

**First Step Learning Center of Lebanon, Inc.**

3 Haytown Rd  
Lebanon, NJ 08833  
908-236-7669

**FIRST STEP PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

First Step is the beginning of an educational journey. Children, from six weeks to six years, learn best through an environment in which their total development and individual needs are met.

We have built our philosophy around three goals which will prepare a child to take his or her first steps toward a positive educational experience. These three goals are:

- ❖ TO DEVELOP A POSITIVE SELF-IMAGE
- ❖ TO FOSTER A LOVE FOR SCHOOL
- ❖ TO HAVE FUN!

We will provide learning experiences that will enhance each child's cognitive, social, physical and emotional development. All the activities are led by a nurturing staff that both supports and challenges the children, through age appropriate lessons and socialization experiences. Their first steps should be the ones that create a strong foundation on which to build.

Initial development and learning experiences include tummy time, age-appropriate stimulation, space and personal attention. As children mature, learning activities include block play, creative movement, music, art, math, language arts, and the development of fine and gross motor skills.

The children's learning experiences will begin with age-appropriate activities to support conceptual development in the following areas: shapes, colors, numbers and letters. Children will also learn to develop important socialization skills, and a variety of science and social study units according to each individual child's level of ability.

As each child matures to pre-kindergarten, he or she will develop pre-reading skills including sight words, introduction to journal writing and expression of comprehension. Pre-operational math skills are introduced and taken to the individual's highest level.

Traditional classrooms provide structure for cooperative and independent learning. Outdoor play areas offer field play, for creative and structured play, and a playground for climbing and sand play.

Our primary goal for parents and staff is to work together as a team to meet each child's individual goals.

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*Love of Learning  
Self-Esteem  
Pride*

**APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION**

Date of Application: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Applying For:

<b>18 Month – 2 ½ Year Old Program</b>	<b>3-Year-Old Program</b>	<b>Pre-K Program</b>	<b>Fun with Fives/ Kindergarten/ K-Wrap Programs</b>
Full-Day: _____ Half-Day: _____ Days Per Week: _____	Full-Day: _____ Half-Day: _____ Days Per Week: _____	Full-Day: _____ Half-Day: _____ Days Per Week: _____	Full-Day: _____ Half-Day: _____ Days Per Week: _____

**Student Information:**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (Middle) (Preferred)

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Family Information:**

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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Registration Fee: \_\_\_\_\_

Deposit: \_\_\_\_\_

**General Information:**

Physician

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

Office Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact/Permission for Pick-up:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**WE ARE A NUT-FREE SCHOOL.**

Please list any allergies/dietary needs or restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In the event that parents cannot be reached, First Step Learning Center of Lebanon has my permission to contact Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ at (Phone) \_\_\_\_\_.

In the event that the physician cannot be reached, First Step has my permission to seek emergency medical treatment at the nearest hospital.

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

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

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**RATE SCHEDULE**

First Step offers a variety of rate packages and times, full day and half day. The rates are available on request and are subject to change.

**We offer individualized scheduling, billing and second child discounts.**

**Tuition is due on the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month for the following month. A 10% late fee will be assessed to the account if tuition is not received on time. Billing of 10% late fee will be assessed the 27<sup>th</sup>, to be paid with tuition. Special arrangements can be made on request, for example: bi-monthly or weekly.**

**OTHER FEES**

Extra hours:	\$12.00/hour – Due when scheduling is arranged
Activity fee:	\$100.00
Returned check fee:	\$35.00
Late pick-up fee:	\$15.00 for each five minutes after closing hours

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**VISITING AND ACCESS**

Dear Parent:

In keeping with New Jersey's child care center licensing requirements, we are obliged to provide you, as parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child enrolled at our center, with this informational statement.

The statement highlights, among other things:

- ❖ Your right to visit our center at any time without having to secure prior permission
- ❖ The center's obligation to be licensed and to comply with licensing standards, and
- ❖ The obligation of all citizens to report suspected child abuse/neglect/exploitation to the State's Department of Children and Families.

Please read this statement carefully and if you have any questions, feel free to contact us at 908-236-7669.

Sincerely,

Lynne Baka  
Director

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Please complete and return this portion to the Center. PLEASE PRINT.

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and received a copy of the Information to Parents Statement prepared by the Department of Children and Families Office of Licensing.

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

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January 2022– January 2023

**Calendar**

**2022**

January 3	Back to school
February 21	Closed for President's Day
April 15	Closed for Good Friday
April 18	Closed for Easter Monday
May 30	Closed for Memorial Day
July 4	Closed for Independence Day
September 2 – September 5	Closed for Labor Day
September 6	First day of school
November 24 - 25	Closed for Thanksgiving Break
December 23	1:00PM closing
December 24 – January 2	

**2023**

January 3	First day 2023
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**DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The Discipline Policy is in compliance with the State of New Jersey's Department of Human Services Manual of Standards for Child Care Centers, Section 10:122-6.8:A-E. (See below.)

Our discipline will be handles in the following manner:

- 1) The first time that the behavior is exhibited, the child will be spoken to and given an explanation as to why the behavior is unacceptable and how they are expected to behave.
- 2) The second time that the behavior is exhibited, the child will be given a verbal warning. If the behavior warrants, the child will be removed from the activity or area.
- 3) The third tie the child is spoken to, they will sit in a quiet area This will enable the child to think about their behavior and why it is unacceptable.

If the behavior persists, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified.

- ❖ Methods of guidance and discipline used shall be positive, consistent with the developmental needs of the children, and applied with the full knowledge, understanding and approval of the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- ❖ There shall be no hitting: corporal punishment; abusive language; ridicule; harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment.
- ❖ Discipline shall not be associated with the behavior of children in regard to rest, toilet training, or food.
- ❖ Children shall not be isolated without supervision, and are within direct view of the teacher at all times.
- ❖ Discipline shall not be associated with the withholding of emotional responses or stimulation, and shall not require the child to remain silent for long periods of time.



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**POLICY ON MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, the child should not attend the Center. If such symptoms occur at the Center, the child will be removed from the group, and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be called to take the child home.

- ❖ Severe pain
- ❖ Acute diarrhea
- ❖ Episodes of acute vomiting
- ❖ Elevated oral temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit
- ❖ Lethargy
- ❖ Severe coughing
- ❖ Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
- ❖ Red eyes with discharge
- ❖ Infected, untreated skin patches
- ❖ Difficult or rapid breathing
- ❖ Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavioral changes
- ❖ Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
- ❖ Mouth sores with drooling
- ❖ Stiff neck

Even if the child needs to be seen by a doctor for any of the previously listed symptoms, a return to school will be left to the discretion of the Director.

**TABLE OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

A child who contracts any of the following diseases may not return to the Center without a health care provider's note stating that the child presents no risk to him/herself or others.

**Respiratory Illnesses**

Chicken Pox\*\*  
German Measles\*  
Hemophilus Influenzae\*  
Measles\*  
Meningococcus\*  
Mumps\*  
Strep Throat  
Tuberculosis\*  
Whooping Cough\*

**Gastrointestinal Illnesses**

Camphylobacter\*  
Escherishia coli\*  
Giardia Lamblia\*  
Hepatitis A\*  
Salmonella\*  
Shigella\*

**Contact Illnesses**

Impetigo  
Lice  
Scabies  
Shingles

\* Reportable diseases that must be reported to the health department by the Center.

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\*\* Note: If a child has chicken pox, a health care provider's note is not required for re-admitting the child to the Center. A note from the parent is required, stating either that either six days have elapsed since the onset of the rash or that all sores have dried and crusted.

If a child is exposed to any excludable disease at the Center, parents will be notified in writing.

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**SCHOOL HEALTH PROTOCOL**

In order to ensure that child care/school remains a safe and healthful environment, this health protocol will be implemented by Red Balloon as it is imposed by the State of New Jersey, Department of Children and Families.

We cannot risk the possibility of infection to the other students when a sick child is sent to school or becomes ill at school. If your child were to develop any of the following symptoms during the previous 24 hours, he/she should remain at home the next school day.

- 1) Fever of 101.5 or higher. The temperature should be normal 98.6 for 24 hours before returning to school WITHOUT any fever reducing medication.
- 2) Congestive cough
- 3) Vomiting
- 4) Diarrhea
- 5) Discharge that is other than clear from nose, eyes, mouth, ears, or any other areas
- 6) Skin rash

If a student arrives at school or develops any previously listed symptoms, you will be notified and expected to take your child home. If you cannot be reached, the next available contact on your emergency list will be called. Children sometimes are not able to specify what is wrong or how they feel. The staff at this time will make that call.

Completely

A child/student should not be in school/day care and will be sent home if any of the following condition(s) are present:

- 1) Fever of 101.5 or higher. The temperature should be normal 98.6 for 24 hours before returning to school WITHOUT any fever reducing medication.
- 2) The child/student is unable to function/participate in the school activities due to observed health status.
- 3) The child/student wants to sleep and appears listless.
- 4) The child/student has a discharge which is other than clear from nose, eyes, mouth, ears, or any other areas.
- 5) The child/student is vomiting.
- 6) The child/student has diarrhea.
- 7) The child/student has a congestive cough.
- 8) The child/student has open, draining sore and will not keep the bandage on.
- 9) The child/student had a previously controllable medical condition and that condition has become unmanageable, e.g.: asthma, seizure disorder, etc.
- 10) The child/student exhibits unusual pallor or flushed face.
- 11) The child/student has an unknown rash.

If the child should need to be on an antibiotic, they must have been on, and had enough doses, for 24 hours before returning to school. We will not administer doses unless completely necessary and there is a doctor's note.

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**UNIVERSAL  
CHILD HEALTH RECORD**

Doctor for any of the pre  
Director.

Endorsed by:

American Academy of Pediatrics, New Jersey Chapter  
New Jersey Academy of Family Physicians  
New Jersey Department of Health

SECTION I – TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT(S)			
Child's Name <i>(Last)</i>	<i>(First)</i>	Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Date of Birth / /
Does Child Have Health Insurance? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If Yes, Name of Child's Health Insurance Carrier		
Parent/Guardian Name	Home Telephone Number	Work Telephone/Cell Telephone Numbers	
Parent/Guardian Name	Home Telephone Number	Work Telephone/Cell Telephone Numbers	
<i>I give my consent for my child's Health Care Provider and Child Care Provider/School Nurse to discuss the information on this form.</i>			
Signature/Date		This form may be released to WIC. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
SECTION II – TO BE COMPLETED BY HEALTH CARE PROVIDER			
Date of Physical Examination: / /		Results of Physical Examination Normal? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Abnormalities Noted:	Weight <i>(Must be taken within 30 days for WIC)</i>		
	Height <i>(Must be taken within 30 days for WIC)</i>		
	Head Circumference <i>(if &lt;2 Years)</i>		
	Blood Pressure <i>(if ≥3 Years)</i>		
<b>IMMUNZATIONS</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Immunization Record Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Date Next Immunization Due	
MEDICAL CONDITIONS			
Chronic Medical Conditions/Related Surgeries <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>List medical conditions/ongoing surgical concerns</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Special Care Plan Attached	Comments	
Medications/Treatments <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>List medications/treatments</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Special Care Plan Attached	Comments	
Limitations to Physical Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>List limitations/special considerations</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Special Care Plan Attached	Comments	
Special Equipment Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>List items necessary for daily activities</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Special Care Plan Attached	Comments	
Allergies/Sensitivities <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>List allergies</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Special Care Plan Attached	Comments	
Special Diet/Vitamin & Mineral Supplements <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>List dietary specifications</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Special Care Plan Attached	Comments	

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<p>Behavioral Issues/Mental Health Diagnosis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>List behavioral/mental health issues/concerns</li></ul>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Special Care Plan Attached</p>	<p>Comments</p>
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Emergency Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List emergency plan that might be needed and the signs/symptoms to watch for</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Special Care Plan Attached	Comments			
<b>PREVENTATIVE HEALTH SCREENINGS</b>					
<b>Type Screening</b>	<b>Date Performed</b>	<b>Record Value</b>	<b>Type Screening</b>	<b>Date Performed</b>	<b>Record Value</b>
Hgb/Hct			Hearing		
Lead <input type="checkbox"/> Capillary <input type="checkbox"/> Venous			Vision		
TB (mm of induration)			Dental		
Other:			Developmental		
Other:			Scoliosis		
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>I have examined the above student and reviewed his/her health history. It is my opinion that he/she is medically cleared to participate fully in all child care/school activities, including physical education and competitive contact sports, unless noted above.</i>					
Name of Health Care Provider (Print)			Health Care Provider Stamp:		
Signature/Date:					

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**METHODS OF PARENTAL NOTIFICATION**

All parents will be notified by phone or email for any and all illness, injury, accident or emergency matter.

Parents may contact us by phone at (908) 236-7669 for the fastest response. Parents may also use our email: [parents@firststeplc.com](mailto:parents@firststeplc.com) to contact us as well.

All emergency closing, upcoming events, and notifications will be communicated through email. Please contact our school for any questions or concerns.

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Print Name

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Date

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**POLICY ON RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

Each child may be released only to the child's parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) to take the child from the Center and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by court order, the Center shall secure documentation to that effect, maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court order.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fails to pick up a child at the time of the Center's daily closing, the Center shall ensure that:

- 1) The child is supervised at all times;
- 2) Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
- 3) An hour or more after closing time, provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his/her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the Center, the staff member shall call the Division's 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-877-NJ-ABUSE) (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parents(s) is able to pick up the child.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgement of the director and/or staff member, then child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, the Center shall ensure that:

- 1) The child may not be released to such an impaired individual;
- 2) Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
- 3) If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call the Division's 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-877-NJ-ABUSE) (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

For school-age child care programs, no child shall be released from the program unsupervised except upon written instruction from the child's parent(s).



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Authorization from Parent/Guardian to Release Child(ren)

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

I, \_\_\_\_\_ authorize the release of my

(parent name - printed)

child/children listed below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

to: \_\_\_\_\_ . This is in effect for

(authorized party )

\_\_\_\_\_ ONLY, unless specified for a range of dates.

(day/date)

Per the policies of First Step, the authorized party is required to provide proof of identification such as a driver's license or passport.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or guardian signature

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**MEDIA POLICY**

The First Step Learning Center of Lebanon does not make use of a television or any other media as a constant source of teaching or entertainment.

Television is not used as a tool consistently for the children. We limit media to approximately 1 hour of developmental videos per month for all ages determined by age appropriateness.

The Staff of First Step

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**POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

It is the policy of First Step Learning Center of Lebanon to post no pictures of students on school Facebook or website without parental permission. There is to be no picture taking of students with or without intent to post or display anywhere except in school.

There should be no use of cell phones to send or distribute pictures or written information regarding students or the school. What happens at the Center remains there.

If, for any reason, an employee is approached by any type of individual attempting to secure media, social or otherwise, they may NOT provide any information. Should this occur, the Director should be notified immediately.

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**EXPULSION POLICY**

The policy of First Step Learning Center of Lebanon regarding the expulsion of children follows:

- ❖ Children will be expelled if their behavior is deemed dangerous to themselves, other children or staff members.
- ❖ When a child has a behavior or social problem that is disruptive to the school, parents will be notified and a behavior plan put in place. Staff and parents will meet to discuss the implementation of the plan. If the behavior does not improve, the child may be expelled.
- ❖ Should the staff feel that the problem requires outside professional services, the parents should be ready to comply.
- ❖ Failure to pay in accordance with the written policy is cause for expulsion.
- ❖ Parents will be notified in writing twice before an expulsion takes place. Notifications will be signed by parents and staff.

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I have received, read and understood the Expulsion Policy.

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Parent/Guardian Signature

---

Date

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**Department of Children and Families  
Office of Licensing  
INFORMATION TO PARENTS**

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Under provisions of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C 3A:52), every licensed child care center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other child care matters. The Center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). In keeping with this requirement, the Center must secure every parent's signature to his/her receipt of this information.

\* \* \* \*

Our Center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing Law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing (OOL), Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our Center. Look for it when you are in the Center.

To be licensed, our Center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety; staff qualifications, supervision and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and recordkeeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may view a copy of the Manual of Requirements on the DCF website at <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/CCCmanual.pdf> or obtain a copy by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", mailing it to: NJDCF, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, P.O. Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the Center or the meaning, application, or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our Center may be in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing, toll-free at

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**Department of Children and Families  
Office of Licensing  
INFORMATION TO PARENTS**

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1-877-667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention, too.

Our Center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parents to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the Center.

Our Center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our Center must have a policy concerning expulsion of children from enrollment at the Center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our Center.

Parents are entitled to review the Center's copy of the OOL's Inspection/Violation Reports on the Center which are available soon after every State licensing inspection of our Center. If there is a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the OOL's Complaint Investigation Summary Report as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the Center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review or you can view them online at [https://data.nj.gov/childcare\\_explorer](https://data.nj.gov/childcare_explorer).

Our Center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF may interview both staff members and children.

Our Center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with any questions you may have about it.

Our Center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the OOL for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the Center's space.

Our Center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the Center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in, and observe, the activities of the Center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the Center should

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**INFORMATION TO PARENTS**

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discuss their interest with the Center director who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our Center without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents. Our Center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, special event away from the Center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Our Center is required to provide reasonable accommodations for children and/or parents with disabilities and to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the Center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 TTY).

Our Center is required, at least annually, to review the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), unsafe children's products list, ensure that the items on the list are not at the Center, and make the list accessible to staff and parents, and/or provide parents with the CPSC website at <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>. Internet access may be available at your local library. For more information, call the CPSC at (800) 638-2772.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been, or is being, subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the Center, or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the *State Central Registry Hotline*, toll-free at (877) NJ ABUSE/(877) 652-2873. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292-0422 or go to [www.nj.us/dcf/](http://www.nj.us/dcf/).

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### **First Step**

#### **Abuse Prevention**

#### **Policies & Procedures**

##### **I. General Definitions**

###### **A. Types of abuse**

1. Physical abuse is injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a child.
2. Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a child and an adult or between two children. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the other child.
3. Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the children's growth, development, or psychological functioning.
4. Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs or the failure to protect a child from harm.

##### **II. Code of Conduct with Children**

The following policies are intended to assist employees and volunteers in making decisions about interactions with children. For clarification of any guideline, or to inquire about behaviors not addressed here, contact your supervisor.

Our organization provides our children with the highest quality services available. We are committed to creating an environment for children that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success.

No form of abuse will be tolerated and confirmed abuse will result in immediate dismissal from our organization. All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with children or allegation of abuse will be taken seriously. Our organization will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation.

The Conduct with Child outlines specific expectations of the employees and volunteers as we strive to accomplish our mission together.

1. Children will be treated with respect at all times.



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2. Children will be treated fairly regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, or religion.
3. Employees and volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of displaying affection as outlined by our organization.
4. Employees and volunteers will avoid affection with children that cannot be observed by others.
5. Employees and volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions as outlined by our organization.
6. Employees and volunteers will not stare at or comment on children's bodies.
7. Employees and volunteers will not date or become romantically involved with children.
8. Employees and volunteers will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of children.
9. Employees and volunteers will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on our organization's property.
10. Employees and volunteers will not have secrets with children and will only give gifts with prior permission.
11. Employees and volunteers will comply with our organization's policies regarding interactions with children outside of our programs.
12. Employees and volunteers will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with children.
13. Employees and volunteers are prohibited from working one-on-one with children in a private setting. Employees and volunteers will use common areas when working with individual children.
14. Employees and volunteers will not abuse children in anyway including (but not limited to) the following:

*Physical abuse:* hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints

*Verbal abuse:* degrading, threatening, cursing

*Sexual abuse:* inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations

*Mental abuse:* shaming, humiliation, cruelty

*Neglect:* withholding food, water, shelter

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15. Our organization will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one child by another child. In addition, our organization will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, we will take steps needed to eliminate such behavior.

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:

- a. *Physical bullying* – when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
- b. *Verbal bullying* – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful names.
- c. *Nonverbal or relational bullying* – when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.
- d. *Cyberbullying* – the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs). Cyberbullying can involve:
  - Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
  - Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
  - Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.
  - Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
  - Hazing – an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person's willingness to participate.
  - Sexualized bullying – when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposures of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all children, employees and volunteers.

16. All employees must follow state specific mandatory reporting requirements. Employees should be trained to be aware of and understand their legal and ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of mistreatment and abuse. Employees will:
- a. Be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse.
  - b. Know and follow organization policies and procedures that protect children against abuse.

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- c. Report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as required by state mandated reporter laws.
  - d. Follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.
17. Employees and volunteers will report concerns or complaints about other employees, volunteers, adults, or children to our organization's supervisor.
18. Our organization cooperates fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. Any employees or volunteer shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible in any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the organization or persons given investigative authority by the organization. Failure to cooperate fully may be grounds for termination.
19. Employees and volunteers may not have engaged in or been accused or convicted of child abuse, indecency with a child, or injury to a consumer.

### **A. First Step's Policy Prohibiting the Abuse or Mistreatment of children**

This organization has zero tolerance for abuse and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of children in its programs. Any mistreatment or abuse by an employee or volunteer will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer service and cooperation with law enforcement.

### **B. First Step's Policy Prohibiting the Abuse or Mistreatment of One Child by Another Child**

The organization has zero tolerance for abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity among children within the organization. This organization is committed to providing all children with a safe environment and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one child by another. Conduct by children that rises to the level of abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity will result in intervention or disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program.

In addition, our organization will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, the organization will take the necessary steps to eliminate such behavior.

### **III. Policies**

Policies define the bandwidth of acceptable behavior in an organization. Because offenders often violate policies to gain access to children, when employees know and understand policies, they can identify, interrupt, and report policy violations. Simply interrupting a policy violation can prevent a false allegation of abuse or put an offender on notice that no one works in private, the rules apply to everyone, and violations will be detected.

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1. Physical Contact

Our organization's physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children, employees and volunteers. Our organization encourages appropriate physical contact with children and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by employees or volunteers towards children in the organization's programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

The organization's policies for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions include but are not limited to:

<i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i>
Contact initiated by the child such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Side hugs</li><li>· Shoulder-to-shoulder or "temple" hugs</li><li>· Pats on the shoulder or back</li><li>· Handshakes</li><li>· High-fives and hand slapping</li><li>· Pats on the head when culturally appropriate</li><li>· Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</li><li>· Arms around shoulders</li><li>· Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Full-frontal hugs</li><li>· Kisses</li><li>· Showing affection in isolated areas or while one-on-one</li><li>· Lap sitting</li><li>· Piggyback rides, wrestling</li><li>· Tickling</li><li>· Allowing a children to cling to an employee's or volunteer's leg</li><li>· Allowing children, older than kindergarten, to sit on an employee's or volunteer's lap</li><li>· Any type of massage given by or to a child outside of accepted and documented medical treatment</li><li>· Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child or the employee or volunteer</li><li>· Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas that is outside authorized and documented personal care assistance</li></ul>

C. Verbal Interactions

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Employees and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to children in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Employees and volunteers must not initiate sexually oriented conversations with children. Employees and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with children.

Our organization's policies for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions are:

<i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Positive reinforcement</li><li>· Appropriate jokes</li><li>· Encouragement</li><li>· Praise</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Name-calling</li><li>· Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving children in the personal problems or issues of employees and volunteers</li><li>· Secrets</li><li>· Cursing</li><li>· Off-color or sexual jokes</li><li>· Shaming</li><li>· Belittling</li><li>· Derogatory remarks</li><li>· Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate children</li><li>· Derogatory remarks about the child or his/her family</li></ul>

**D. One-on-One Interactions**

Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a child. Our organization aims to eliminate or reduce these situations and prohibits private one-on-one interactions unless approved in advance by the organization administration.

In those situations where one-on-one interactions are approved, employees and volunteers should observe the following additional guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:

<i>Additional Guidelines for One-on-One Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· When meeting one-on-one with a child, always do so in a public place where you are in full view of others.</li><li>· Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high-fives, and handshakes.</li></ul>

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- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
- Inform other employees and volunteers that you are alone with a child and ask them to randomly drop in.
- Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.

E. Off-site Contact - There is to be NO external contact with children.

1. This organization prohibits interactions between employees and volunteers with children outside of regularly scheduled program activities.

F. Electronic Communication

1. This organization prohibits all electronic and social media communication directly with children. These are guidelines for employees:

- Employees and volunteers are prohibited from sending text messages to children and/or replying to text messages from a consumer. If a child attempts to communicate with an employee or volunteer via text, a supervisor must be notified immediately.
- All e-mail communications with children who are minors must be directed to the children's parents/guardians. The director is to be copied on all electronic communication with children. Employees and volunteers are prohibited from all other forms of electronic communications and instant messaging with children.
- Employees and volunteers are prohibited from communicating with children using social networks, including direct messaging through social media and gaming platforms.
- Personal social media accounts and blogs of employees and volunteers must be private and inaccessible to children. Employees and volunteers with profiles on social media sites may not request to be friends with or follow children or approve friend/follow requests from children.

G. Electronic Communication and Social Media Code of Conduct

In recent years, electronic communication and social media platforms have become increasingly popular. While these tools provide many benefits, they also present the potential for inappropriate behavior, increased access to vulnerable children, and privacy violations, therefore First Step discourages social media and electronic communication. If electronic communication is necessary, employees, volunteers, and children participating in this

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organization's programs, events, and activities shall adhere to the following Social Media Code of Conduct:

1. Do not engage in behavior or comments that are, or could be construed by any observer to be, harsh, abusive, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
2. Do not engage in personal attacks, sexually oriented conversations, or discussions about sexual activity.
3. Be a positive role model by exhibiting professionalism in all interactions; portray an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
4. Only program-related messaging may be communicated electronically between employees and volunteers of the organization and children, parents, and guardians. Such communication should generally occur during standard business hours.
5. Employees and volunteers are prohibited from sending private messages to children and/or replying to private messages from a consumer. If a child attempt to privately communicate with an employee or volunteer electronically, their supervisor must be notified immediately.
6. Personal social networking profiles and/or blogs of employees and volunteers shall be private and not shared with children. Employees and volunteers with profiles on social networking sites shall not request to be "friends" with or follow children or approve friend or follow requests from children.
7. Employees and volunteers may not engage in electronic communication or social media contact with other family members or friends of children.
8. Never reveal sensitive or confidential information, including identifiable details or photos of a child without written consent from their parent or legal guardian.
9. Employees and volunteers may not post or share on their personal social media accounts any photographs or videos of children participating in the organization's programs.
10. Employees and volunteers may not post or share inappropriate photos or comments on photos of children.
11. Do not make pornography in any form available to children participating in the organization's programs, events, and activities or assist children in any way in gaining access to pornography.
12. Employees and volunteers may not create web pages on behalf of the organization unless they have prior approval to do so and may not misrepresent their work with the organization or the organization itself.
13. Employees and volunteers engaging in social media and online communication become a public figure associated with the organization and are responsible to help protect the organization and its children. Always act in a professional and constructive manner and use sound judgement before posting or sharing content.

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14. Rather than personally defend the organization's reputation, employees and volunteers should notify their supervisor or an administrator of a negative comment or online representation or if any member of the media contacts them about any matter related to the organization.
15. Employees and volunteers must adhere to uniform standards of electronic communication and social media use as outlined in any applicable organizational policies and procedures.
16. This Code of Conduct and associated policies and procedures shall be provided to parents/guardians of children. It shall also be available on the organization's website for public view.
17. children and Parents/guardians may request in writing that a child not be contacted through any form of electronic communication or social media by an employee or volunteer of the organization.

### Acknowledgment of Electronic Communication and Social Media Code of Conduct

#### Gift Giving

Molesters routinely groom children by giving gifts, thereby endearing themselves to the consumer. They might instruct the child to keep the gifts a secret, which then starts teaching the child to keep secrets from parents/guardians. For this reason, employees and volunteers should only give gifts to groups of children, and only under the following circumstances:

1. Administration must be made aware of and approve the gift.
2. Parents/guardians must be notified.

#### IV. Monitoring and Supervision

When employees are adequately supervised, potential offenders are less likely to act on their impulses because they face detection. When children are adequately supervised, they too are less likely to engage in inappropriate interactions with others. Similarly, the physical plant must be monitored, particularly out-of-the-way locations or locations that might permit an offender undue access to or privacy with a consumer. Effective supervision and monitoring require that a variety of methods be used frequently, at both scheduled and random times.

##### 1. Facility Monitoring

Building architecture can increase or mitigate the risk of an incident or accident. Because most incidents of sexual behavior occur in private, the extent to which privacy is managed, risk is managed, First Step used a facility monitoring checklist and eliminated high-risk areas, reducing or eliminating unnecessary privacy or limit line of sight supervision:

- Ensuring employees and volunteers are aware of these locations and circumstances;



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- Ensuring unused rooms, offices, and closets remain locked;
- Ensuring visibility in rooms without windows; and
- Ensuring employees routinely walk through out of the way locations

All unused rooms, offices, storage areas, and closets are locked. Stairwells are consistently monitored.

All windows permit observation into program areas and offices (i.e., artwork on windows should not prevent informal monitoring by passersby; all blinds on windows should be open).

All program activities are within the designated set by the State of New Jersey.

Employees and volunteers are spread out in the activity area and actively supervising children in authorized areas.

### Bathrooms

The bathroom are monitored and doors remain open while the children's privacy is respected. Bathroom trips are separated into smaller groups to maximize supervision.

Neither children nor adults are just "hanging out" in the bathrooms.

### Miscellaneous Guidelines

All children remain in authorized facility areas that are easily viewed by employees and volunteers (i.e., children are not wandering off by themselves without employees and volunteers present to supervise them) or in structured, supervised program activities.

#### I. Checking Members into a Facility:

1. When anyone (members, guests, residents, construction workers, maintenance, cleaning crews, etc.) enters the facility during operational hours, they must check in with the front desk.
2. When possible, create a single point of entry and exit in the facility.
3. If there is more than one entrance or exit, ensure these other points of access are consistently monitored.

#### J. General Supervision

General supervision procedures:

1. Administrative and Supervisory Visits to child Programs- child supervisors and administrators will regularly visit all child programs to ensure that all activities are well- managed and that child policies are observed by all in attendance.

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2. Ratios- Each program will follow the ratio requirements that are directly to the goals of the program and the design of the program area. The employees or volunteer-to-child ratio should be adjusted for programs that serve children with special needs. Refer to local licensing requirements and general best practice guidelines for establishing adult-to-child ratios.
3. Mixed Age Groups- In most incidents involving one child abusing another consumer, the children are from different age groups. Each program is responsible for establishing specific guidelines for additional monitoring and supervision of activities that involve children from different age groups. Employees and volunteers must be aware that close line of sight supervision is required when monitoring programs that mix age groups.
4. For playgrounds, employees and volunteers should be positioned around the perimeter of the playground to ensure that children are supervised and that they remain the assigned area. Employees and volunteers should also be stationed near playground equipment (such as tunnels and jungle gyms) that do not allow for line-of-sight supervision.

### **K. Monitoring child in Facilities**

Generally, children under the age of 12, or 7<sup>th</sup> grade, should not be alone in the facility without a parent or guardian present. By this age, most children have had the experience of being without immediate parent/guardian supervision. In addition, 12-year-old children are able to use self-protection skills in the event that they are approached inappropriately by another child or by an adult.

However, many child serving programs (i.e. schools) must permit younger children to access the facilities for many reasons without a parent or guardian being present.

That said, because the program is responsible for all children in the facility, we recommend implementing the following practices:

1. Require a parent or legal guardian to complete program registration form which includes identifying information, any special medical or behavioral circumstances, any legal indemnifications, the child's date of birth, and emergency contact information. In addition, require all children to sign-in AND to sign-out of the facilities so that the program has a record of the child who are in the facility at all times.
2. Require parents to sign a Code of Conduct that outlines the program's behavioral expectations and policies regarding appropriate and inappropriate interactions. This Code of Conduct should also include a systematic disciplinary policy which explains that children will be suspended or dismissed from the program for policy violations. Require parents/guardians to sign this Code of Conduct as well, so that systematically checked by employees. children should know that they

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will be supervised by employees at all times, and all employees should know which areas are authorized and which are not.

5. Utilize supervision standards for the authorized areas, as recommended by the State of New Jersey.
6. Train all employees:
  - a. To greet children that enter the facility; to direct children to the structured activities or authorized areas; and, to redirect children who are not in an authorized area or who are not participating in a structured activity.
  - b. To be aware of the risks involved with mixing age groups and how to monitor activities involving mixed age groups.
  - c. To routinely monitor high risk areas (such as bathrooms and unused rooms). First Step designates specific employees to supervise these areas (i.e., Managers on Duty). The employees should document the scheduled and periodic sweeps of high risk locations.

Ultimately, all children must be supervised at all times, regardless of age. The key to remember is that they can be supervised directly in structured activities and indirectly when they are in authorized areas.

### 5. Transition Times and Free Times

Transition times and free-choice times (or free times) pose a high risk for incidents because during these times, employees and volunteers may not be assigned a particular group of children to supervise. To decrease the risk of incidents, implement the following procedures:

- a. Require children to remain in line-of-site of employees at all times.
- b. Specify the employees-to-child ratio.
- c. Specify narrow geographic boundaries in the program areas.
- d. Ensure that all employees are assigned specific areas to supervise (“zone monitoring”).
- e. Include bathroom procedures.
- f. Require periodic roll calls for each age group.
- g. Require supervisors to conduct periodic check-ins and sweeps of the entire activity area.

### 6. Playground Activities

The playground procedures require:

- a. Children to remain in line-of-site of employees at all times.
- b. Definition of specific and narrow geographic boundaries around the playground area.
- c. Specific instructions on how to monitor barriers of supervision (such as storage sheds, playhouses, tunnels, and shrubs).

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- d. That all employees are assigned specific areas to supervise (“zone monitoring”).
- e. Specific bathroom procedures.
- f. Employees to conduct periodic roll calls for each age group.
- g. Supervisors to conduct periodic check-ins and assessments of the activity period and of the entire activity area.

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### HEALTH AND SAFETY

Now more than ever, the top priority for us is keeping your children healthy and safe. We have enhanced our protocols but First Step has already met, and exceeded, all of the standards in the child care and elementary education industry for over 35 years.

Our school has remained open since the beginning of the pandemic, demonstrating determination and reliability in meeting our families', and communities', needs and we have not had one case of COVID-19 affiliated with our school. We are:

- Cleaning and continuously filtering the air in our school
- Encouraging children to wear masks whenever possible, to practice good hygiene and maintain good social distance
- Using a secure Internet system, in addition to secure entry and alarm systems into the building
- Staffed with teachers who are trained and certified in CPR and first aid
- Repeatedly inspected through the New Jersey State Office of Licensing and meet, and exceed, their standards for health protocols

One of the requirements mandated by the State is that you sign in your child at our health check-in daily and fill out the mandatory health information, detailing temperature and exposure to people who might have COVID-19.

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**Daily COVID Check-In Form**

CHILD'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TEMPERATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

Has child been in contact with anyone afflicted with the Coronavirus? YES NO

Is child showing any signs/symptoms of the Coronavirus? YES NO

Did the child receive any medications today? YES\* NO

\*If YES, what type of medication was  
given? \_\_\_\_\_

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RECEIPT OF INFORMATION SHEET

Please initial each item bulleted below and sign at the end to indicate receipt of the following information:

- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Philosophy of Education
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Application
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Rate Sheet
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Visiting and Access
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ School Calendar
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Discipline Policy
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Illness and Communicable Disease Policy
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Health Protocol
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Universal Child Health Record
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Notification
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Release of Children Policy
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Media Policy
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Social Media Policy
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Expulsion Policy
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Department of Children and Families Information to Parents
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ Abuse Prevention Policy
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ COVID Policy
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ COVID Check-in Form

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date

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