responsible for your child, therefore, please see that your child respects the rules of my home. Running in and out of my home is a major NO NO! If you have other siblings with you, if possible, please try to keep those children in your vehicle as this can add to the confusion of pickup time. If it is necessary to bring siblings into my home, please keep them close by you.

If it becomes constant where you are dropping off or picking up at many different times than communicated, I will discuss perhaps a need to change your times. It is important that I be available to families when they arrive and at the same time, there are routines that I must maintain (infant feedings, bus schedules, etc) that I try to not interrupt. Please just send a quick message if you're running late! Thank you for your understanding!

### **PARKING**

Please try to pull into the driveway and not park in the street. Please pull into one side or the other of the driveway and up as far as possible. Four large vehicles can easily fit in my driveway at once if this is done. Please be mindful of our neighbors and do not block driveways or mailboxes.

If there is available space, please park in the driveway and pull up as far as possible. We should be able to get six vehicles in our driveway if this is done. As you know, we live in a residential neighborhood, and it is a priority that we do not inconvenience our neighbors. If you **MUST** park on the street, please do not park in our grass! Please also do not leave your garbage, food and cigarette butts in my driveway or yard! Finally, please take your children out of your vehicle as quickly as possible and bring them in. Additionally, at drop-off time, please get your children into your vehicle as quickly as possible. I know some parents are setting up car snacks, car drinks and car tablets; please make this **QUICK!** Thank you!

## **SUBSTITUTE CAREGIVERS**

Occasionally it may be necessary to have a substitute caregiver if it is necessary for me to be away from the daycare. Please know that the people I have as back-up caregivers are people that I trust 100% with your children, my home – my livelihood!!! All policies will be in place and enforced as if I were here. I will always TRY to introduce you to any substitute caregiver I may have or at least make that option available to you, if time permits. Otherwise, I would hope that you would trust my judgment that I would only choose someone who is going to only give the very best of care!

## **RESPECT**

As a family childcare provider of 30 years, I have had many families come through my doors giving me the opportunity to care for their children. Through these years, I have found there are so many different personalities and parenting styles. The most important thing is that you have come to me to provide quality childcare for your children. If you have signed the Childcare Contract, that means you have read The Parent Handbook. Respectfully you don't have to agree with or like any of my policies; however, if you signed the Childcare Contract that means you have agreed to abide by them. If there is a policy you have a question about, please feel free to RESPECTFULLY talk with me about said policy. You will always be treated with respect when coming into my home, however we are all human so if I ever make a mistake, I am always happy to apologize for that mistake. There is no room in my home for disrespect toward myself, other caregivers, other children, other parents and my family.

## **OVERVIEW**

I am very thankful for the opportunity to care for your children! I am always looking forward to getting to know your family and having a respectful and long-lasting relationship. I will always be honest with you and treat you with respect and I know you will treat me in the same manner. Please know that my door is always open if you have anything you wish to discuss regarding your child's care in my home. We all want what is the very best for your children and I'm sure we can work together to make that possible!