



The Child Development Program at Taft

Please read the following handbook carefully.

Welcome to The Child Development Program at Taft, Inc. We are an early care and education center for children between the ages of 6 weeks and 5 years old. With before and after school care for children 8 years old or up to second grade. The program is a non-profit organization founded in 1991 because of the need for quality care for children of The Taft Schools faculty and staff. The center is located in a building within The Taft School parking lot, but is not owned, operated, or funded by Taft. The center is governed by a Board of Directors (made up of parents and interested community members) that meet monthly to discuss the centers general and financial status. Accommodating a maximum of 38 children the center prides itself on offering a small homelike environment. The teacher/child ratio for our Infants and toddlers is 1 to 3, while the Preschool room has a ratio of 1 to 7.

Our philosophy is that each child is unique. Each endowed with their own gifts and talents. One of our ongoing goals at our learning center is to recognize those gifts and promote a positive environment in which those talents may be enhanced.

The Program's daily activities reflect our belief that children go through stages in their social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth. Your child will be given every opportunity to explore the world around them, to interact with peers and adults, and to make their own choices and decisions. Your child will be offered a balanced combination of teacher directed activities as well as child initiated activities, carpet times, structured play, supervised projects, quiet activities, and free play. During these activities an appreciation and respect for cultural differences will be fostered. We undertake this responsibility seriously, guiding every child with love, patience and understanding. The Program provides a safe, secure and routine environment in which your child can engage in these daily activities and develop friendships.

Arrival and Departure

The center is open Monday through Friday, from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM. When you enroll your child in the program you will be asked to sign up for the hours that you will need.

We ask you to please adhere to the hours that you are contracted for upon enrollment.

If you are leaving your car in the Taft parking lot we ask that you leave the parking spots nearest to the front door open for the centers staff in case of an emergency. We ask that parents please bring their children directly inside the building, hanging up outdoor clothing and placing lunch boxes in their designated areas. At this time parents are encouraged to share any information relevant to their child's care with the staff.

Parents must sign in the time of their child's arrival and the time of departure on the classroom attendance sheet daily. Any changes in routine should be noted in the "comments" column (where parent can be reached, different adult picking up, etc.). In the event that changes occur during the day, please call the center and leave a message with the staff.

The center closes promptly at 5:30PM. We ask that parents pick up no later than this time. If for any reason you will be delayed, please call the staff to let them know. There is a late fee for parents that are late picking up their children. While we understand that emergencies do occur, continued tardiness may necessitate that a child be withdrawn from our facility.

Yearly Schedule

We are open all year except for the following holidays:

- **Memorial Day**
- **4th of July**
- **Labor Day**
- **Thanksgiving Day and the day after**
- **Christmas Week (December 24th at noon through January 1st)**

If there is inclement weather or power outages and the center must open late, close early, or close for the day parents will be notified and the status will be posted on WTNH and WFSB.

Enrollment

Each child enrolled in the program will have a provisional 30 day enrollment period. If the center feels as though we cannot meet the needs of the child after this period, we will not be able to accommodate them and the child will have to be withdrawn from the center.

We ask that parents give the center two weeks notice if they need to withdraw their child for any reason.

Parent/Staff Communication

The Director is available for parent conferences if you would like to discuss any aspect of your child's development or experiences at the center. Please call or email the Director to let them know you wish to have a conference.

In addition, the Preschool classroom will have scheduled conferences each year. On a day to day basis, the Director and staff are available to assist you with any questions or concerns that you may have.

Daily notes will be kept for parents of all Infants, Ones, and Toddlers. We can take better care of your child if you share with us written ongoing changes and schedules, food intake, sleep patterns, rashes, bruises and scrapes, possible reactions to immunizations, etc.

Parent Involvement

Because the program operates on a non-profit basis, and we are a small center our budget is tight. We welcome contributions of any kind, including equipment and toys, special snacks or treats, books, chaperones for field trips, and help with center maintenance projects.

Several times a year we will plan fundraisers and events. Parent, grandparent, and entire family involvement is appreciated and welcome.

Snacks and Lunch

We provide nutritious snacks in the morning and afternoon for our Ones, Toddlers and Preschool classrooms. If your child is in the Infant room you must provide all of their food for the day including snacks. Remember this is just a snack it is not meant to replace or be your child's breakfast.

Parents must provide lunches which will be kept in a lunch box that has an icepack.

We will be able to heat food from your child's lunch when necessary.

We serve snacks and lunches with disposable plates, forks and spoons. We try to make mealtime a pleasant experience as well as a time to reinforce good manners learned at home. **Food will be served as it is sent and any uneaten portion will be sent home. Please do not send in nuts, gum or candy.**

Birthdays and Special Occasions

Parents are welcome to send special treats to share with the other children at the program on birthdays or special occasions. If your child has any allergies to any foods you can send in a "special treat" we can keep at the center to offer instead.

Bedding and Toys

The center provides cribs and cots. Each child must have a blanket large enough to cover their body and a fitted crib sheet. Your child may also bring in a small soft toy to sleep with. Bedding will be sent home every Friday for washing. Please be sure to send bedding back in with your child on Monday.

We can not be responsible for any toys brought into the facility. Please do not send in toys that are hazardous to infants and toddlers. **Toy guns or weapons are not appropriate and should never be brought to the center.**

Toilet training

When a parent feels that their child is ready to be toilet trained the staff will work with the parent using the same techniques that are being used at home. All children are not

ready for this step in development at the same age, and no child will ever be shamed because of an “accident”.

Extra clothing including socks, underwear, and pants are needed. Elastic waist pants are best during training time. Belts and zippers sometimes take too long or are difficult for a child to undo. Please do not dress your child in “onsies” when they begin toilet training.

Discipline Policies

We strive to accept and treat all children as the unique individuals that they are and do our best to search for the causes of misbehavior as we endeavor to change and redirect those behaviors. Our staff practices the following discipline policies:

Positive guidance: Positive guidance helps children to develop control over inappropriate behavior and helps to improve self-esteem. Children who feel good about themselves are less prone to exhibit disruptive or negative behavior. Our children are guided towards activities where they can have positive experiences and interactions with others. Positive reinforcement in the form of verbal and non-verbal (hugs, smiles) messages follow these positive experiences.

Verbalizing negative feelings: Our staff helps children express their negative feelings in an acceptable manner. Verbalizing feelings is a harmless way to express themselves and diffuse their anger or frustrations.

Redirection: Sometimes a child is not able to verbalize their feelings and they act out. Redirection to a different classroom activity can help soothe and calm a child. The child can then regain control of him/herself and be successful in the classroom.

Setting clear limits: When children clearly understand what is expected of them, they are often more inclined to cooperate in complying with the rules of the classroom. Our limits are simple and few in number. Our staff enforces these limits consistently without shame or blame on the children.

Continuous supervision: Providing constant supervision and taking steps to prevent inappropriate behavior is exercised by our staff on a daily basis.

Following the guidelines of the Connecticut State Department of Health, our center prohibits abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating or frightening punishment. There will be no physical restraint unless it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or others.

Health Policies

State regulations require us to follow strict health policies. We must maintain and update certain records on a monthly and yearly basis. All children need to have a completed health form on file upon enrollment. Infants need to have a new form completed with

each visit to the doctor. Preschoolers need to have the form completed with a yearly well exam.

For the protection of all of the children, your child should be kept home if they have any of the symptoms noted on our health policy (attached). If you are not sure if your child is healthy enough to attend, please call and ask the director or staff. If your child becomes ill during the day, they will be isolated from the group, and you will be contacted to pick your child up as soon as possible. Depending on your child's illness you may be required to bring in a Doctors note stating that your child is well enough to return to the center after an absence.

