

THE GROWING TREE CHILD CARE



~ PARENT HANDBOOK ~

www.GrowingTreeChildcareLLC.com

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The Growing Tree Child Care GrowingTreeChildCareLLC.com

Parents,

Thank you for choosing **“The Growing Tree Child Care”** for your childcare needs. Enclosed you will find a copy of my *Parent Handbook*. There may seem like a lot of information, but this is to let you know what you can expect from me as your child’s care giver and in turn to also let you know what is expected once our contract is signed.

Please take the time to go over this handbook. We have viewed it during your interview, but this copy is for you to keep as a future reference. If, at any time you have a question regarding my policies, please don’t hesitate to ask. I want to have an open line of communication with you.

A new contract will be signed by all families at the beginning of each year. I reserve the right to make changes in policies as I deem necessary. You will be notified, in writing, of any changes that may occur. Every attempt will be made to give at least a two-week notice of new changes.

I look forward to welcoming your child/ren into our childcare/ preschool care.

Sincerely,
Tamara Gallagher



WE ARE ECO-FRIENDLY!

Young children are especially susceptible to the negative effects of modern life, including indoor air quality, heavy metal exposure, such as lead, chemical-heavy cleaning products, and poor-quality, sugar-laden food. Many eco-living families feel like they must sacrifice some of their green morals when placing their children in daycare or preschool. At The Growing Tree Childcare, we strive to keep an eco-friendly child care environment. This means we use eco-friendly cleaning supplies, we practice and teach children about the three “R’s” – Reduce, reuse and recycle, encourage and provide organic, local food when possible, and promote preserving the environment.



The Growing Tree



Child Care

Thank you for choosing **The Growing Tree Childcare** for your child. I started **The Growing Tree Childcare** recently, because of a strong desire to spend more time with my own children. It was this desire to spend more time with my own children and provide them with playmates in a safe and happy environment that led me to start my in-home child care. I live with my three great kids ages 10, 8 and 5, my mother, and our kitty Max.

As a family child care provider, my goal is to provide a safe and happy environment for each child that will stimulate their physical, intellectual, social and emotional growth at their own pace. I offer loving care that focuses on each child as a unique and wonderful individual and in doing so, builds self-esteem and respect for others.

As your partner in caring for your child, my interactions with you the parent are as important as my interaction with your child is. I encourage parent involvement in the child care setting.

For clarification purposes:

Regarding all statements in this policy book directed to the parent, the word parent shall mean parent or guardian or adult person responsible for the child's physical and financial well-being.

Infant - any child 16 months or younger

Toddler - any child 16 months to 30 months

Preschooler - any child 30 months to kindergarten

Kindergartner - any child attending kindergarten

School-ager - any child attending grades 1 or higher

All policies shall remain in effect as stated herein unless provider gives notice of change of any said policy in writing. Provider retains the right to enforce these policies at will. Lack of enforcement of a certain policy at any time does not indicate that the particular policy is no longer in effect.

THE GROWING TREE CHILD CARE

The following is a list of rules and regulations governing our child care agreement. Please read this handbook thoroughly as it contains many important policies and procedures that pertain to the care of your child. If you have any questions or need clarification, please ask.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

All necessary forms must be completed and returned to me before we will assume the responsibility of caring for you child. **NO EXCEPTIONS!** Please inform me immediately of any changes.

Listed below you will find the list of forms that you need to return to “The Growing Tree Child Care” before or on your child’s 1st day.

*Financial Agreement

*Birth Certificate

*Medical Consent

*Information Form

*Authorization to Leave Care

*Food Program Form

*Discipline Form

*Immunization Record (within 30 days)

AGES SERVED

The ages of the children that I care for are 6 weeks up through school age. If you reserve a spot for an older child and they don’t attend, you will still be required to pay for the spot. Please keep in mind that I do not provide transportation to and from school and my home. I am occasionally available for non-school days to care for other siblings. **Arrangements must be made in advance.** If you reserve a spot for an older child and they do not attend, you will still be required to pay the full time rate.

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

Child care is open Monday—Friday from 7:30a.m. to 5:15p.m. Child care is never offered on weekends, evenings or holidays. Child care may be arranged earlier or later than hours of operation for an additional weekly fee. Please remember that your fee is based on the hours you contract for, not the hours that I am open (For contracted drop-off/pick-up times, see separate child care agreement.) If you drop-off or pick-up before or after these scheduled hours, you will be charged an early/late fee of \$1.00 per minute per child per every minute that you are early or late. This also applies if your contracted drop off time is 8 a.m. even though my child care is open at 7:30 a.m. Please choose your drop off and pick up times carefully. **Late drop-off does not constitute late pick up.**

SIGN-IN SHEET

Parents will be required to sign-in and sign-out your child on the sheet provided for each child, each morning. This will also include a space for times. (See pick-up policy, page 12)

FEES

My fee for full-time child care is \$220.00 per week (\$235.00 for infants), and part-time care (when/if available) is \$55 per day (\$60/day for infants), whether your child is in attendance or not. This is for the normal business hours of 7:30 a.m.-5:15 p.m. five days per week. You are paying for a contracted spot for your child. I will be taking **2 weeks vacation per calendar year**. The dates of our vacation will be posted at least two months in advance. Regular payment rates apply for our vacations, your vacations, weeks with holidays, and provider's sick/personal days. Payments are to be made by 5:15 PM on the Friday prior to each work week. If the childcare is closed on Friday then payment is due on the last day of childcare of that previous week. A late fee of \$10.00 per day will be charged for payment not received by 5:15p.m. on Friday. A fee of \$30.00 will be charged for any returned checks along with any bank fees. Future tuition payments will then be paid in cash. When fees are not current, children will not be admitted. In the event that a Court Date has to be set for collection, the Parent/Guardian will be responsible for any and all fees associated with this. This is to include but is not limited to Late Fees, Loss of Wages and any Court Costs.

HOLIDAYS

We take 9-11 paid holidays. They are: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day. We occasionally take other days. If any of the above days fall on a Sat. or Sunday, we will either take the Friday prior, or the Monday after the holiday.

EMERGENCY

If there is an emergency during childcare hours, someone will notify you to pick up your child.

SNOW DAYS

We rarely take snow days, but if the weather is severe, we will close to allow staff to stay safe. We will give as much notice as possible, though there may be times it will not be until it is assessed in the morning (5 a.m.)

TRANSPORTATION

Limited to specialty field trips within an age group. A minivan is the transport vehicle, with age appropriate car seat restraints.

HOLDING FEE

I do not charge an enrollment fee; however, before your child is admitted into child care (or to hold a future spot) a holding fee must be paid. This holding fee is equal to two weeks of child care and will be credited towards your last two weeks. In the event your child does not attend, this deposit will be forfeited.

A year-end statement of all child care fees paid during the year will be given to you in January, the following year, for tax purposes. You may request a receipt at any time.



MEDICATION

If your child is on medication and it must be administered while at child care, the medicine must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, doctor, name of medication, dosage and when it is to be taken. I will also have a form for you to sign giving me permission to administer the medication to your child. Medication will be given at the time or with the meal you specify and a written record kept. If your child becomes ill, you will be called, and permission may be granted to administer pain-relieving medication.

DIAPERING

Latex gloves are used when changing diapers. After use, the changing pad is cleaned and sprayed with a disinfecting solution. Hands of the child and care giver are washed thoroughly. Diapers are changed as needed and are checked often. Creams, ointments and powders are not routinely used. On the occasion that these products are needed it will be discussed with the parents before applying. We very seldom have a problem with diaper rash. Most cases occur because of the child having been on certain medications or teething.

PROPER ATTIRE

Child's play is messy work! Your child will be painting, playing on the grass, in the sandbox, playing with chalk and participating in many other various activities. Please do not expect me to keep your child's clothes clean and free from stains. Please dress your children appropriately. I am not be responsible for "cute" clothes getting dirty. The children will participate in all activities regardless of their dress. Children (and parents) do not wear shoes when inside the home. They must be taken off in the entrance and put on the shoe tray. Children should have slippers kept at child care to be used. This helps to keep the floor more sanitary for crawling infants and children.

TOYS AND PERSONAL ITEMS

Toys brought from home will be placed in the child's cubby until it is time to go home. Occasionally children may play with these toys if it is not disruptive. Please note that we are not responsible for broken toys.



A TYPICAL DAY AT THE GROWING TREE

7:30-8:00 Children arriving and breakfast being served.

8:00-9:00 Breakfast cleaned up/free playtime.

9:00-10:00 Begin class time with good morning song. Weekly theme projects
(Colors, shapes, numbers, art's & crafts—alternate days).

10:00-10:30 Group play, free play, music, story-time.

10:30-11:45 Lunch preparation time/ hand washing, clean up time.

11:45—12:30 Lunch/wind down time.

12:30– 2:45 Nap time/Quiet time. All children will be expected to rest at naptime.
They may quietly look at books or other quiet activity.

2:45 Wake up time, hand washing.

3:00—3:30 Snack time

3:30-5:15 Free play, outdoors if weather permits. If not, free play & dress-up inside. Close to closing, wind-down time. Pick-up

(This schedule is typewritten—it is not set in stone. This is an idea of what we do during the day.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Our outdoor activities will include using the playground equipment in the backyard, riding toys and playing organized games. Children, no matter the age, will NOT be allowed outside to play unsupervised.

During the summer most of the day is spent outside. During the winter, children will go outside if the temperature is above 20 degrees. If your child is too sick to play outside he is too sick to attend child care. If your child is not appropriately dressed for the weather, you will be required to return to child care with the correct attire. Please be sure your child is prepared to start the day.

Please note we are working towards becoming an outdoor certified classroom which means we are outside a lot!!

MAINE WEATHER

We are all aware of how unpredictable Maine winters can be. I know that weather and driving conditions can cause late pick-ups. These are unavoidable, but please try to remember the hours you are contracted for. Please pay close attention to the weather to help avoid late pick-up.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Growing Tree Child Care is proud to offer a “Preschool Program” September to June of each year. This program targets children ages 2 1/2 to 5 yrs (or when developmentally ready). There are many learning stations in our daycare playroom. There is a housekeeping area, blocks and trucks, puzzles and books, dress-up items and much more. Children actively learn while playing. We will be using a combination of developmental and Montessori approaches, also known Reggio-Emilia pedagogy. One of the goals of Reggio-Emilia is to use collaborative learning to help a child become a better citizen. It emphasizes creativity and artistic expression.

ILLNESS AND SICK CARE

The health and well being of all of the children here are the utmost importance to me. It is for the protection of the children that I must insist on a strict adherence to my Health Policy. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions or doubts regarding the statements it contains please discuss them with me now. Do not wait until your child is sick to think about what would be best for all concerned. Even with all our precautions, children do get sick and/or hurt. Due to my concern for all of the children enrolled in my child care there are certain guidelines that I require all my clients to observe. In some cases, if your child needs to be seen by a doctor, you will be required to submit a signed report from your doctor before your child

There are a number of immunizations required by law before your child may attend child care. Upon application for enrollment you will be asked to fill out an immunization record. You will be informed of any immunizations that will be needed before your child starts child care. Children with minor illness may attend childcare at the provider's discretion. It is important to realize that if a child is unable to participate in the normal routine or needs more care than I can provide without neglecting the others in my care, that child must stay home. There are also some illnesses that by law exclude the child from attending child care. Some of those illnesses are:

*Chicken Pox *Hepatitis A *Scarlet Fever *Scabies *Ringworm *Strep Throat
*Lice *Impetigo

When a child has certain symptoms, he should be kept at home. Some of these are:

FEVER

A fever is a sign that the body is fighting some problem. The importance of a raised temperature depends on what is causing the fever. A temperature of 101 degrees or higher means a child should stay home. In the event of this type of temperature, the child should not come to child care until the temperature has been down for 24 hours without the aid of a fever reducing medication such as Tylenol. If your child wakes with a high temperature and you administer a fever reducer, this generally only lasts a few hours and I will have to call you when you arrive at work to come pick up your child. In the meantime, the other children have possibly been exposed to an undiagnosed illness.

VOMITING OR UPSET STOMACH

A child who has been vomiting can easily spread germs. If your child vomits while at child care, you will be expected to come immediately to remove your child. If you are not able to come as soon as you are called, please arrange for someone else to come pick up your child. The child must stay home until 24 hours has passed with no vomiting episodes.

DIARRHEA

When a child has a single loose stool, he or she does not need to be at home. However, if a child has very runny stools that cannot be contained in a diaper, or the child cannot reach the toilet in time, the stool may contaminate the child care setting and this child must remain at home. Please use your discretion with this. If the child has diarrhea that's not contained, you will be called to come pick your child up from child care.

RUNNING NOSES

Children with constant runny noses that are not caused by allergies may spread germs everywhere. They may wipe their noses on their hands, and then rub them on other children, toys and on surfaces. This is a difficult one to call. Please keep in mind how you would feel if another child's parent brought their child to care and exposed your healthy child. These cases will be handled on a case by case basis. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.



Some of the features that help to ensure your child's health are:

- * NO SMOKING ON THE PREMISIES
(We are a non-smoking home)
- * My health policy is strictly adhered to
- * Current immunizations are required
- * Good hygiene is stressed at all times
- * Every attempt is made to keep toys and play areas sanitized
- * Napping is done on individual nap mats
- * Food preparation is done in a safe and hygienic manner
- * Menus using fresh, organic and local food
- * Hand washing before eating, after diapering, use of toilet, outside play, touching bodily secretions, messy crafts or projects.(And about 100 other times during the day...)

DISCIPLINE

My philosophy is that you use discipline to teach a child. I achieve this through love, consistency and firmness. I stress two main patterns of behavior: respect for other people and respect for property. The children are explained the rules of the child care home frequently, so they are all familiar with the guidelines.

Young children especially, who are not adept at communication have a hard time expressing their feelings . Sometimes they hit or throw toys, etc. Although teaching children appropriate behavior is what I will be doing, remember that this behavior is normal in most cases. The following methods of discipline will be used:

- * Encourage children to solve problem themselves
- * Intervention and discussion
- * Redirection to another play area
- * Loss of privileges
- * Time-out

If I feel there is a chronic behavioral issue that needs attention, I will let you know so that you and I are handling it in the same way and your child has consistency in discipline between our homes. These types of behavior might include such things as biting, use of bad words, chronic hitting, etc.

Together, we will try to find a solution. You may be called to remove your child if his/her behavior prevents me from being able to properly care for the other children. If the problem continues, other arrangements for the care of the child will have to be made, for the safety and well being of all.

Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will there be any spanking, physical abuse, verbal abuse, name calling or isolation used. Neither food nor sleep will ever be withheld from children as a means of punishment.



As a Child care provider, I have a responsibility by DHHS to recognize and report any evidence of child abuse—physical or emotional—or neglect. This is strictly for the benefit of your child.

SMOKING

This is a non-smoking home and there will be no smoking anywhere on the premises. Cigarette butts are not to be discarded in the driveway, yard, planters, etc. Please respect this.

BIRTHDAYS

Each child's birthday is his/her "Special Day." We will celebrate everyone's birthday and provide cake or treats if desired.

FIRE-DRILL PROCEDURES

We have monthly fire drills. The children are instructed to go outside in front of the garage until everyone is outside for one drill, and out to the playground for another drill. If there is a fire the children will be moved to safety and the fire department will be called. During a severe weather warning all children will be taken to the basement and they will be provided a blanket to cover with. We will all remain there until it is safe to return to the child care area.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

If your child becomes **ill** while at child care, he/she will be isolated from the other children and one parent will be called immediately. If I am unable to contact a parent I will call the designated emergency contact person on the emergency card. The child will be unable to remain in child care if ill and I will expect them to be picked up **WITHIN** the hour. No exceptions—IF a child is not picked up with one hour you will be billed a late fee of \$1.00 per minute. Frequent abuse of this policy may be grounds for termination.

If your child is unable to go outside or participate in daily activities, please inform me. Special needs required by one child restricts the activities of all the children. Prolonged requests for special treatment may result in a request to keep the child home until they are able to participate in normal activities.

Should your child require a modified diet due to recovery from an illness or injury, please inform me. You may be requested to supply the necessary foods required.

EMERGENCY

In case of an EMERGENCY, I will administer necessary first aid. The Westbrook Police Department or Paramedic Unit will be called and your child will be transported to the hospital. **YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED IMMEDIATELY.** If an ambulance is called to transport your child, the cost of the ambulance will be covered by the parent or guardian.

PARENT/CAREGIVER COMMUNICATION

When I accept a new family into my child care, I like to be sure that we can openly share any concerns or questions that may arise. It is important that there is a similar child care philosophy between us. I welcome questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind that are oriented towards a positive outcome for the child(ren). Sensitive issues will be discussed in private outside of regular child care hours either by telephone or conference.



Annual conferences (twice a year) will be scheduled during the month of child's birthday as a routine part of your child's care. However, you may request a conference at anytime.

I publish a monthly newsletter that will explain some of the activities we are doing, our current curriculum themes, events that will be happening during that month, my days off, and any other pertinent or fun information that may be of interest to you. You are always welcome to contribute to our newsletter.

FRIDAY FOLDERS

Children put their artwork and work sheets into their Friday Folders each day. The folders will be taken home with them on Fridays. The folders are to come back every Monday to store their work throughout the week. Children who remember their folders will get a sticker to put on their folder. Please go through the folders with your child each Friday. I will not be liable if you don't know of future days off, etc.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND PLAYTIME

Attending "Growing Tree Child Care" should be an enjoyable experience for the parent as well as the child. While at child care, your child will be exposed to many kinds of learning experiences including:

- Arts and Crafts
- Music and fingerplay
- Story and listening adventures
- Poems & books
- Large and small muscle play
- Self initiated play
- Numbers & Counting
- Letter recognition
- Social development and kindergarten readiness]
- Individual playtime
- Weekly themes
- Parent involvement is encouraged. Parents may visit any time (during daycare hours)

TOILET TRAINING

If you have decided to start toilet training, we will work with you to help the process. We recommend that when in training, your child be dressed in "user-friendly" clothing. Overalls, "onesies", zippers, and snaps are difficult for small children to manage-- especially in a hurry! While potty training, parents are to provide lots of thick training underwear, plastic pants, socks, and outer clothing.

MEALS

We believe in local, organic food & produce. In addition, we have a backyard vegetable garden which supplies some organic, fresh food for meals and snacks. Breakfast is served until 8:00 a.m. Please have your child here by that time if you want them to eat breakfast here. If your child arrives after 8:00, I will have expected them to eat at home. Lunch is served at 11:30 a.m. and I serve a p.m. snack at 3:15p.m. I believe mealtime should be a pleasant time; therefore, children are always offered food but are not forced to eat it. Children, who choose not to eat, will not be served food until the next meal or snack.



PHOTOGRAPHS AND PUBLICITY

Photographs of the children participating in our programs may be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures or other publicity materials. Your permission for photographs including your child, to be used without compensation, is part of this agreement.

NAPTIME

All children are to lie down for a rest period in the afternoon. Even older children will benefit from a short period of “Quiet Time”. I provide mats and blankets. If your child has a special blanket or stuffed animal that he/she sleeps with, please send it along. I would ask that you please avoid picking up your child during naptime, as it disturbs the other children's quiet time. Please come before 12:30 or after naptime around 2:45.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Please make sure to send along extra clothes, to be kept here, in case their clothes get soiled.(Marked with their name).
2. Please help me to keep floors clean and safe for the children by removing your shoes if they are wet or muddy, or wait on the rug that I have provided.
3. Please call me in the morning if your child will not be coming that day.
4. Be prompt in picking up your child after work.
5. Please share information with me that will help me better care for your child. For example: child complaining of tummy ache, throwing up over the week-end, etc.
6. Please respect me, my profession and my home. The respect that you show me, including my home, furnishings, equipment and yard will communicate itself to your child and will make for a better working relationship.

TRIAL PERIOD AND WITHDRAWAL

A two week trial period will be given upon enrollment, to determine the suitability of the arrangements. If, at any time during the two weeks, you feel the arrangement has not proven workable, then you will be required to give a two week notice in writing. I will also have the right to terminate, with the same notice if I feel that it is not working out. If there is a problem where I feel that it is affecting the safety and welfare of the other children that I care for, I have the right to immediate dismissal. If, however, you are happy with the care that your child is receiving and your child is settling in, then we will enter into a permanent contract.



I do require a two week notice, (in writing) if and when you intend to withdraw your child from my care. Your one week holding fee will be applied towards the last week of child care fees.

ABSENTEEISM AND ILLNESS

If a child or parent is ill, or for any other reason the child will not be here for the day, please call me in the morning to let me know. If you know the night before please call before 8:00 p.m. I would appreciate this courtesy. The main reason for child care provider's charge for absent days is to provide stability in their budgets.

Parents should have alternative arrangements available in the event of emergency, illness, vacation or such, if the situation should occur.

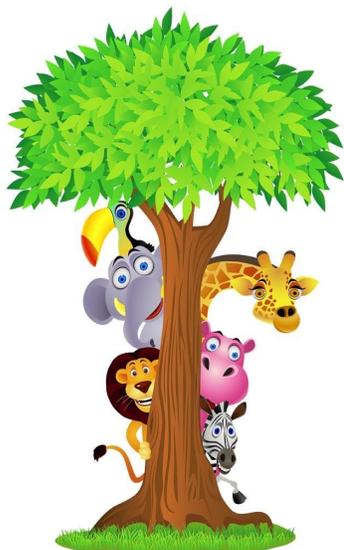
If you are having someone else pick up your child, **please let me know in advance**. I will need to know the name of the person picking up your child, and please let them know I will be asking for some form of I.D. I will not let a child leave without the parent's written permission. (See pick-up policy, page 12.)

PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

- * Please label your child's personal possessions.
- * Please be certain that boots slip on and off easily, zippers zip, etc. as the malfunction of these things can hinder and frustrate the the child in learning to dress him/herself.
- * Please encourage children to take responsibility for their own belongings.
- * I am not responsible for replacing lost or broken toys. This is why I request you keep such items home. If toys are brought, they will go into their cubbie.
- * Accepting responsibility for their own possessions is an important skill for a child to learn.

HOUSE RULES

Please go over this section with your child so they may also know what is expected of them while at child care. I expect all children (age taken into consideration) to know the rules of the house. These I assume are quite similar to the ones you have in your own home. I don't intend for these to sound as though I don't allow the children to play and enjoy themselves, but I feel it is important with the number of children in a child care setting to follow these rules to ensure safety and lower the maintenance of my home.



- *No hitting, biting, pushing, kicking, etc.
- *No throwing or intentionally breaking anything
- *No running, jumping, wrestling in the house
- *No picking up babies or toddlers
- *No leaving the house or yard
- *No name calling, teasing, etc. Everyone is treated with respect



Sometimes at pick-up time, the children may get rowdy because someone else is here (you). Your child has listened to my rules all day. Please show your child that you respect me and my rules by reminding them and enforcing them while you are here. Believe me, when they get older, you will thank me...

Please remember there are times we have places to go or appointments that we have to meet at the end of the day. For this reason, please don't be late. Child care hours END at 5:15 p.m. (Remember your contracted pick-up time.)

PICK-UP POLICY

Only the individuals listed on the Child Information Record, or on a **written** permission note from the parent, will be allowed to leave with a child. We will request a picture I.D. from any unfamiliar person (including grandparents). If there is any concern, we will attempt to contact you and, if we are unable to reach you, we reserve the right to deny a person's request to pick-up a child.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

At Growing Tree Child Care, you can always be assured that the door is open to you. Please keep in mind there may be times when it is not convenient for visits, such as at nap time. Also, there may be times when it is not convenient for me to run to the phone. (i.e. diaper changing, bottle feeding, etc.) If the phone goes unanswered, please do not become alarmed, simply leave me a voice mail and I will call as soon as I am able.

You may also communicate with me via email. There may be those times when something comes to you at work that you don't want to forget to relay to me. If you have an email, please feel free to drop me a line and I will generally reply during rest time.

Email: GrowingTreeChildCareLLC@gmail.com

Again, WELCOME to our child care...we look forward to a great, growing relationship!

