

Discovery Zone Learning Center



Parent Handbook

Rev: 3/11

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Discovery Zone Learning Center. We realize that a great deal of thought and consideration has gone into your choice of a child-care center for your child. Our mission is to provide a caring and nurturing environment where your child can learn and develop through chronologically and developmentally appropriate activities. Discovery Zone Learning Center's programs offer peace of mind to each parent by providing the highest standards of childcare and education. We believe we need to be a vital extension of your family, sharing love and concern for your child as we work together to build a foundation for their happiness and success.

Parents are an integral part of our program. We encourage parents to participate in their child's learning process. Parents are always welcome in our center to visit, observe, or speak with our staff. We encourage parents to spend time with their children at our center. We seek to form a partnership with you and foster the learning and healthy development of your child. Our aim is to make our center an extension of your home.

We want to help your family with your child's transition into our Center. We recognize that each child's adjustment period will vary depending on his or her age and prior experiences in a child-care setting. Here are some suggestions on how to facilitate your child's transition into the program.

- Visit the center with your child before he or she begins the program. On one of those visits, leave your child alone for 15 to 20 minutes. This time will allow your child to associate your leaving with a return, and it will allow you an opportunity to observe your child at play with other children.
- Spend some time together in the classroom before your leave each day. Staying in the classroom communicates that you feel the classroom is a good place to be, not some place from which you want to hurry away.
- Say good-bye to your child rather than slipping out. This is so that your child will recognize that although you are leaving, you will return.

As we build our programs together, please feel free to share new ideas. We value the need for close communication between parents and teachers. We look forward to getting to know you and to offering you and your child a safe, caring and discovery-filled environment.

Sincerely,

Robin Green
Director / Owner

Philosophy

We at Discovery Zone Learning Center understand the difficult decision parents must face when choosing a daycare center for your child. That is why we are a friendly, safe and inviting center, dedicated to making your child's experience with us rewarding and positive.

We believe that during your child's early years he or she will learn basic social, intellectual, emotional, and physical skills. These skills are essential for your child's "*growth*". Discovery Zone Learning Center strives to provide your child with these life-long skills. We also believe children below the age of eight learn best when they have: objects they can manipulate; chances to safely explore the world around them; and opportunities to experiment and learn from trial and error. Discovery Zone Learning Center provides this through our planned activities and our educational programs. We foster learning and development by providing space, toys, and opportunities to help your child learn through play. It is important to us to help your child develop and learn in a healthy, safe and positive environment.

Discovery Zone Learning Center facilitates learning and growth for children of all developmental levels in a creative, multicultural atmosphere. Here your child will be encouraged to explore his or her own world and discover that he or she is a unique individual. As your child finds his/her individuality, our staff will strive to help him/her develop his/her social skills through daily activities with his/her peers.

As you can see, Discovery Zone Learning Center believes your child's "*growth*" is not is size alone. We believe that early learning last forever. It is the foundation for your child's years to come. We know when you child leaves us and has grown; he/she will have acquired the skills needed for a successful

DZLC - Goals & Objectives

Discovery Zone Learning Center will provide parents & children with a wide range of child-centered services which support the parents and they family in fostering the emotional, social, physical and intellectual growth of their children.

Infant:

- Caregivers will engage in many one-to-one, face-to-face interactions with infants. Caregivers talk in pleasant, soothing voices and use simple language.
- Infants are held and carried frequently to provide them with a wide variety of experiences. The caregivers talk to infant infants before, during and after moving them around.
- Caregivers listen and respond to the sounds that infants make and respect infants' sounds as the beginnings of communication.
- Caregivers respond quickly to infants' cries recognizing that this is the infants' only way to communicate their needs.
- Playful interactions with infants are done in ways that are sensitive to the child's level of tolerance for physical movement, sounds and other changes.
- Caregivers frequently talk with, sing to and read to infants.
- Caregivers adjust to infants' individual feeding and sleeping schedules. Their food preferences and eating styles are respected.
- Diaper changing areas are routinely sanitized after each use.
- Caregivers speak to parents daily to share pertinent information wit them about their child's day.

Toddler:

- Caregivers engage in many face-to-face, one-on-one conversations with children. Caregivers label or name objects, describe events, and reflect feelings to help children learn new words.
- Caregivers are supportive of children as they develop new skills. Caregivers allow children to do what they are capable of doing and assist with tasks that are frustrating.
- Caregivers respond quickly to children's cries or calls for help.
- Caregivers respect children's developing preferences for food, objects and people.
- Caregivers patiently redirect children to help guide them toward controlling their emotions and actions.
- Caregivers praise children's accomplishments.
- Caregivers greet children each day and help them adjust to being part of a group.
- Caregivers frequently read to children, do finger plays, and sing songs.
- Children are provided with appropriate art materials. Children are encouraged to explore the process of art and are not expected produce a finished art project.
- Caregivers respect children's schedules for eating and sleeping.

- Time schedules are flexible and smooth, directed by children's needs.
- Caregivers provide children with both large & small motor activities daily.
- Caregivers speak daily to parents to share pertinent information with them about their child's day.

Preschool, Kindergarten & Afterschoolers

- Teachers will provide experiences that meet children's needs and stimulate learning in all areas of development; physical, social, emotional and intellectual.
- Teachers will view each child as a unique individual. Teacher interactions with children will be responsive to the individual differences and abilities of each child. Different levels of abilities and learning styles are expected and are an important part of the curriculum. Activities are planned according to the needs of the children.
- Teachers will provide children with a variety of learning areas so they can select many of their own activities.
- Teachers will provide opportunities for children to be physically and mentally active.
- Teachers will provide concrete learning activities with materials and people that are relevant to children's life experiences.
- Teachers will move among groups and individual children, assisting when necessary, asking probing questions and offering suggestions to elaborate play.
- Teachers will encourage the development of self-control in children by using positive guidance techniques such as modeling appropriate behavior, encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to more acceptable activities and setting clear limits.
- Teacher will provide children with many opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperative play, helping others and talking with others to solve interpersonal problems.
- Teachers will provide children with many opportunities to see how reading and writing are useful before they are instructed in letter names & sounds.
- Teachers will provide opportunities for children to learn basic math, science and social studies concepts through play and teacher directed activities.
- Teachers will provide children with daily opportunities to use their large and small motor skills indoors and outdoors.
- Teachers will provide children with daily opportunities to express themselves through art and music.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement, parent satisfaction, and support of family life is essential to Discovery Zone Learning Center. We vigorously work to create ways to involve families in our Center.

- Open door policy. Please stop in at any point of the day. If you would like to come for lunch, please feel free to do so. Parents are welcomed always.
- Daily progress notes are given to parents at the end of each day.
- Parents are welcome to meet or talk to the Director/teacher at any time.
- Parents are encouraged to join classroom activities whenever they wish.
- Parent / Teacher conferences are held twice a year – December & May.

Conflict Resolution

If at any point during your child's stay at Discovery Zone Learning Center you feel that there may or is a communication problem between you and your child's teacher or another staff member, please contact the Director immediately. Discovery Zone Learning Center is committed to responding to all parent grievances within a 24-hour period and to resolving those grievances as quickly as possible. It is critical that long before a conflict arises there already exist an environment that fosters mutual respect, tolerance, and clear, honest communication.

Our Hours

Discovery Zone Learning Center's regular hours are from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. five days a week (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday).

Discovery Zone Learning Center observes the following paid holidays:

- New Year's Eve

- New Years Day
- Forth of July & day before or after
- Memorial Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

In the event that a holiday falls on a weekend, the day prior to or after the holiday will be observed.

Enrollment & Attendance

The enrollment procedure includes defining the child's weekly schedule (9 hours) pick and drop off times must be specified on the enrollment form and also on the sign in & out forms. Per State requirement please be sure to sign in daily. If drop-off or pick-up requires times outside of your defined weekly schedule just let the Director know and arrangements can be made. During the period prior to the child's start date, the Director and parent will schedule as many visits as are necessary to help familiarize the child and parent with the Center, teachers, and other children, so that on the day of enrollment the child will feel completely at home.

All applications must be accompanied by a check for \$50.00 per family made payable to Discovery Zone Learning Center and one week's tuition as a deposit. This is an annual payment.

Discovery Zone Learning Center enrolls children 6 weeks through 12 years of age.

All children who attend Discovery Zone Learning Center must complete forms regarding the child's health and development. These forms include family information; daily schedule including arrival and departure times for selected daily schedule, a medical authorization, consent form, and developmental history. Families must also read and sign a parent enrollment agreement that outlines the Center's policies. This will ensure that you are familiar with all of our operating procedures.

Discovery Zone Learning Center is required by the Department of Public Health to maintain each child's daily attendance with includes arrival times and departure times . All attendance records must be maintained at the facility for at least 2 years.

Discovery Zone Learning Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, creed, ethnicity or disability.

Vacations & Attendance

DZLC does not give credit for family vacations. Weekly tuition is due regardless of vacation or a child's sickness. If your child is sick, please call the center and inform the office that your child will not be attending for the day. Also, please share your child's sickness with the Office.

Withdrawal From Discovery Zone- Family & DZLC

At Discovery Zone Learning Center we understand that every situation is different and respect those lifestyles and career choices which require families to withdraw from our program. A notice is requested, but not required when withdrawing from Discovery Zone Learning Center.

Discovery Zone Learning Center reserves the right to request the withdraw of a family at anytime without prior notice.

Dis-enrollment of a Child due to Behaviors

For other various reasons, some children have difficulty adjusting to a childcare environment. If this is the case, we will make every attempt to work closely with our families to assure a successfully placement.

However, our child-centered approach seeks to accommodate a wide range of individual difference; a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Some examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to him/herself, other children attending the center, center employees or anyone else at the center.

- Medical, psychological, or social service personnel working with the center determine that continued care at the center could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child.
- Any situation in which the accommodations require for the child's success and participation- place an undue or unreasonable burden on the Center's resources and finances, removal will be requested without prior notice.

Late Pickups

Because our teachers work a long day, and it is not fair to make them stay after hours, please allow enough time to leave the center before closing time. A late pickup fee of \$1.00 per child is payable to the center for each minute the child is in the center after closing time until the child leaves. This fee is subject to change at anytime. Payment is due in full immediately the next day. Late pickup is not a normal program option and should be considered an exceptional occurrence.

A staff person will attempt to contact the parent to remind them to pick up their child. If this does not result in a contact then the staff person will contact an emergency/alternate contact person. If this attempt fails then the Police will be notified.

Financial Policies

1. A non-refundable deposit equal to 1 week of tuition is required to reserve your child's space. If the child does not attend the Center, the deposit is forfeited- this includes Camp Discovery & the childcare program.
2. Payment / weekly tuition is required for your child on Monday of each week. If payment is not received by Wednesday 8 a.m. a late fee of \$20.00 will be added. No child will be allowed to attend the program if payments are left unpaid. Excessive late payments will be cause for dismissal from the Center. Balances on the account will be cause for dismissal from the Center. If you are going on vacation please make sure your account is current and paid prior to your vacation.
3. All checks returned by the bank for insufficient funds will have an additional charge of \$25.00. The Director will have the option to refuse any further payments by check.
4. Our regular hours end at 6:00 p.m. There will be a \$1.00 charge (per child) for every minute or fraction thereof that a parent is late. Payment for lateness must be paid immediately in cash to the person who is waiting with your child. Consistent lateness will be cause for dismissal from the Center.
5. Fees are based on actual age, not group placement.
6. Discovery Zone Learning Center reserves the right to discontinue services to any family/child for violation of any of its policies.

Child's Records & Confidentiality

All information given to DZLC will remain confidential and on a need-to-know basis. All student files will be stored and maintained in the Office.

Schedule Changes

In order to provide appropriate supervision for children and to appropriately schedule staff, parents are asked to follow the schedule they set for their child. If you have an emergency and need to alter your schedule, do not hesitate to contact the Director.

Absence

Parents should call the center when their child is going to be absent or arriving after 9:00 a.m. If we do not hear from you, we will be concerned about your child. If a child has a contagious illness, parents are asked to let the Director know so that other parents can be alerted to look for symptoms in their child.

Signing In & Out

Per DPH Regulation each parent must sign in and sign out each night. The sign in & sign out sheet is required to have arrival & departure time. Records will be maintained for 2 years.

To ensure that each child is safe and supervised at all times and to foster daily communication between families and staff, a parent or authorized guardian must accompany each child into the classroom and sign in their child on the attendance sheet. Families must re-enter the center when picking up children and sign out on the attendance sheet each day.

Children will be released only to a parent or legal guardian or to persons whose names are listed on the Child Release Form. Families should advise the Center Director in advance, in writing, if an alternate or person not listed on the original form is to pick up their child. For the safety of each child, photographic identification will be requested of all authorized persons picking up children.

Positive Discipline

Discovery Zone Learning Center believes in positive discipline, which focuses on consistency, prevention, guidance, and redirection. Positive discipline teaches children where limits are set, how to maintain control over their bodies, and how to problem solve in the event of conflict. Our philosophy is a child cannot be “bad”. Inappropriate behavior is viewed as exactly that. We address the inappropriate behavior as the problem, not the child.

Child are encouraged to resolve conflicts by verbalizing their feelings to one another and **NOT** by resorting to destructive behavior. This helps them develop social skills, self-control, and reduces conflict between them. We offer children choices whenever possible. By doing this, we help them become responsible for their own actions by choosing what they will do. We also set reasonable and positive expectations for them. We feel this kind of discipline maximizes the child’s growth and development. Discovery Zone Learning Center always has your child’s best interest in mind. Here are some guide lines Discovery Zone Learning Center follows.

- Expectations are limited to what is realistic for developmental level of the child, and are clarified for children so that they understand what is expected of them.
- Teachers speak and act in ways in which they want children to speak and act.
- Teachers encourage children’s efforts to build feelings of self-worth.
- The Center’s staff encourages behaviors such as helping, cooperating, negotiating and problem solving.

The use of Time-out outs will be used when a child displays an inappropriate behavior. However, the child will be given a warning and choices on how to correct the behavior first. If the child continues the inappropriate behavior then a time-out will be given. Children are placed in a quite area for one minute per year of life. Once the time-out is completed the teacher will discuss and review the inappropriate behavior, which required the time-out. The teacher reviews the time-out so that the child understands the reason he or she was placed in the time-out. The teacher will be in eye contact during the time-out.

At no time is spanking or corporal punishment tolerated at Discovery Zone Learning Center. Children are never subjected to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal, physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment. Children are never force-fed. Children are never punished for wetting or soiling in their clothing. And children are never forced to remain in soiled clothing.

SUPERVISION & TEACHER: CHILD RATIO

Staff members must comply with the Teacher: Child Ratio set forth by the Department of Public Health.

Infants	1 : 4
Toddlers	1 : 4
Preschool	1 : 10
School age	1: 10

It is the responsibility of every staff member to monitor their classroom often, especially at early morning and late afternoon, for compliance. It is mandatory that when a group becomes over ratio, either too many children or too many teachers that DZLC will immediately adjust staffing accordingly to correct the problem. Staff /child ratios must be maintained during nap time (in the building only), playground time (indoor & outdoor), classroom time, bathroom time, kitchen time and bus-stop time . Children must be in visual/sound supervision at all times.

When there is a mixed age group, the lower required ratio for the age of the youngest shall prevail.

Criminal Checks- Teachers / Volunteers / Substitutes Teachers

Upon hiring each staff person, that person's name, address, phone number and date of birth shall be submitted to the Department of Public Health for a criminal check on forms provided by the Department of Public Health. All employees hired at DISCOVERY ZONE LEARNING CENTER must submit to fingerprinting. If a prospective employee is found to have a criminal history and or a record of Abuse & Neglect, Discovery Zone Learning Center will not hire that person.

Volunteers may be used in the building as an extra set of hands, but never to be left alone with the children. A DZLC staff person will be within sight and hearing of any volunteer in the building.

SMOKING / SUBSTANCE ABUSE / FIREARMS

DISCOVERY ZONE LEARNING CENTER recognizes that smoking in the workplace may adversely affect employees and children. Accordingly, smoking is prohibited on all center premises. This smoking policy applies to all employees, parents, and visitors while on the center's premises.

Discovery Zone Learning Center is a DRUG FREE ZONE – at no point in time are illegal drugs permitted in or around Discovery Zone Learning Center.

Firearms - per CT General Statutes 53-206; *No dangerous weapon as described in section 53-206 of the CT General Statutes or facsimile of a firearm as defined in section 53-206c of the CT General Statutes shall be permitted on the premises of the child day care center or group day care home unless the carrier of such weapon or facsimile firearm is a police officer as defined in section 53a-3 of the CT General Statutes.*

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

ORIENTATION , ON-GOING TRAINING

WORKSHOP/CONFERENCE/TRAINING ATTENDANCE

All staff working directly with children, including the Director shall complete training which totals 30 hours their first year of employment and 24 hours thereafter.

Yearly, mandated training consist of the following trainings: Signs & Symptoms Illness', Fire Safety & Fire Drills, Playground Safety, Bloodborne Pathogens, Standards & you/Immunizations, Basic Childcare, Abuse & Neglect/Reporting, Curriculum Planning, SIDS, CPR & First Aid, Medication, EpiPen, Behavior & Classroom Management, Policy & Procedures.

Documentation of the individual training plan and completion of the required training shall be kept in a binder located in main office. Each staff member will be responsible for their own required training hours. Individual staff records will be available for review by The Department of Public Health during licensing inspection.

Health & Safety

To ensure that parents and children feel safe and comfortable at all times, families of enrolled children are welcome under an open-door policy to visit at any time during the day. Staff undergoes a thorough screening & hiring process, which includes background (police/FBI & Department of Children & Families) and reference checks.

Staff that are certified in First Aid, CPR and Bloodborne Pathogens (infection control) are present in the center at all times. Discovery Zone Learning Center employs a Nurse to advice on all health and safety issues.

Cribs and infant toys are cleaned and sanitized with a bleach/water solution on a daily basis; or after they are mouthed. Classroom furniture and equipment is washed and sanitized daily or more often if needed.

Crib sheets, and machine washable fabric toys are washed on a weekly basis, or more often if needed. Toddlers cots will be sanitized on a weekly basis. Daily for children who use the cote a day to day basis. Blankets and washable toys that belong to children are sent home at the end of week for washing.

Hand Washing Procedure:

Discovery Zone Learning Center recognizing the importance of hand washing as the first line of defense against infectious disease; unwashed hands are the primary carriers of germs & bacteria that cause infection.

Teachers & children wash hands before and after the following activities:

- Handling food
- Eating food
- Wiping noses
- Cleaning
- Toileting & diapering
- Contact with any bodily fluids
- Cleaning up after projects

Infection Control:

All staff is trained in general infection control procedures during orientation. Included in this training are proper hand washing and hygiene measures, sanitation procedures, handling of bodily secretions, diapering and toileting procedures.

The following items, surfaces or equipment will be washed with soap and water and disinfected on the following schedule:

After each use:

- Toys or other objects mouthed by infants & toddlers
- Bibs
- Mops used for cleaning bodily fluids
- Diapering area

All surfaces are cleaned and disinfected weekly or more often when needed.

Diapering Procedure:

When changing diapers we follow these procedures:

- Wash hands 20 seconds and child's hands
- Put on a pair of latex gloves. A new pair of gloves is mandatory with each and every diaper change.
- Place paper barrier on the changing table
- Change diaper. One hand will be on the child at all times.
- Wash hands (teacher & child's)
- Remove paper barrier
- Disinfect changing table
- Wash hands & child's hands

Children are washed and dried with individual washing materials such as "wet wipes". A clean diaper is placed on the child and ointment applied if requested and provided by the parent. Children are changed every two-three hours and immediately after each bowel movement and before dismissal.

Toddler-Toilet Training Policy

Learning to use the toilet is a major milestone for any child. Toilet training should be a positive experience for everyone involved. Research indicates that young children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, mentally, and emotionally ready. Most pediatricians say that children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Toilet training is most successful when it is started between two and half & three years of age. Teachers & parents must look for the signs of readiness (can verbally voice toilet needs, can pull pants down and can recognize something in the private area is happening). Toilet training can be easily accomplished when the child is ready, but it takes patience, commitment, and cooperation between parents & staff. **Consistency is**

essential. Discovery Zone Learning Center believes good communication between parents and staff is the secret to success!

The Center will begin toilet training once the child's parents & staff decide the child is ready. Toilet training can only be accomplished when the child has the ability to realize the need to go and the communication skills to express the need. Staff & parents will work together through this process. **Please support the following guidelines:**

The weekend prior to starting the pull-up phase please have your child wear underwear the entire weekend so they can actually feel what it feels like to urinate/BM in their underwear. We know this can be very messy, however, children learn by feeling their environment. Monday...start pull-ups at school. **This is a very important stage of toilet training.**

When your child begins the process of toilet training we require children to wear pull-ups and use the bathroom during scheduled toilet training times (every 20-30 minutes). Children wearing pull-ups MUST wear clothing that they can take on and off by themselves (i.e. pants with elastic waistbands, and a T-shirt or jersey. Please no onesies, snap T-shirts, overalls, etc.). Once your child remains somewhat dry in the pull-up for a maximum of 2 weeks we will ask you to place your child in training underwear the weekend prior to wearing underwear here at the Center. Once your child begins to wear underwear **please do not return to pull-ups...**this only prolongs toilet training & confuses the child.

If your child is not successful within two weeks of the pull-up phase, then we will ask you to return your child back to diapers. We have found that children who wear pull-ups longer than 2 weeks are typically not ready for toilet training. Toilet training should only take about a month to complete, two weeks in pull-ups & two weeks in underwear.

We allow four children to use the bathroom at one time, while supervised by a staff member. Parents please provide many outfits and lots of pull-ups/ training underwear during this phase of your child's learning.

In order to receive the Preschool 3's daily price, your child must be completely toilet trained. Otherwise, the toddler daily price will apply.

Food Safety:

The parent will supply all formula, baby food and lunches for their child. A refrigerator is located in the infant room for storage and a bottle warmer for heating all necessary bottles. Please provide ready-made bottles. Infant bottles must be plastic and capped. All bottles and caps should be clearly labeled with your child's name. All bottle-fed children will be held during feeding times. All unused portions of the bottle & food will be discarded. All bottles will be sent home at the end of the day. The Center requires for food safety reasons that all lunches contain a "cold pack" so that your child's lunch does not become unsafe for them to eat. DZLC provides only snacks for morning and afternoon. All food handled by staff members will be handled with proper food safety measures. Gloves will be worn during cutting of fruit & dairy.

Snacks From Home:

If food from home is intended for other children in your child's class to consume, (i.e. birthday cake, cupcakes, or cookies) we strongly encourage store-bought items to be dispensed from its original, unopened container. If you prefer to make homemade treats---we MUST have a listing of all ingredients from either the box mix or from the recipe. There are many children with food allergies-we need this information to protect them.

Breast Feeding:

Discovery Zone Learning Center will be more than happy to make arrangements for nursing mothers to visit their infants any time of the day and provide you with a quiet place to enjoy your nursing experience. If the Center is not near enough to your work site, please feel free to provide us with expressed milk to feed your baby.

Rest & Nap time:

Infant

Infant Sleeping Plan

To reduce the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) infants (unless otherwise ordered by a physician) will be put down on their backs (prone position) to sleep. When infants can easily turn over from the back position they shall be put down to sleep on their back, but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer for sleeping per DPH.

Only firm mattresses manufactured for sale as infant sleeping equipment will be used at DZLC. During sleep time infants will be placed in their cribs. Cribs will be checked to ensure that they are up and locked. Infants may not sleep in their

car seats (regardless of parents' request unless a written doctor's order is on file), bouncers or swings. Pillows, quilts and other such items are not permitted inside the crib with the infant per DPH regulation.

Visual supervision will be maintained at all times.

Toddler & School Age Children

Young toddlers nap according to their own schedules. A morning & afternoon nap will be offered.

Older toddlers nap during the early afternoon.

Children returning from kindergarten & school age children are provided the opportunity to rest when they are at the Center.

We provide cribs & cots for all of the children to rest. Children may bring a small blanket and stuffed animal to rest with.

Medical

Illness or Emergency Care

To ensure the health and safety of the children, children with any of the following symptoms will not be allowed to remain at DISCOVERY ZONE LEARNING CENTER: Temperature of 101, conjunctivitis (pink-eye), strep throat, head lice, vomiting, diarrhea, rashes of unknown origin, or the presence of a contagious disease.

A child will be sent home if any of the above symptoms are seen during the day. The Center is not equipped to care for ill children. Each family must be prepared with a reliable emergency contact in the event the child becomes ill during the day and the parents cannot be reached.

A child who is sick must be separated from the other children to prevent further contagion. A designated area for a sick child will be taken to the main office where one of the office staff will watch the child until the parent arrives. The child may bring their cot & rest during this time.

We ask that for the child's comfort and to reduce the risk of contagion, children be picked up within one hour or sooner of notification.

A child will be allowed to return to the Center if he or she has been on medicine for a contagious illness for 24 hours or is fever free. Please, fever free means no Tylenol, or any other medication. Medication only masks the symptoms.

If a child is well enough to attend the Center then he or she is well enough to participate in all activities, including outside playtime.

Should your child require emergency medical care, we need to have all emergency numbers on file in case we cannot reach you. It is therefore important that all information be listed on the enrollment application. In case of an accident requiring immediate medical attention, an emergency vehicle will be contacted, as well as the parent. The Director or appropriate staff person will accompany the child to the hospital and will stay with the child until the parent has arrived. Staff will bring with them the child's appropriate medical information. It is important that your physician and choice of hospital be recorded in their file. All paperwork of this type will be given to you before your child is enrolled so that you may complete the required forms before their first day at the Center.

If an emergency incident does arise with your child and medical attention is required an emergency vehicle will be contacted. If DZLC is responsible for the incident or accident DZLC's medical liability insurance will cover the expense of the emergency incident. If DZLC's medical liability insurance company finds that the accident was of no fault of DZLC and was the result of human nature (i.e. child tripping over their own feet, running on the playground and hits his/her head on the playscape) DZLC will not be responsible for any medical expenses caused by human nature accidents.

Discovery Zone Learning Center does employ a nurse who visits the Center weekly. She is available for consultations if parents feel the need. The nurse also maintains all medical records on your child.

Medication

Discovery Zone Learning Center believes that all children who require medication during the hours they participate in child care should have medication administered safely to them in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes and Regulations of CT State Agencies for child day care centers. To accommodate this need Discovery Zone Learning Center does administer medication.

Discovery Zone Learning Center requires written permission from the parent & doctor in order to administer any medication (Authorization for Medication in a Daycare Center Form must be filled out). Discovery Zone Learning Center allows nonprescription topical medication without a prescription. All written prescriptions must be written by your doctor and the first dose must be taken with the parent.

Topical Medication (i.e. sunscreen, diaper cream, powder or ointments): A Topical Medication Form, located in a binder in each classroom, needs to be filled out and signed by the parent for each topical medication. This form is valid for one year.

Illness Policy

Chicken Pox:

The incubation period is 7-21 days prior to the first pimple like symptom to appear. A child is considered contagious for 7 days after the first appearance and until all vesicles are dry and scabbed over. Many children experience "flu-like" symptoms- fever, fussiness, and vomiting before they actually break out with the rash. Children are contagious for 24-48 hours after the first lesion appears.

Colds:

Children will undoubtedly have colds, especially during the winter months. If the cold is accompanied by fever, greenish-yellow drainage from the nose, or fussiness, the child should be kept at home.

Conjunctivitis (pink eye):

Conjunctivitis is an extremely contagious illness. The symptoms include "weeping eyes" many times with a white to greenish-yellow drainage. The child may also complain that his/her eyes itch or hurt. Pink eye is easily treated with a medication from your doctor. Because Pink eye is so highly contagious, the child should not return to the Center until the eyes clear up or two doses of medications.

Diarrhea/Vomiting:

A child developing diarrhea and vomiting will be sent home. Diarrhea will consist of three or more loose/liquid stools in a one-hour period. Children should be free of symptoms for 24 hours and be able to tolerate a regular diet before returning to the Center.

Ear Infections:

Although there is some controversy as to whether or not ear infections themselves are contagious, most physicians agree that the virus/bacteria in the cold that usually accompanies the ear infection is contagious. All children diagnosed as having an ear infection must be on an antibiotic for 24 hours before returning to the Center.

Fever:

Children with a temperature of 101 degrees should be kept home. Many times a fever is the first sign of an infection or illness, which could be contagious to other child. If a child should develop a fever at the Center of 101 degrees orally, the child's parent will be called and asked to take their child home. Children should be fever-free (temperature at but not above 98.6 degrees) without the use of a fever reducing medication (i.e. Tylenol, Children's Advil or Motrin, etc.) for 24 hours before returning to the Center.

Head Lice:

1. Check with your doctor or pharmacy for appropriate shampoo.
2. Bed sheets & pillow cases, clothing, hats and other head-gear such as combs, brushes, etc. must be washed in hot water (130 degrees) with soap or detergent.
3. Anything that can't be washed should be placed in a tightly sealed plastic bag for 10 days (this kills the lice).

4. Hair must be fine combed daily for seven days.
5. At the end of the seven days, repeat the shampoo again.

Children who have been treated for lice may return to the Center after treatment.

Impetigo (Infectious skin lesions- scab-like):

These lesions may have signs of honey colored drainage. They are found many times on the face or diaper area. A child is considered contagious until an oral antibiotic has been given for 24 hours.

Slivers:

If your child gets a sliver under his or her skin. We will wash the area thoroughly with soap & water and apply a Band-Aid, then you will be notified. We will observe the area for the remainder of the day for signs of infection.

Strep Throat:

Strep Throat is a contagious illness, which must be treated with an antibiotic. Symptoms include, sore throat, usually accompanied by a fever and a headache. The child may also complain of a stomachache or nausea. If your child has been diagnosed as having strep throat, she/he must be on antibiotic for 24 hours before returning to the Center.

Ticks:

During the spring, summer and fall months, ticks can be found in the area. If a tick is found on your child while in our care, you will be notified. Your doctor will be able to advise you about the best procedure for removing ticks, or you may want to have your doctor remove it for you.

Immunizations

Any time your child has received an immunization, please inform the Center. This will avoid a phone call being placed to you if your child develops a fever as a result. This is especially important for the MMR shot, which is given at 15 months of age. The possible side effects of this vaccine are "delayed reactions". The symptoms are: fever, fussiness, and rash, which do not occur until 5-15 days after the immunization was given. We will note the date, thus avoid mistaking this for an illness. DPH requires all children in daycare to follow a certain time frame immunization schedule. If the immunization scheduled is not followed according DZLC will not be able to allow your child to attend until the immunization scheduled is followed. Your doctor is aware of the required immunization schedule. If you have questions – please ask someone in the Office.

Coxsackievirus – Hands, Foot, & Mouth Disease:

The symptoms of this virus may include complaints of sore throat, fever, and/or cold. These are accompanied by a blister type rash on the palms of hands, soles of the feet and/or inside the mouth. It is not necessary to have them in all three areas: many people with this virus have them only in one or two areas. The important things to note with this virus are as follows:

1. The coxsackievirus is extremely contagious. As with chickenpox, the virus is transmitted through the respiratory system (airborne) and a person is probably most contagious just before breaking out with the blisters. Because the symptoms are mild (many children never run a temperature or have a cold) the blisters may be overlooked or mistaken for poison ivy. Anyone with the blisters continues to be contagious until all have faded. The infected person also can pass the virus through their stool for up to three weeks after blister stage.
2. The virus is not limited to children. Very often it is passed on to adults in the family.
3. The child can not return to the Center until the blisters are completely gone.

Rashes:

An unidentified rash appearing on a child's body must be seen by a doctor. The child cannot return to the Center until we receive a written confirmation from the doctor that the rash is not contagious.

Thrush:

Thrush is a fungal infection usually limited to the mouth. It is characterized by raised white bumps, which resemble a milk or formula coating on the tongue or gums. Unlike milk, however, it can not be wiped off. It is highly contagious, even while the child is being treated. It is transmitted by anything that comes in contact with the mouth. Treatment

usually consists of a ten-day course of oral Nystatin, which is prescribed by your pediatrician. If you suspect that your child has Thrush, he/she can not come to the Center. Any child over the age of 5 months will not be allowed to return to the Center until all the white bumps have disappeared. An infant between the ages of 6 weeks and 5 months will be allowed to return after he/she has been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.

Physical Exam Requirements & Health Forms:

The State of Connecticut has very specific requirements in this area. In order for Discovery Zone Learning Center to maintain its license to provide child care for your child, the following requirements must be met:

1. For children below school age, an **annual physical exam** report signed by a licensed physician must be submitted to the Center by the parent/guardian. Immunizations must also be included on the physical exam form. We are required to have the day, month, and year for each immunization. A thirty day allowance after an expired physical will be given.
2. For school age children, physical exam reports are required by the State of Connecticut on the same schedule as the public school system. Exams are required at the beginning of kindergarten, second & sixth grade. Completed immunization records are also required.
3. *Care Plan:* Children with disabilities or special health problems care needs such as, allergies, special dietary needs, dental problems, hearing, visual impairments, chronic illness, developmental variations, contagious diseases and an individual plan of care for a child with special health care needs developed with the child's parent and health care provider and updated, as necessary. Such plan shall include appropriate care of the child in the event of a medical or other emergency and shall be signed by the parent and staff responsibly for the care of the child.

Health forms are always available at DISCOVERY ZONE LEARNING CENTER.

Parents' Bulletin Board

The Parents' Bulletin Board is located in lobby area of the Center. Please check the bulletin board frequently. We post all social functions, parent meetings, conferences, timely news issues, etc. on the bulletin board.

Lunch & Snack

Parents are to provide all lunches & drinks for their child. Discovery Zone Learning Center will provide a morning & afternoon snack and drink. Snack menus are posted on the refrigerator in the kitchen. Please provide an ice-pack in your child's lunch daily. Lunch's are kept in your child's cubby. Use of the refrigerator is limited to snack & drink for Discovery Zone Learning Center.

We have found that most children like "finger foods" as an alternative to the traditional "lunch box" meal. Plastic food containers or recyclable butter tubs are great idea for packing fruits and vegetables, cheese, or pieces of meat. Please make sure that all lunch boxes, bags, and containers are labeled with your child's name.

If your child has allergies to certain foods please share that information with your child's teacher. Because of this critical issue, it is Discovery Zone Learning Center's policy that child never share food or formula. All food allergies will be posted in each classroom so that every staff member working with your child will be informed.

Lesson Plans

Lesson plans are posted in each classroom. Please check this daily so you will know what projects and or songs your child's group is learning during the week.

Teachers also fill out a more detailed daily note each day, summarizing what the class has done with their day.

Things to Bring

Infants:

- Formula/Breast Milk
- Large box of diapers
- Wipes
- Three complete changes of clothing

- Pacifier (if needed)
- Crib blanket
- Baby food / cereal- please write your child's name on all food
- Diaper ointment, cream, powder etc. (signed authorization required)
- Bibs
- Sun block (signed authorization required-please consult with your doctor. Most doctors recommend sun block after 12 months).
- Bottles- marked with your child's name
- Any comfort item (stuffed animal, blankies, etc.)
- **Toddlers:**
- Sippy cup
- Nap blanket
- Two complete changes of clothes (more if toilet training)
- Large box of diapers (if applicable)
- Wipes
- Comfort items-for nap time only
- Outdoor clothing
- Diaper cream, ointment, powder (signed authorization required)
- Sun block (signed authorization required)

Preschoolers:

- Extra clothing
- Nap blanket
- Outdoor clothing
- Comfort item
- Sun block (signed authorization required)

School age children:

- Extra clothing
- Outdoor clothing
- Sun block (signed authorization required)
- Swimming Vest for Camp Discovery if your child is not able to swim

All children should wear comfortable play clothes to Discovery Zone Learning Center. Many of our activities are messy. All items should be labeled with your child's name & initials.

To cut down on confusion children are not permitted to bring toys from home to the Center.

Shoeless Infant Room

We have a shoeless policy in the infant room. Children in these rooms spend the majority of their time on the floor therefore; we require that all children and parents remove their shoes when entering these rooms.

Weather Closing

In the event that Discovery Zone Learning Center must close due to weather or other emergency conditions please watch for the announcement on , channel 3 and 30 and 61.

Evacuation:

In the event of a natural disaster, where shelter is required, the Elmes Elementary school in Marlborough for DZ- Marlborough and Porter Elementary for DZ- Columbia will act as our evacuation shelter. Laidlaw Transit Bus Company (537-0777) will provide transportation or the Center vans will provide the necessary transportation. The Director/ Ast. Director will be responsible for bringing all required Emergency forms. The Director/ Ast. Director will also be responsible for contacting all parents and informing them of their child's whereabouts.

Child Abuse Reporting Abuse & Neglect

At DISCOVERY ZONE LEARNING CENTER we take the abuse and/or neglect of a child very seriously. We are considered, by law, to be mandated reporters (see below) of child abuse and/or neglect. We are required by the state of Connecticut

to report to the Department of Children & Families (DCF) any child we believe to be suffering from serious physical or emotional injury as a result of abuse or neglect by any caretaker within 12 hours.

What is abuse and neglect?

- ◆ Abuse & neglect is a non-accidental injury to a child which, regardless of motive, is inflicted or allowed to be inflicted by the person responsible for the child's care.

Types of Abuse & Definitions:

Physical Abuse-is any physical injury inflicted other than by accidental means, any injury at variance with the history given of them, or a child's condition which is the result of maltreatment such as malnutrition, deprivation of necessities or cruel punishment.

- ◆ Head injuries, bruises, cuts, internal injuries, burns, scalds, death.

Sexual Abuse & Exploitation- is any incident of sexual contact involving a child that is inflicted or allow to be inflicted by the person responsible for the child's care.

- ◆ Rape, intercourse, sodomy, fondling, oral sex, incest sexual penetration & sexual exploitation.

Emotional Abuse or Maltreatment- Emotional abuse or maltreatment is the result of cruel or unconscionable acts and/or statements made, threatened to be made, or allowed to be made by the person responsible for the child's care that have a direct effect on the child. The observable and substantial impairment of the child's psychological, cognitive, emotional and/or social well-being and functioning must be related to the behavior of the person responsible for the child's care.

- ◆ Repeated negative acts or statements, exposure to violent, brutal, or intimidating acts or statements among members of the household, rejection of the child.

Neglect- Neglect is the failure, whether intentional or not, of the person responsible for the child's care to provide and maintain adequate food, clothing, medical care, supervision, and /or education. There are four types of Neglect- Physical, Medical Educational & Emotional/Moral.

Physical Neglect- failure to provide food, shelter, and clothing appropriate to the climatic and environmental conditions. Failure to provide proper supervision. Leaving the child alone for an excessive period of time.

Medical Neglect- the refusal or failure on the part of the person responsible for the child's care to seek, obtain, and/or maintain those services for necessary medical, dental, or mental health care. Withholding medically indicated treatment.

Educational Neglect- Failure to registered the child for school or is not allowed to attend school. This affects children 7 years to 15 years.

Emotional/Moral Neglect- is the denial of proper care and attention to the child, emotionally and/or morally, by the person responsible for the child's care that may result in the child's maladaptive functioning.

- ◆ Encouraging the child to steal or engage in illegal activites, encouraging the child to use drugs and/or alcohol.

Mandated reporters are required to report or cause a report to be made when, in their professional capacity, they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of 18 has been abused, neglected or is placed in imminent risk of serious harm by a person responsible for the child's health, welfare or care, or by a person given access to the child by the responsible person. (Connecticut General Statutes 17a-101a)

Summer Program

Each summer, Discovery Zone Learning Center offers families a summer enrichment program, with added outdoor extracurricular activities. We feel summer is a special time of the year for children and an opportunity to engage in new and different experiences. For parents of school age children please see the Director for details on additional fee charges for our Camp Discovery Program.

Camp Discovery

During the summer months for our school age children we provide a full camp experience for our 1st graders (going into 1st grade) and up children. Daily field trips are planned and children visit many fun places like museums, mini-golfing and swimming. Camp Discovery provides all the transportation. Camp Discovery begins the day after school lets out and ends the day before school begins. We follow the 1:10 ratio.

Field Trips – All Age Groups

DZLC will notify parents of all field trips. Only toddler / preschool and school age children are permitted to attend field trips. If a classroom plans a field trip the teacher will notify the Director and receive verbal permission first. Once verbal permission is granted from the Director then the teacher will notify the parent through a permission slip. The permission slip will state the following information: where the class is going, time of departure from DZLC, time of return to DZLC, cost of the field trip, if DZLC will be providing the transportation, if a car seat is needed and who will be attending the field trip. All field trip permission slips will be kept in the child's file.

Field Trips

Field trips do not occur often in the Preschool & Toddler program, however when they do DZLC will provide the transportation in the Center's vans. You will be notified and a permission slip must be signed and returned. As always parents are welcomed to attend all or any field trip of their choice. If permission is not given for your child to attend the field trip please find other arrangements during the assigned field trip times. Credit or a discount will not be given for not attending the field trip.

Camp Discovery for school age children during the summer – transportation will be provided by DZLC in DZLC vans.

Parent Teacher Meetings

Parent teacher conferences will be scheduled in December & May (Toddler – Preschool- 4 only). A written notice indicating the exact dates and times will be sent home when the conferences are approaching. The conferences are at time when teachers can discuss your child's developmental progress with you at length. If you are not able to attend – we can accommodate a phone conference or provide a written report.

Parents are always welcome to request a conference at anytime during the year if they feel it is warranted. We suggest that parents make an appointment to meet with their child's teacher during naptime to discuss concerns or issues. Drop off & picks up times are not a good time to discuss concerns, because the teachers are busy with the children. If you feel that your child's teacher does not adequately address your concerns, please feel free to contact the Director.

Toys

Please do not bring in toys from home. The Center can not be held accountable or responsible for their whereabouts if they are lost.

Van

Discovery Zone Learning Center has many vans for which the Center uses for field trips. The Center van does not regularly transport children to and from school. Children over the age of four being transported in the vans are not required to use a car seat or a booster. The vans have a special license that allows for children to sit directly on the seat during transporting. Children are required to wear seat belts at all times. Permission slip is required to attend all field trips.