

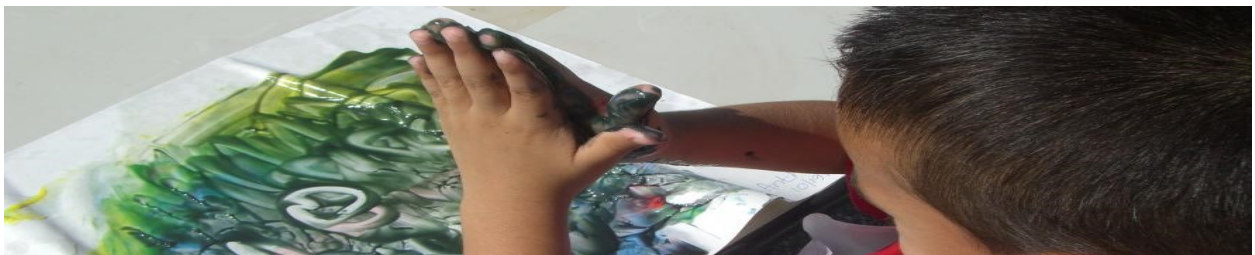


GLAD Kids

Early Learning Center

PARENT HANDBOOK

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The *mission* of **GLAD Kids** is to provide educational and developmental child care for children of low-income working families and to strive to provide for the social, emotional, economic, and developmental needs of those children and their families.

GLAD Kids does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental handicap, or sexual orientation.

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Program Philosophy

We believe each child is special and holds the future in their hands. We offer a quality child care program for infants, toddlers, preschoolers that facilitates and nurtures the individual needs and abilities of each child. Our program is based on the **Creative Curriculum** philosophies which stress a developmentally appropriate setting that allows children to be active explorers and encourages learning through play, movement, music, and stories, and fosters social interaction between other children and adults. Our program provides a balance of small group and individual time, active and quiet time, as well as indoor and outdoor opportunities to meet the needs of children. Children learn how to make choices and take control of their actions through play; this helps build self-confidence.

Children with or without special needs benefit from exposure to, and interaction with, one another. All children deserve the same opportunities. Any special therapeutic or behavioral programs that are required will be integrated into our developmentally-appropriate environment.



GLAD KIDS:

1. Offers a curriculum that encourages social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth.
2. Teaches the child to relate to others, to value friendships and to respect all people.
3. Provides a safe, comfortable environment for early learning and growth processes.
4. Helps each child learn to develop self-discipline and independence and to deal with their emotions in an appropriate manner.
5. Provides a well-balanced schedule of activities and quiet times.
6. Provides a nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack that contributes to the growth and development of a happy, healthy individual.

Information and Procedures

1. **Confidentiality:** The staff at GLAD Kids maintains the family's right to confidentiality. Confidential information is respected.
2. **Hours:** Center hours are 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM Monday-Friday for *children in all classrooms*. **All children must arrive by 9:00 AM each day. Children will not be accepted after 11:00 AM without prior approval. If your child will be late or absent, please call before 9:00 AM.**

Scheduled holidays include: Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day (observed), July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day & day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Day & day before/after. There are also teacher in-service days, which will be announced and communicated with parents/guardians.

3. **Open Door Policy:** We believe in an "open door" policy for parents and guardians. You are welcome to visit without advance notice at any time to observe or participate in any activity.
4. **Enrollment:** GLAD Kids has a capacity based on accreditation which is stricter than child care licensing. We take children on a first-come, first-serve basis. We offer child care for children four weeks through five years (*before entering kindergarten*).
Early Head Start: 6 weeks – 3 years
Toddlers: 12 months – 24 months
Two's: 24-36 months
Three's/Preschool: 36-48 months (must be potty-trained)
Four/Five Year-Olds & Pre-Kindergarten/*Voluntary Pre-K: 48-60 months

*VPK is a free program offered at GLAD Kids. Before and After VPK Care is available at an additional charge. Free lunch is included.

5. **Parent Involvement:** Parents are recognized as their child's first teacher. Parents are welcome to visit and observe or participate in daily activities. Daily notes are sent home to keep a school-home connection. Other important information is shared by the classroom teacher. Parents are always welcome in our classrooms.
6. **Electronic Attendance System:** In order to maintain the safety of each child while in our care, families are required to record their child's arrival and

departure daily. Please check your child's cubby for important information. A charge of \$10 will be applied to your account if you do not record this. Your child's attendance is tracked several times a day with the electronic data entered. This assures your child's safety and our ratio compliance. Your cooperation with this is very important.

7. **Pick-Up Policy:** Children can **ONLY** be picked up by parents or other designated responsible adults, age 18 or older. Parents must update designated pick-up lists, as needed. In an emergency situation, the parent may approve another responsible adult to pick up their child. A valid photo ID is required for all people picking up a child from our Center. This ongoing policy is in place to prevent any un-authorized persons from removing children from the Center.
8. **Late Pick-Up Policy:** All enrolled children must be picked up from the Center by 5:30 PM. The charge for late pick-up is \$15 per child for each 15 minutes or any part of 15 minutes thereafter that you are late.

*Late pick-up charges are to be paid at the time of the late pick-up or the next morning. Habitual late pick-up is deemed neglectful behavior and will be reported to the proper authorities.

9. **Policy regarding the release of a child to a person who appears intoxicated or impaired:** STAFF ARE INSTRUCTED THAT RELEASING A CHILD TO AN INTOXICATED OR IMPAIRED INDIVIDUAL IS INTOLERABLE. If an adult attempts to pick up a child and appears to be either manner, or if staff have concerns about the child's safety if released, they are advised to call law enforcement immediately. Law enforcement will be asked to make the determination whether the adult is capable of driving the child. An exception to this policy would be if they can confirm there is another authorized responsible adult with the impaired adult, who is not intoxicated or impaired and will be driving the vehicle used to transport the child. The program is required to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.
10. **Telephones:** In order for our staff to meet the needs of your children, it is important for them to give direct attention to them. At times, the answering machine may pick up your call. Please be sure to leave a message with your name, telephone number and reason for your call. We will return your call as soon as possible.



11. **Jewelry:** Please do not send your child to the Center with jewelry. It can become a hazard and safety concern. We will not be held liable for any lost jewelry.
12. **Meals:** We provide well-balanced meals which meet the USDA meal pattern for children. We serve breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Weekly and monthly menus are posted in each classroom. Any special dietary changes require a physician to complete a USDA medical statement verifying nutritional or allergy-related needs.

Children must be at the Center by 8:50 AM for breakfast.

13. **Toys:** We request that all personal belongings be left at home unless requested for a special activity. We will not be held responsible for lost or broken toys that came from home.
14. **Television and Video Policy:** Television and video viewing is NOT a regular occurrence in our classrooms. At times, teachers use videos to present theme-related materials.
15. **Clothing:** Children should wear rugged, washable play clothes, socks and closed-toed shoes. Open flip-flops and sandals are NOT permitted. Dress clothes and jewelry should not be worn. Smocks or oversized shirts are provided for messy play; however, clothing may still get dirty! Weather permitting, outdoor play will occur daily. Please plan for an active day with food, sand, water and art activities. Please provide a change of clothing, including shoes, in case of an accident. Place the clothing in a labeled plastic bag and place it in your child's cubby. Remember to send in a change of clothing after a dirty set has been sent home.
16. **Diapers and Wipes:** Diapers and wipes must be provided by the parent for each child requiring such, weekly, with the exception of Early Head Start students. We request 25 diapers per week and a container of wipes to start.

Parents must check the supply and provide more, as needed.

17. **Class Size/Ratios:** Class size and ratios are maintained according to the APPLE and Florida Statutes and Regulations for child care.
18. **Conferences and Reports:** Parents will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development through conferences, and electronic and written reports. Parents are welcome to visit and discuss their child with the Director and teacher by scheduling a conference at any time.
19. **Child Care Fees:** Payments are to be made by cash, money order or credit card. An additional 3% fee is added to credit card payments. Personal Checks may be used when paying ONE month in advance. To pay online, a convenience fee will be added. Please visit our website, www.gladkids.net, and click on the **DONATE NOW** button (on the top banner). The payment will be sent to our account, which will automatically email the office. You will receive an email acknowledging your payment and will be made aware of the convenience fee and your current balance. **Tuition is due regardless of attendance.** Fees are expected to be paid each Monday for that week of service. Tuition not paid in full by Monday will result in a late fee of \$15 weekly. Other arrangements must be agreed upon, in writing, with the Director. You will be charged each week according to the schedule agreed upon when enrolled, regardless of attendance. Part-time care students require a MINIMUM of 3 days tuition.



Absences:

1. Regular attendance is required. **Tuition does NOT change when a child is absent.** We require that all children arrive by 9 AM or call to notify administration of tardiness or absence.
2. Parents must notify the Center of any absence prior to its occurrence – vacations or extended illness, etc. Please get a doctor's excuse when your child is seen, or is out due to immunizations, or testing.

(continued next page)

3. Parents will be charged a fee for each scheduled day the child is enrolled, even if absent for a holiday.
4. Parents will receive ONE week of vacation allowance after ONE year enrolled. Vacation is allowed for the schedule your child attends. For example, if they attend 3 days weekly, they receive 3 days' vacation. A re-enrollment fee will be charged if you choose to un-enroll your child.
5. **ELC FAMILIES ONLY:** Only 3 unexcused absences are allowed per month. If you have more than 3 unexcused days, you will be charged an extra fee. Failure to pay the fee will result in termination of your student.

Health Policy

IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN IN OUR CARE, WE FOLLOW THESE PROCEDURES: PLEASE BE AWARE THAT WHEN ATTENDING OUR PROGRAM, YOUR CHILD MAY BE EXPOSED TO UNIMMUNIZED CHILDREN THAT ARE ENROLLED. IMMUNIZATION EXEMPTIONS ARE KEPT ON FILE.

1. Parents **MUST** provide the Center with proof of a physical exam, current immunization/shot records (DCF Form 680) or letter of exemption from a physician prior to enrollment.
2. Physical exams and shot records must be kept updated. Failure to maintain records will result in suspension of enrollment.
3. When a child becomes ill, they will be isolated from other children, if possible, and the parent will be notified to pick up their child within an hour. 911 will be called if a true emergency arises or a child's fever reaches 103 degrees.
4. It is the parents' responsibility to make us aware of phone number changes. If we cannot contact a parent, or other emergency contact, when a child is ill, the parent may be reported for neglect.

IF THE PARENT CANNOT BE REACHED, WE WILL CONTACT THE PERSON INDICATED ON YOUR CHILD'S EMERGENCY CONTACT FORM. A PARENT WILL BE CONTACTED TO PICK UP A SICK CHILD WHEN THEY EXHIBIT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:

- **Fever** – 101.0° F or higher
- **Diarrhea** – After 2 loose stools
- **Vomiting** – 2 episodes in one day, or accompanied with other symptoms
- **Rash** – any rash that is unexplained, except for diaper rash
- **Irritability** – listlessness, or unusual behavior which is inconsistent with the child's regular temperament will be noted by the teacher. They will have the office manager call the parent. **The child must be picked up within ONE hour of receiving a call.**

Teachers have the right to refuse to accept a child into care if any symptoms pertaining to the health policy are exhibited. If your child contracts any of the following infectious diseases, they must be excluded until the following occur:

- **Chicken Pox/Shingles** – After all blisters have scabbed over
- **Croup** – After the cough has subsided
- **Ear Infection** – After three doses of medication or after 24 hours
- **Fever** – After temperature has returned to normal without aid of medication (they may NOT return the next day after being sent home with fever)
- **Head Lice** – After one complete treatment and removal of all nits. Child must be checked upon readmittance to the Center. We have a NIT-FREE policy.
- **Impetigo** – After 24 hours of medication
- **Pink Eye** – After the child has been on medication for 24 hours and has no matter in their eyes
- **Ringworm** – After medical treatment with a fungicidal ointment. Must be covered with a bandage until gone.
- **Roto Virus** – After the child has had one formed stool
- **RSV** – After wheezing and coughing have subsided
- **Strep Throat** – After 24 hours of medication
- **Thrush** – After 24 hours of medication

If your child contracts any communicable disease, please inform the Director. If your child is exposed to a communicable disease while at the Center, a notice will be posted.

**** Parents must notify the Center when a child will be absent due to illness. Extended illness requires a doctor's excuse.**

Medication Policy

All medications must be administered by parents whenever possible. This includes sunscreen and bug spray. The only medications to be administered at school are rescue (epi-pen, inhaler) and those that absolutely must be given during school hours. The Director, or designated staff in charge in the Director's absence, will be responsible for dispensing any medications. We are only allowed to accept medications in the original bottle or container. This container must include the prescription label with the child's name, name of physician, medication name and directions on the written label. No medication shall be given by child care personnel without the signed permission of the parent or legal guardian. Expired or no longer administered medication will be returned to the parent or legal guardian.

Medication Review

- *A completed medication form is required for all medication to administered.
- *All medication must have a doctor's prescription to administer.
- *Containers must be original with the child's name and dosage clearly visible.
- *Staff will administer medication following the dosage directions with a witness to initial the medication log and time documented.

Discipline Policy

Expectations for Children's Behavior: Children are not permitted to behave in a manner that may hurt themselves or another person or damage any property. Staff works with children according to individual needs and stages of development. Children's developmentally-appropriate social behavior, self-control, and respect for the rights of others are encouraged. Staff practice positive behavior management methods using Conscious Discipline techniques, as a guide. Behavior management is used to help children develop internal controls and to learn appropriate behaviors without damaging their self-esteem.

Discipline Techniques

Discipline is the way we teach our children to behave appropriately. We strive to teach our children self-discipline and control. Staff is responsible for consistently maintaining the safety and welfare of the children in the group. Lessons in discipline include: clearly telling children what is expected of them, reinforcing good behaviors, reinforcing class rules, teaching consequences of unacceptable behavior, removing a child from an undesirable situation, and conflict resolution. Teachers are always a good role model for students. Staff is required to use positive communication, informing children of the behavior they expect. Physical punishment, shaming, fear, withholding food, rest or toileting are **NEVER** used.

GLAD Administrators reserve the right to end childcare services and removal of a child for any reason, at any time.

Character Development

Along with families, teachers play a central role in developing children's morals and values. The best way to develop those values is to nurture a sense of community in the classroom. We have adopted the following values in our program:

- **Empathy:** the ability to understand the feelings of others and respond appropriately
- **Responsibility:** doing what needs to be done and applying appropriate effort to complete a task
- **Respect for Others:** showing consideration, using manners and being polite.
- **Respect for the Environment:** caring for living things, not littering and wasting materials
- **Negotiation/Conflict Resolution:** working peacefully to solve a problem



Daily Schedules and Lesson Plans will be posted in each classroom. A newsletter with upcoming events is also posted.

Guidelines for Un-Enrolling a Child: Parents must notify the Center in advance if they plan to withdraw their child from the program. There will be a re-enrollment fee of \$40 if you un-enroll your child and choose to re-enroll them within a 90-day period. All charges must be paid in full at time of dis-enrollment.

Note to Parents/Guardians: The use of daily child reports, assessments, observational tools and parent-teacher conferences allows for the ongoing communication between teachers and parents. We rely on you for the sharing of goals, expectations and also for problem-solving. Please do your part to keep open communication with your child's teachers.

Two-Year Old Potty Training: See your teacher for this policy.

Toilet training should begin at home in conjunction with the Center. We will assist your child with the understanding that it will be successful only if we work together. Pull-ups and wipes are required until your child goes two weeks accident-free. If multiple accidents occur in one week, your child will need pull-ups for another two-week accident free period.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a special time for everyone. We welcome celebrations! Parents may provide decorations and/or a special treat for their child. Please check with your child's teacher for any dietary restrictions or allergies. Foods must be commercially prepared.



Shaken Baby Syndrome (Abusive Head Trauma) Prevention Policy

This policy is designated to prevent the possibility of abusive head trauma during care. Abusive head trauma (also referred to as Shaken Baby Syndrome) occurs in infants and young children, whose neck muscles are not fully-developed and whose heads are larger, relative to their bodies. As a result, they are especially susceptible to head trauma caused by any type of forceful or sudden shaking, with or without blunt impact. Damage can occur in as little as 5 seconds. Abusive head trauma can occur in children up to 5 years of age; however, infants less than 1 year are at greater risk of injury.

Shaken Baby Syndrome can lead to serious conditions including:

- Brain damage, problems with memory and attention, cerebral palsy
- Blindness or hearing loss
- Intellectual, speech or learning disabilities
- Developmental delays

Signs and symptoms of Shaken Baby Syndrome or head trauma include:

- Seizures
- Bruises
- Lack of appetite, vomiting, difficulty sucking or swallowing
- Lack of smiling or vocalizing
- Rigidity, inability to lift the head
- Difficulty staying awake, altered consciousness
- Difficulty breathing, blue color (due to lack of oxygen)
- Unequal pupil size, inability to focus the eyes or track movement
- Irritability

Injury Prevention

Infant crying is normal behavior, which improves as a child ages. Caregivers should develop proactive strategies to manage stress levels and appropriate responses to a crying child. This includes being self-aware and noticing when the caregiver may become frustrated or angry. Parents/guardians, caregivers and co-workers should discuss what calming strategies are successful with a particular child at home or in the Center.

Emergency Response

If a child presents any of the above symptoms or you suspect a baby has suffered abusive head trauma:

- Call 911, the parent and guardian and inform the Director and Regional Manager.

- Report to the appropriate child protective services agency (or law enforcement, if applicable) within 24 hours or less, as required by law. See Child Abuse/Neglect and Mandated Reporting Policy and Procedure for further information.
- See Medical Emergencies – Calling 911 for additional information.

Strategies for Caregivers and Parents

A child is usually shaken out of frustration, often when the child is persistently crying or irritable. The following strategies may work some of the time; but sometimes nothing will comfort a crying child. A teacher should seek support from a co-worker or Center management. If a child is inconsolable on a regular basis, the Director will be notified and determine if the right supports are in place for the child and staff.

Do:

- Give the child to another caregiver.
- Place the child somewhere safe in the classroom (or home) and call the office (or a neighbor) for support; take deep breaths and count to 10.
- Check to see if the baby's diaper needs changing.
- Give the baby a bottle. If the baby readily takes bottle, feed slowly, stopping to burp often. Do not force the baby to eat.
- Check for signs of illness and call the parent if you suspect the child is sick.
- Give baby a pacifier.
- Hold the baby close against your body and breathe calmly and slowly, while gently rocking the baby using slow, rhythmic movements.
- Sing to the baby or play soft, soothing music
- Use "white noise" or rhythmic sounds that mimic the constant whir of noise in the womb.
- Hold the baby on their side or stomach to help with digestion. Babies will always be placed on their backs to sleep.
- Take the baby for a walk indoors or outside for a ride in the stroller.
- Be patient: let the baby cry it out if necessary.

Crisis Management Codes

ALL Staff are required to have class roll, first aid kits, children's medication and cell phones at ALL times. Roll call must be taken once situated in designated areas. Additionally, staff should have a prepared bag with items to keep children occupied during evacuation, as well as tissue and baby wipes.

CODE RED

SCHOOL-WIDE LOCKDOWN

- Teachers quickly ensure all children are in their classroom.
- Lock all classroom doors, outside doors and turn off lights. Lock all gates and exterior doors, if applicable.
- Teachers direct students to safe area in classroom, away from doors and windows. Set up table barrier. Cover windows if possible.
- Students on playgroup evacuate immediately and report to designated areas and lock all doors behind you.

CODE BLUE

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

- Use cell phone to call office for assistance.
- Report to office if 911 assistance is needed. If child cannot be moved, request administration come to your location.

CODE ORANGE

BOMB THREAT

- Instructions will be given for either school-wide lockdown or site evacuation.

BEHAVIOR EMERGENCY (CHILD OR ADULT)

- Alert all available staff for assistance and to witness altercation

FIRE EMERGENCY

- If smoke or fire is seen, activate fire alarm if not already sounding
- Evacuate according to fire route posted in room

WEATHER EMERGENCY

- Remain/Return to your classroom line inside walls assuming huddle position, away from windows.

BUILDING EVACUATION – Route will be confirmed/announced by Director/Asst. Director

Shelter in Place – Temporary shelter on-site, if directed by emergency personnel.

Universal Precautions in Child Care

Universal precautions is the term used for the guidelines developed by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in the 1980s to reduce the spread of infection to health care providers and patients in health care settings. Standard precautions is the new term used for an expansion of universal precautions, recognizing that any body fluid may hold contagious germs. They are still primarily designed to prevent the spread of bloodborne disease (disease carried by blood or other body fluids) but are also excellent measures to prevent the spread of infectious disease in group care settings such as child care facilities.

Standard precautions are designed to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease from both recognized and unrecognized sources of infections. Germs that are spread through blood and body fluids can come at any time from any person. You may not know if someone is infected with a virus such as Hepatitis B or HIV, and the infected person may not even know. This is why you must behave as if every individual might be infected with any germ in all situations that place you in contact with blood or body fluids.

What do standard precautions consist of?

Handwashing:

- After diapering or toileting children
- After handling body fluids of any kind
- Before and after giving first aid (such as cleaning cuts, scratches, or bloody noses)
- After cleaning up spills or objects contaminated with body fluids
- After taking off disposable gloves

Latex gloves should be worn:

- During contact with blood or body fluids which contain blood (such as vomit or feces which contain blood you can see)
- When individuals have cuts, scratches or rashes which cause breaks in the skin of their hands. Environmental sanitizing should be done regularly, and as needed. In a child care setting, this means cleaning toys, surfaces and diapering areas with a bleach solution (1 tablespoon of bleach per quart of water, made fresh daily). Blood spills or objects with blood on them need a stronger solution of ¼ cup bleach to 2½ cups water (Donowitz, 1999). Proper disposal of materials that are soaked in or caked with blood requires double bagging in securely-tied plastic bags. Send these items home with the child, or if you wash them, wash them separately from other items. Child care

facilities follow the standard precautions in clinic and hospital settings, with the following exceptions:

- Use of nonporous gloves is optional, except when blood or blood-containing body fluids may be involved.
- Gowns and masks are not required. Appropriate barriers include disposable diaper table paper, disposable towels and non-porous surfaces.

A Board of Directors governs GLAD Kids Early Learning Center, the daily operations are the responsibility of the Director of Early Childhood Education. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Director. More information is available on our website, www.gladkids.net, or by calling the facility at 239-481-2100.

Parent printed name _____

Parent signature _____

GLAD Kids Early Learning Center follows the Child Care Statutes mandated by the State of Florida, Sections 402.26-402.319

License # C20LE0192

My signature acknowledges that I have read and understand this Parent Handbook.