

Never Grow Up, Inc.

Child Development Centers and Preschools



Parent Handbook

Parent Handbook

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Parent Handbook

WELCOME

Dear New Academy or Holly Tree Family,

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to our family of schools. We are so happy to have you and your family here.

Our schools are proud of the continued community recognition as the “Best Preschool” in Middle Tennessee and we strive to maintain the high quality of care that the families have come to know and expect from our schools.

As child care providers, we strive to achieve a bond of trust and love with you and your child that comes from the daily interaction of caring for them. Each day, we focus on providing a nurturing, safe, and loving environment that children love!

We ask that you read this handbook. Feel free to ask any questions that you may have. We know you have many child care options, and we thank you for choosing us to provide the high-quality care that your family needs and deserves.

Sincerely,

Lesley Hosford, Chief Operating Officer

...Grow, Learn, Play!

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STAFF AND CURRICULUM

About us

Our schools are owned and operated by Never Grow Up, Inc. (NGU), a licensed corporation of child development centers and preschools in Middle Tennessee. Never Grow Up, Inc. is dedicated to providing quality early childhood education and child care in a loving atmosphere.

Staff: "We're Creating Childhood"

Children deserve a fun and memorable childhood and we pride ourselves on having a home-like atmosphere in each of our centers to make that happen. Our experienced and degreed teachers are specifically chosen for their caring attitudes, knowledge of child development, and their enthusiasm for teaching young children. Professional development including training in First Aid, CPR, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) prevention, as well as age-specific training on child development is a continuous process for our staff. In addition, we make it a priority to remain informed about current child development and education research and trends in order to most effectively serve your child's needs. Each teacher undergoes a criminal background and fingerprint check to ensure your child's safety.

State Requirements

We abide by state requirements, and these rules and regulations help guide our practices and processes. All staff members have a health screening, background check, and reference check before beginning employment. Furthermore, our staff members participate in additional training hours each year for continued professional development.

Curriculum

Our program uses a nationally recognized, research-based curriculum as its educational foundation. Our teachers then expand upon this curriculum with additional projects, activities, and games designed to enrich your child's educational experience. In addition, our teachers are trained to recognize the unique strengths and talents of each child to provide individualized activities to foster each child's development. Our educational program is designed to be creative and fun for your child, with hands-on learning experiences and many opportunities to learn through play!

Conscious Discipline

Our classroom management style is based on the Conscious Discipline model, which focuses on helping children achieve success by increasing safety, connection, and problem-solving. It is proven to improve the quality of student-teacher interactions and the social and emotional behavior of students. Conscious Discipline holds that change and self-control are possible and have a profound impact on others. It advocates that behavior is governed by connectedness, and views conflict as an opportunity to teach. Visit ConsciousDiscipline.com or talk to your child's teacher for more information on this unique classroom management philosophy.

Enrichment Programs

We know that it is important for kids to learn from the experts! Therefore, we bring in outside professionals to teach your children special skills. At Never Grow Up preschools, we provide enrichment classes in art, culture, technology, science and movement/fitness. Some of these classes begin for children as young as one and a half year of age. Holly Tree provides JAM (Jesus and Me) classes in its curriculum. These enrichment classes are a part of your child's regular program and are included in your weekly tuition!

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Tadpoles

Tadpoles is the program through which we manage classrooms, prepare lesson plans, and communicate your child's daily activities. Through Tadpoles, you can receive and download photos, videos, and notes about your child's day, and receive important messages and reminders from the center. Visit www.tadpoles.com or talk with your child's teacher for more information.

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ENROLLMENT AND TUITION

Admission

Admission to NGU programs is based on availability and the age of your child. When a classroom no longer has open enrollment availability, a waiting list will be established. Priority will be given to siblings of currently enrolled children and active military families. Otherwise, individuals will be placed on the waiting list on a first-come, first-served basis. NGU does not discriminate against any race, religion, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation.

Enrollment Application

A complete and signed application form is required. Please be sure to answer every question thoroughly. In addition, you must fill out a Health History checklist and provide an updated immunization record prior to your child's start date. The immunization record must be up to date and signed or stamped by the child's physician. Parents will be asked to sign state mandated forms annually, including a Flu Form and a Keeping Kids Safe Curriculum Acknowledgement.

Registration and Supply Fees

An initial registration fee and the first week of tuition are required to hold enrollment space until the requested start date. These fees are non-refundable. In order to provide our excellent curriculum and activities, we require an annual Supply Fee for materials, which is due in the fall. Please refer to the Fee Schedule in your enrollment package for more detailed information.

Tuition Payments

Payment must be received prior to the first day your child attends. Thereafter, tuition is due at the beginning of each week. Upon deciding to withdraw your child from the center, a written two-week notice is required. If no notice is given, you will be required to pay tuition for the additional two weeks.

- Tuition is based on enrollment NOT attendance. Full payment is required even if the child is not in attendance, regardless of absences or closings.
- No credit will be given for illness, vacation, center closing due to a holiday or an emergency situation, or inclement weather. Never Grow Up, Inc. reserves the right to close the center for weather or safety-related reasons.
- All tuition is paid through automatic bank drafts. Your deposit and first week's tuition may be paid with a check. If the draft fails a 10% late fee will be charged.
- Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the center.
- Ask your center's director about our referral program, and how to win a free week of tuition!

Annual Rate Change

We reserve the right to adjust rates annually.

Disenrollment

We require a two-week written notice to be given in the event that a family ends enrollment at the center (including when a child leaves the center to attend kindergarten). Payment of tuition for these two weeks is required even if a family leaves prior to the end of the two-week period. We reserve the right to dis-enroll any family for any reason deemed necessary, including non-payment of tuition or other fees, disruptive or dangerous behavior as deemed by center staff, or the inappropriate or disruptive behavior of a parent/guardian that interferes with the operation of the center.

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Drop Off and Pick Up

Hours of Operation

NGU centers are open Monday-Friday with the specific times varying at each location. Refer to your center's website for hours of operation at that location. Please refer to the yearly schedule of closings later in this handbook.

Cell Phone Free Zone

We ask that you refrain from using a cell phone during drop off and pick up times, for the safety of our children and for efficiency during these busy hours.

Security Codes and Entry

Safety and security is very important to us, which is why at some centers, each family will have their own security code or fingerprint passcode to enter the building. Please do not share your code with anyone other than people who will pick up your children. Guests will be able to ring the bell and gain entry. Children must be signed in and out daily.

Absences and Late Arrivals

If your child will be absent, or will be arriving later than 10:00 a.m., please call or email to notify your center. This will help us in planning teacher schedules for the day.

Release of Children Policy

Please inform your child's teacher and/or management if someone other than you will be picking up your child. You will be asked to provide names of those individuals who are approved to pick up your child in the application procedure. A photo ID is required at time of pick-up. The Academy and Holly Tree centers reserve the right to refuse to release a child to any person who appears physically, emotionally, or mentally unable to provide adequate care for the child as judged by the staff member responsible for the child. We will not be able to release a child to an adult who appears inebriated. In the event that this situation should arise, staff will release the child to an authorized individual on the child's emergency contact list who appears able to provide appropriate care for the child.

Late Pick Up

Late pick up fees are put in place to cover the staff after the center closes. The charge will be \$10.00 for the first 5 minutes after 6:00 pm, then \$1.00 per minute following that. At 6:30 pm, if the child has not been picked up, local authorities will be called.

What to Wear/Bring

Dress/Attire

Part of creating childhood means FUN! When choosing your child's clothing, bear in mind that sometimes our fun can be messy, too! For this reason, please follow our clothing policies to ensure your child has the best experience.

- Please dress your child in seasonally appropriate and comfortable play clothes.
- Each child should have at least one, preferably two complete changes of seasonally appropriate play clothing, including socks and shoes, in his or her cubby at all times. Please be sure to replace any articles of clothing that are used from the spare set.
- During the summer months, we will have water play. We will notify you of the times for water play so that you may provide a swimsuit and towel.

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- Please label ALL items (including clothing, coats, hats, bottles, baby food, bags, and sippy cups) that you bring to the center with your child's first and last name.
- Children MUST wear secure shoes at all times. No flip-flops, please.

Personal Belongings

Please refrain from allowing children to bring personal belongings to the center other than those we request (see the following sections). For the safety and well-being of all the children in our center, we ask that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home except on special "sharing" days. We are not responsible for personal items or toys from home that get lost or broken. Any items brought for a special reason requested by teachers need to be labeled appropriately with the child's first and last name. Labeling all of your child's items is the best way to ensure they do not get misplaced.

Infants (6 weeks - 12 months)

Please bring the following supplies, **labeled with your child's first and last name:**

- Clean fitted crib sheets and receiving blankets for each day your child attends. Please ask the center whether Pack and Play sheets are an option.
- Two complete changes of seasonal clothing (including shoes) and bibs
- Diapers and wipes
 - Parent must complete a form in order for staff to apply diaper cream.
 - We will not use any form of powder, as it has been linked to lung and respiratory issues in young children. The American Pediatric Association strongly advises parents not to use it.
 - We are cloth diaper friendly! Please bring the brand with a plastic cover and a labeled bag in which to place soiled diapers.
 - Please do not leave diaper bags in the classroom.
- Any cereal or unopened jar food. State law prohibits the center from accepting any opened baby food of any kind.
- Prepared bottles (formula or breast milk) for enough feedings for each day. These will be refrigerated immediately. We provide milk for infants no longer on formula, but you may bring labeled milk from home if you wish.
 - For breastfed babies, please bring pre-made bottles ready to warm and serve. Bottles will be warmed in our bottle warmers on a low setting and served as needed.
 - For formula fed babies, please bring bottles with water only and separate pre-measured formula for each bottle. Teachers will mix formula with water as the child is ready to feed. Bottles will be served room-temperature unless parents request they be warmed.
 - We do not allow rice or medicine in bottles.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) special note:

We are proactive against SIDS. In line with DHS regulations, cribs will only contain a sheet. Mobiles, stuffed animals, extra blankets, and propping will not be allowed. Infants in cribs are checked every fifteen minutes during napping times.

We have a number of specific policies in place to ensure the safety and well-being of our infants.

- Infants may not sleep in swings or bouncers.
- Teachers may not swaddle children, but arms-free sleep sacks are permitted.
- No glass bottles are allowed in the classrooms.
- We do not allow pacifiers that have attached animals/toys/teethers, etc.

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- We have individualized feeding schedules, however if the child is hungry we will feed on demand, per state regulation.
- While feeding, the teacher must be sitting in a chair with the child.

Toddlers and Twos (12 months - 2 years)

Please bring the following supplies, labeled with your child's first and last name:

- Diapers and wipes
- A complete change of seasonal clothing including socks and underwear (if applicable)
- Sippy cups are provided. We provide milk, meals, and snacks for toddlers.
- A clean fitted crib sheet and a blanket for each week for use on our nap cots/mats

Preschoolers (3 years - 5 years)

Please bring the following supplies, labeled with your child's first and last name:

- A complete change of seasonal clothing including socks and underwear
- A clean fitted crib sheet and a blanket for each week for use on our nap cots/mats

Medication Policy

We do not dispense any over the counter or prescription medication other than REQUIRED medical equipment or emergency medication that is supported by written and signed release from a physician that is kept in your child's file.

Communication and Parent Involvement

Communication

We provide weekly emails, blog newsletter updates, and electronic daily sheets with detailed information about your child's day. Daily sheets will include details about meals, snacks, diaper/potty, nap times, activities, your child's behavior, and needed items (diapers, wipes, clothing, etc.). In addition, where applicable, each child will have a "Take Home" folder or bin/cubby for you to check each day. Here you will find artwork and activities from your child's day. Please check these every day! Parent-Teacher conferences will be offered as well to discuss this information. Please provide your child's teacher with any special instructions to help us serve your child better.

Child Assessments

In continuing to provide the best educational experience for your child, we offer two developmental assessments per year, one in the fall and one in the spring. In addition to the assessments, we offer parent teacher conferences to discuss your child's development and to work with your child's teacher on special projects and activities uniquely designed for your child. This is also an opportunity to address any questions or comments you have. Conferences may be held at any time throughout the year, at either the request of the parent or the teacher.

Please remember, drop-off and pick-up times are considered transition times for a classroom and may seem busy. These transition times are not the best time to address your child's growth or development. Please let a management team member know your question or request to schedule an appropriate time to discuss your child's needs.

Confidentiality Policy

Staff will only have conversations with parents concerning his or her child. Personal info is NOT sold or shared.

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Parent Participation

We welcome parent participation in your child's class, and parent feedback for the improvement of our program. We welcome all parents to serve on our Parent Board, which meets at least twice per year and maintains regular communication with parents and the directors throughout the year. We have several regular opportunities for class participation, such as reading in your child's class, sharing special family traditions or cultures, assisting with parties and open houses, and volunteering in the class. Please talk to center management for guidelines about class visitation during the day. Additional ideas and suggestions are always welcomed and appreciated!

Birthdays and Special Events

Birthday Policy

We love to celebrate! Please first check with center management for center-specific guidelines for birthday celebrations. If you want to celebrate your child's birthday with the class, you may bring in party food (cupcakes, cookies, etc.) or party favors. Any food items that are brought in **MUST** be store bought in order for management to check ingredients for allergens. **Please remember we are a peanut and nut free company.** You may stay for the party or have the staff give the party. Please discuss plans for the party with your child's teacher, including date and time, class allergies, developmentally appropriate food choices, and favors. Some centers may have certain days of the week set aside for celebration, in order to avoid interrupting enrichment classes. If you are handing out favors or invitations to parties outside of the school, **PLEASE** bring enough for each child in the classroom.

Holidays and Special Events

We will also celebrate holidays and special events. You will be given an opportunity to sign up to bring food, goodies, or paper goods for these parties. We also love to have parent volunteers during party time, so please let your child's teacher know if you are interested in participating.

Balloon Policy

Mylar helium balloons are the only type of balloons allowed in the school. Rubber or latex balloons are **NOT** allowed because they present a potential choking hazard.

Nut Free Commitment

All Academy and Holly Tree centers are completely nut free. Please refrain from bringing lunches, snacks or food for parties or other celebrations that contain any kind of nut. This would include peanuts (including peanut butter), hazelnuts (including Nutella™ and similar products), almonds and cashews (including almond milk, cashew milk), pecans, pistachios, walnuts, etc. During special celebrations, any items brought into the center **MUST** be store bought and sealed. Once brought to the center, **you must drop off the items at the front desk.** Please refrain from removing the ingredient labels, as this is how we will check ingredients before delivering to the classrooms.

Due to continual changes in manufacturer's packaging and processing, please read the ingredient label of your chosen food to ensure that it does not contain any of the following: peanuts/nuts, peanut/nut butter, peanut/nut oil, peanut/nut flour, peanut/nut meal, or "may contain traces of peanuts/nuts," or "may have been manufactured in a facility where a nut product is produced or is manufactured." If any of these are listed on the food items or we do not have an ingredient list to check, the food items will not be consumed and will be left in the kitchen.

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We thank you in sharing our commitment to ensuring a safe environment for all of our students and staff!

Diapering and Toilet Training

Diaper Changes/Cloth Diapers

Part of our high level of customer service is ensuring that all children are properly cared for. For children still in diapers, cleanliness is an essential factor of maintaining an appropriate level of care. Therefore, diapers/pull-ups will be changed when soiled or at minimum every two hours. Diaper changes will be noted on the child's daily activity sheet. The TN Diapering System will be used for all diaper changes.

Toilet training

When you are ready to start toilet training your child, we ask that you let us know what routines you are using at home so the teacher can do the same in the class. Consistency is key when toilet training. Please bring any supplies such as a few pairs of extra clothes, including socks and shoes, to put in the child's cubby for any accidents.

Transitions

Transitioning into school/other classroom

As your child grows and develops through our school, he or she will transition from one class to another. We strive to make this as stress-free as possible, not only for the child but for you as well. There are many decisions involved in graduating children to the next class. Children are assessed by age as well as terms of their developmental level. The child's interest level in the classroom activities will also be taken into consideration. The classroom teacher and parents will be consulted. When the final decision is made, you will get a transition letter and email, and communication from the teacher as well as information about the next room. If needed, there will be a transition period to ensure that the child feels comfortable with the change. We help and encourage parents to be involved in the process.

Discipline and Behavior

Discipline Policy

Your child will be disciplined in a manner which protects your child's dignity and well-being. Discipline will not be embarrassing or abusive, and physical punishment will never be allowed. Discipline will be consistent and fair. The staff will use positive reinforcement and redirection techniques. First, the child will be redirected verbally. If the behavior continues, the child may be separated from the group, within the classroom. If the behavior presents a safety issue, the parent may be call to remove the child from the center for the day. If discipline is a persistent problem for a child, the director will have a conference with the parent. Behavior problems that cannot be easily resolved may result in dismissal from the center.

Biting Policy

Biting is an age appropriate stage of development for infants, toddlers, and on occasion preschoolers. In a group setting, most children will attempt biting at least once. When biting occurs, our focus will be on determining why the biting occurred and what we can do to help. Communication between teachers and parents will be a key aspect in reducing this behavior. In

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extreme cases, we may need to ask a parent to withdraw a child from the center, and will welcome the child back after a period of time when the behavior has diminished.

Safety and Child Abuse Prevention

Child Abuse Policy

The Academy and Holly Tree will comply with all Tennessee State laws for reporting any suspicion or evidence of child abuse. The Child Abuse Hotline (or 1-800-4-ACHILD) will be contacted and a report will be filed. A report will be made to the police if necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the child. The Department of Human Services will then be notified, and an incident report will be filed within 24 hours. The Center has video surveillance cameras in each classroom and other areas used by children. Management staff will actively use these cameras to prevent any incidences. Reports are filed accordingly when the center refuses to release a child to anyone deemed incapable of adequately caring for the child.

Keeping Kids Safe

The State of Tennessee mandates that all centers must provide the Keeping Kids Safe curriculum for all children 30 months and older. Parents must sign a form to be kept in the child's file which states that they understand that the school uses this curriculum. This curriculum is taught annually.

School Closings

Holiday Policy

We will observe and be closed for the following Holidays/Events:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Spring Teacher In-Service (Friday before Memorial Day)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Fall Teacher In-Service (Friday before Labor Day)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the Friday following
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve - closing at 4:00pm

Note: Holidays listed above that fall on a Saturday will be observed on the Friday before, and those that fall on a Sunday will be observed on the Monday that follows.

At Never Grow Up, there is no vacation policy. Tuition for days missed will not be waived. Yearly tuition has been broken down into 52 payments per year regardless of time your child does not attend.

Snow Day Policy

Normal hours of operation are subject to change at any time to ensure the safety and well-being of your children and our staff. Emergency conditions cannot always be predicted with accuracy, so please be prepared for short notices on snow or ice days. Due to the unavoidable occurrence of emergency weather conditions, the center is unable to reduce tuition. Please remember any closure is to protect the children and staff in our care.

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In order to communicate any inclement weather or emergency closings, there are several ways we will contact parents about closings:

- News Channel 5: You can sign up on their website www.newschannel5.com to have specific closings or delays texted and/or emailed directly to you.
- Mass text alerts and mass email: Please make sure management has the correct contact information for your family. Sign up for our free text alert system by texting "@infoacad" to 81010
- Social Media: We will post closings on our Facebook page.

Illness and Medical Records

Illness Policy

Your school will communicate with you about any health issues that are noted while your child is at the center. As a courtesy to all children and staff, please keep the staff informed about any health issues your child may have, even those occurring over the weekend. In order to protect the health and well-being of all children and staff within the center, the following health procedures and policies will be followed:

- Centers cannot admit a child who has any contagious illnesses or any of the following symptoms, including but not limited to:
 - Fever of 101 degrees or higher
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea that occurs more than twice
 - Open sores and/or mouth sores
 - Unexplained or communicable rashes
 - Severe mucus drainage
 - Conjunctivitis (a.k.a. pink eye)

If your child exhibits any of the above symptoms while at the center, we will notify you, and the child must be picked up within one hour of contact. Your school reserves the right to require a child to be picked up immediately for suspected contagion. You will be notified should your child be exposed to a contagious illness.

Your child must be symptom and medication free for 24 hours before returning to the center.

We reserve the right to request a physician's statement prior to readmitting a child to the center. We do not administer medication to any child (see Medication Policy)

Lice Policy

Children diagnosed with lice must have proof of treatment and be free of nits and lice prior to readmission.

Shot Records

An Immunization Certificate is required upon enrolling and must be kept up-to-date according to Tennessee State Law. Your child will not be allowed to remain in the center without up-to-date immunization records.

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Accidents and Emergency Procedures

Accidents/ Incidents

Safety is an important part of our jobs. We believe it to be our top priority to keep your children safe each day. Although we have many procedures in place to prevent accidents, sometimes accidents are inevitable. In the event your child has a minor injury such as a bump, scrape, bite, etc. we reserve the right to treat your child with the proper First Aid Care and will contact you immediately to inform you. Per our requirements, we will also fill out an accident/incident report that must be signed by you or the person picking up your child that day.

Emergency Medical Procedures

In the event that your child requires emergency medical treatment, center staff will call 911 immediately. If your child requires emergency ambulance transportation, the ambulance drivers will transport your child to the closest local hospital at their discretion and depending on the speed with which your child must be treated. Decisions as to the necessity of emergency medical treatment will be made by the Director or Assistant Director, or another staff member standing in their position. Parents or legal guardians of the child will be notified as soon as possible and will be responsible for any and all medical expenses related to the child's injury including any medical transportation. It is the parent or legal guardian's responsibility to provide insurance information to medical personnel. Our employees are not responsible in any form for medical or transportation expenses.

Man-made Disaster Plan

In the event of a man-made disaster, such as a chemical spill, gas leak, emergency lockdown, etc., the following procedure will be followed: The children will be evacuated by employees and be transported, on foot or in employees' automobiles, to an alternative facility. All parents will be contacted and informed of the evacuation. Parents will be given instructions on how they can pick up their children.

Natural Disaster Plan

In the event of a natural disaster (e.g. tornado, threatening winds, etc.), the children will be moved to an inside room or area of the center in accordance with the center's approved emergency action plan. A weather radio or app will be maintained at all times for updates on threatening conditions, as well as flashlights, first aid kits, and other necessary items. In the event the situation requires evacuation, the same procedure used for a man-made disaster will be followed. Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom. Parents will be notified as soon as possible. The Department of Human Resources will be informed in the event of an actual disaster, and an incident report will be filed within 24 hours. Centers will also follow a schedule of safety drills, such as fire and tornado drills, throughout the year to maintain preparedness for any emergency.

Miscellaneous

Sunscreen/Bug Spray Policy

During the summer months, the children are frequently outside exploring and learning. If the temperature is over 85 degrees, we offer to apply sunscreen and bug spray in the afternoons. The sprays will be supplied by the center. Parents must sign a waiver to allow staff to apply sunscreen and bug spray. You can find information about which brand is used at the specific school. Parents should apply sunscreen and bug spray in the morning before arriving at school.

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Gold Sneaker Initiative

At Never Grow Up, we offer your child healthy meal options in accordance with the guidelines of the USDA, and we are proud to be Gold Sneaker certified. If you prefer to bring your child's lunch from home or have any dietary restrictions, please remember that you MUST bring food that meets the guidelines, as well. If not, we will be required to supplement your child's meal with any missing items. For more information you can go to www.tn.gov/health/topic/goldsneaker.

Parent recruitment of Academy and Holly Tree Staff

Recruitment of any staff member is not allowed. Families may not solicit, directly or indirectly, any employee of Never Grow Up, Inc. to enter into an employment contract while employed at the Academy or Holly Tree centers. Staff members may not provide care for center families outside of the center. This includes, but is not limited to, babysitting, nannying, transportation, etc.

Policy Changes

Never Grow Up, Inc.'s policies are subject to change at any time. Every effort will be made to notify parents of any changes to the policies or procedures in a timely fashion.

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DAILY ROUTINES

Meals and Snacks

We provide nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day. Menus are posted for your reference. At The Academy centers, a continental style breakfast will be provided each morning from opening to 9 a.m. Parents may enjoy breakfast in the breakfast area with their child if they desire. Meal and snack times are scheduled according to a group's age and developmental level. Please alert the staff concerning any special dietary needs or food allergies.

Rest Time

Rest times are scheduled in the middle of the day after lunch for children age one year and up. Rest times will vary according to the group's age and developmental level. Children will be offered two hours of naptime. Children are not required to sleep, but must rest quietly so as to not disturb other children who are resting. Infants sleep at will throughout the day.

Outside Play

We have separate, age appropriate playgrounds. During a day with a normal routine and when weather permits, children will play on the playground two times per day, in the morning and again in the afternoon. Per DHS regulations, we will go outside when temperatures are between 32 and 95 degrees Fahrenheit. If weather conditions do not permit outdoor play, other gross motor activities will be substituted indoors.

Sample Schedule

The following sample schedule is presented here to give you an idea of what your children will be doing throughout the day. Schedules are designed to be appropriate for the age and developmental level of the group. Please check with your child's teacher to see their regular schedule.

7:00-8:30	Center Play (dramatic play, art, science, blocks, music, etc.)
8:30-9:00	A.M. Snack Time
9:00-10:00	Morning Circle Time and Curriculum Activities
10:00-10:30	Interest Areas and Projects (teacher-directed and child-directed activities and chosen activities)
10:30-11:00	Outside Play (weather permitting) or Indoor Gross Motor Activities
11:00-11:30	Lunch
11:30-12:00	Story Time/Prepare for Rest Time
12:00-2:00	Rest and Quiet Time
2:30-3:00	P.M. Snack Time
3:00-3:30	Outside Play (weather permitting) or Indoor Gross Motor Activities
3:30-4:30	Afternoon Circle Time and Center Play
4:30-5:00	Hands-on Learning Activity
5:00-6:00	Books, Games, and Story Time

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BRANCHES

BRANCHES MINISTRIES is a non-profit Christian ministry focused on reaching in and out to employees, families, community and beyond. Our mission is to provide programs, events and community connections to offer support and encouragement in partnership with your employers corporate wellness program. We SERVE to see needs met, lives changed, families enhanced and equipped. Believing we connect lives to the "Source of Life" through branches of HOPE.

WHAT WE DO

BRANCHES exists to SERVE you. Plain and simple. We provide resources not limited to: counseling, mentoring, educational classes, bible studies, prayer, financial planning, business resource connections, emergency financial assistance and encouragement through the company corporate wellness program.

WHO WE SERVE

Part of doing life with people means caring for the ones closest to us as well as the ones closest to them. This includes our families, neighbors, extended family, co-workers and those needing help in our in our community and beyond. We serve the community as a whole, locally and globally.

WHY WE SERVE

We all experience hardship, whether it be financial, relationship struggles, health changes, family hardship, unexpected events or burdens. Branches wants to connect with you during these events. We want to walk with you through the lows and celebrate the joys too! We want you to feel loved, supported and important. Because you are!

Branches is fully funded by pledges and donations from employees, families and outside donors. As a family benefit you are given the option to donate to Branches. Feel free to talk with your center director, LIFE Support Branches representative or email Branches directly at branchesministries@gmail.com. Pledge forms are available on site or on our website at www.branchesministries.org. We also accept donations through PayPal. If you have any additional questions or would like to know more, please contact our Executive Director, Katie Dufleurant, at [615-864-3267](tel:615-864-3267).

RELIABLE RESOURCES

Through partnerships with local supporting businesses and other non-profit organizations, Branches offers assistance and services in times of need. Some of our resources include financial planning, car repairs, health care, holistic care, optometry, family, marital and individual counseling, and much more. Our resource list is constantly growing. If you have a particular connection within the community that you feel Branches could use, please let us know.

LIFE SUPPORT TEAM

The Branches LIFE Support team consists of volunteer representatives from each of the NGU centers. These amazing individuals meet monthly for spiritual growth, to represent their site, plan programs and events, pray together, and support each other. We encourage you to seek out the LIFE Support rep at your center. They are here to support YOU!

FOLLOW BRANCHES ONLINE

It is our genuine hope that you, now as a representative of Never Grow Up, Inc. will become joyfully involved in what Branches is doing throughout the company, either by volunteering and/or supporting financially. We look forward to serving you.

**Please visit our website for all other details and information
www.branchesministries.org**

Parent Handbook

Tennessee Department of Human Services

SUMMARY OF LICENSING REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS

This summary is a guide for parents of children in child care centers. It outlines some of the requirements child care providers must meet in order to be licensed. The Department of Human Services is legally responsible for licensing child care centers with 13 or more children. **The purpose of licensing is to protect your child.** Questions about these requirements or concerns about an agency's compliance should be referred to the local DHS office. You may ask your provider to see the complete set of center rules or you can access the rules through the Department's website at: <http://state.tn.us/humanserv>

Ownership, Organization, and Administration

- Every child care center shall have an on-site director.
- General liability, automobile liability and medical payment insurance coverage shall be maintained on the operations of the child care agency's facilities and vehicles.
- Enrollment of children under six (6) weeks of age is prohibited.
- Children shall not be in care for more than twelve (12) hours in a twenty-four (24) hour period except in special circumstances.
- Written documentation that the parent performed an on-site visit to the agency to review the agency's facility and child care policies & practices prior to enrolling the child.
- A copy of the agency's policies, procedures, and the Department's Summary of Licensing Requirements shall be supplied to the parent upon admission of the child.
- Parents shall be permitted to see the professional credential(s) of staff upon request.
- During operating hours, parents shall be permitted immediate access to their children.
- Children shall be signed in and out of the center by the parent or other person specifically authorized by the parent or the appropriate staff person.
- Children's Records
 - Written consent for emergency medical care.
 - Written plan stating to whom the child shall be released.
 - Written transportation agreement between parent and the center regarding daily transportation.
 - Daily attendance that includes time in and time out for each child.
 - Prior written permission of parent for each off-site activity.
 - The records of any child who is five (5) years old in an agency which lacks approved kindergarten status shall include a signed acknowledgment by the child's parents that recognizes that the child's attendance does not satisfy the mandatory kindergarten prerequisite for the child's enrollment in first grade.
- Incidents, accidents and injuries shall be reported to the parent as soon as possible, but no later than the child's release to the parent or authorized representative.
- Incidents, accidents and injuries to children shall be documented immediately and must include: date & time of occurrence, description of circumstances, and actions taken by agency.
- The agency or agency staff shall not disclose or knowingly permit the use by other persons of any information concerning a child or family except as required by law.

- During hours of operation the current license and agency report card shall be posted near the main entrance in a conspicuous location.

Supervision

- All areas of the building and grounds shall be visually inspected for children prior to closing the agency for the day.
- Children six (6) weeks through nine (9) years of age:
 - Adult must be able to hear the child at all times, be able to see the child with a quick glance, and be able to physically respond immediately.
 - Exception: during mealtime an adult must be in the direct sight and sound of children ages six (6) weeks through five (5) years of age, not in kindergarten, while the child is eating.
- Children ten (10) years of age and older:
 - Adult must know the whereabouts and activities of the children at all times.
 - Each child shall be greeted and received by a specific caregiver who will have ultimate responsibility for their supervision and care.
 - When children leave a caregiver's assigned area and go to another, the center shall implement a system to track the whereabouts of each child and recognize the transfer of responsibility from one caregiver to another.
- When children ages ten (10) and above are grouped with children under ten (10) the minimum supervision requirements for children six (6) weeks through nine (9) years shall apply.
- When more than twelve (12) children are present on the premises a second adult must be physically available on the premises.
- When more than twelve (12) children in first grade and above are present, a separate group, space and program shall be provided for them.
- Each child must be on roll in a defined group and assigned to that group with a specific caregiver(s).
- Infants shall not be grouped with children older than thirty (30) months, and a separate area shall be provided for them.
- Children shall be kept with the same group throughout the day and shall not be moved, shuffled, or promoted to a new group until required based upon the developmental needs of the child, however
 - Groups, excluding infants & toddlers may be combined for short periods for special activities of no more than thirty (30) minutes per day
 - Groups, excluding infants & toddlers may be combined for up to one (1) hour at the beginning & end of the day as outlined in the A:C ratios:

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Ratio Chart - First/Last Hour of Each Day Only

Group Size ▶	10	15	20
2.5 – 12 Years	1:10		
3 – 12 Years		1:15	
4 – 12 Years			1:20

- A:C ratios must be maintained while children are indoors and on the playground.
- A:C ratios and group sizes may exceed the required limit by up to ten percent (10%) no more than three (3) days per week, provided however:
 - Infant & toddler groups may never exceed the required ratios & group sizes.
 - The licensed capacity of the classroom may not be exceeded.
- Adult:Child ratio and grouping chart:

Age of children at beginning of school year	Minimum Adult:Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
Infants (6wks. - 15 mos.)	1:4	8
Infants/Toddlers (6wks. - 30 mos.)	1:5	10
Toddlers (12 mos. - 30 mos.)	1:6	12
2 years (24-35 mos.),	1:7	14
2 -4 years	1:8	16
2 ½ - 3 yrs. (30 - 47 mos.)	1:9	18
2 ½ - 5 yrs.	1:11	20
2 ½ - 12 yrs.	1:10	10
3 years	1:9	18
4 years	1:13	20
3 - 5 yrs.	1:13	22
4 - 5 yrs.	1:16	24
5 years	1:16	20
5 - 12 yrs.	1:20	No Max
School-Age (K & above)	1:20	No Max

- Ratios can be relaxed during naptime and nighttime care but one (1) adult must be awake and supervising the children in each nap/sleeping area (infant/toddler ratios must be maintained).
- Supervision During Off-Site Activities
 - A:C ratios for preschool children doubled during off-site activities.
 - A:C ratios for school-age children during off-site activities must equal the number of trained caregivers required in the classroom plus additional adults:

Number of Children	Trained Caregivers	Additional Adults	Total Adults Required
1 - 20	1	1	2
21 – 30	2	1	3
31 – 40	2	2	4
41 - 50	3	2	5

- A minimum of two (2) adults is required for any off-site activity.
- Supervision During Swimming:

Age Group	Ratio
Infants (6wks – 12 mos.)	1:1
Toddlers/Twos (13 – 35 mos.)	1:2
Three Year Olds	1:4
Four Year Olds	1:6
Five Year Olds	1:8
School-age & Above	1:10

- Group swimming is not prohibited but it is also not recommended due to the high risk.
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Precautions:
 - Infants positioned on backs when placed in crib for sleeping.

- Soft bedding is prohibited for infants to avoid risk of smothering.
- Infants touched by caregiver every fifteen (15) minutes in order to check for breathing and body temperature.

Staff

- At least one adult available on the premises at all times during child care hours must be able to read & write English.
- Caregivers must be at least 18 years of age.
- Staff under 18 years must be supervised by an adult while in the presence of children.
- Each group of children must have at least one caregiver present who has a high school diploma or equivalent.
- Substitutes providing services for 36 or more hours in a calendar year must have a physical and a criminal background check.
- Volunteers can not be used to meet the adult:child ratios unless they meet the qualifications for substitutes.
- Criminal background checks are required for employees who have contact with children.

Equipment for Children

- Individual lockers or cubbies, separate hooks and shelves or other containers, placed at children's reaching level, shall be provided for each child's belongings.
- In infant/toddler rooms, equipment and space shall be provided for climbing, crawling, and pulling without the restraint of playpens or cribs.
- Indoor equipment, materials, and toys shall be available to provide a variety of developmentally appropriate activities so that each child has at least three (3) choices during play time.
- Climbers, swings and other heavy equipment must be anchored even if they are designed to be portable.
- Resilient surfacing is required in fall zones around playground equipment.
- A quiet rest area and cots or mats shall be available for all children who want to rest but no child shall be forced to nap.
- For health & safety reasons each crib, cot, bed or mat shall be labeled to assure that each child naps on his own bedding.

Program

- Each caregiver shall be responsible for providing consistent care for a specific infant(s)/toddler(s) which includes but is not limited to: planning, and record-keeping for the child, communication, general interaction with and routine care of the child.
- Children shall not be left in restraining devices such as swings, car seats, or high chairs (in excess of thirty (30) minutes). Stimulation shall be provided to children in those settings.
- Programs, movies, computer games, and music with violent or adult content (including "soap operas") shall not be permitted in children's presence.
- If television, video tapes/DVDs, video/computer games, and/or movies are used, they shall be limited to two (2) hours per day, or the length of a movie if more than two (2) hours in the case of school-agers.
- Other activity choices shall be available to children during television/movie viewing or computer use.
- An opportunity for outdoor play shall be extended to children of all ages who are in care for more than three (3) daylight hours unless outdoor play is prohibitive.

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- Children shall be provided an opportunity for outdoor play when the temperature range, after adjustment for wind chill and heat index, is between thirty-two (32) degrees and ninety-five (95) degrees Fahrenheit and not raining; children shall be properly dressed and the length of time outside adjusted according to the conditions and the age of the child.
- During outdoor play caregivers shall be alert for signs of dehydration, heat stroke, frostbite, etc., dependent upon the season.
- Spanking or any other type of corporal punishment is prohibited.
- Discipline that is potentially shaming, humiliating, frightening, verbally abusive, or injurious to children shall not be used.
- Discipline shall not be related to food, rest, or toileting.
- Staff shall plan ahead for developmentally appropriate activities; written lesson plans shall be provided for children of each age group.
- For ages three (3) through school-age, a curriculum shall be offered that shall include instruction, at least once a year, in personal safety – parents notified of and given an opportunity to review the curriculum.
- For school-age children the curriculum shall include instruction on reporting physical, verbal or sexual abuse.

Health & Safety

- Children shall be checked upon arrival and observed for signs of communicable disease during the day.
- Symptomatic children shall be removed from the group until parents are contacted and health issues are resolved.
- At least one staff with certification in first aid and one certified in CPR on duty at all times.
- The agency, in consultation with appropriate local authorities, shall develop a written plan to protect children in the event of disaster.
- All home/work contact numbers for parents shall be readily available to all staff.
- Impetigo and diagnosed strep shall be treated appropriately for 24 hours prior to readmission to the center.
- Children diagnosed with scabies or lice shall have proof of treatment and be free of nits prior to readmission.
- Serious injuries or signs of serious illness shall be reported to the parent immediately to arrange for emergency treatment.
- Accidents, injuries, and every sign of illness shall be reported, or a reasonable attempt made to report, to the parent as soon as possible, but no later than the child's release to the parent or authorized representative.
- All medications, prescribed and non-prescribed, shall be received from the parent by a designated staff person or management level staff person.
- Medication shall never be handled by children or administered in bottles or infant feeders unless authorized by a physician.
- All medications shall be inaccessible to children.
- Unused medication shall be returned to the parent.
- Smoking is not permitted in the presence of children.
- The use of alcoholic beverages is not permitted in child care centers during the hours of operation of the center.
- Firearms shall not be on the premises of a child care agency, in any vehicle used to transport children or in the presence of a child.
- Staff's personal belongings (purses, backpacks, coats, etc.) shall be inaccessible to children at all times.

- For the protection of children and adults, the Centers for Disease Control guidelines for handwashing and diapering procedures shall be followed.
- If older children are enrolled who lack independent toileting abilities, rules regarding diapering of preschool children shall apply; they shall be changed in a location designated for that purpose and which provides privacy from other children and adults.
- In order to avoid the spread of airborne diseases children shall be positioned on mats in a face to feet alternating pattern during naptime.
- All staff, substitute staff, volunteers are required to immediately report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

Food

- If any agency provides meals, the agency shall provide developmentally appropriate meals, snacks, and drinks for each child that are of sufficient proportions and nutritional value to meet each child's health needs.
- A meal shall be offered to children who arrive before 7:00 a.m. and have not had breakfast at home.
- All special needs diets shall be prepared as prescribed by a physician or by the written instructions of the parent.
- Staff shall support and facilitate a parent's decision to continue breast feeding.
- Children shall not be permitted to carry a bottle with them throughout the day.
- Caregivers and children shall wash their hands with soap and water.
- At mealtime, children shall be seated at tables and chairs of appropriate size, and adults shall sit with them.
- Frozen breast milk shall be dated when expressed.
- All formulas remaining in bottles after feeding shall be discarded.
- Microwave ovens, bottle warming devices, and crock pots, including cords, shall not be accessible to preschool children.
- School-age children shall use microwaves only under direct supervision.
- Previously opened baby food jars shall not be accepted in the center. If food is fed directly from the jar by the caregiver, the jar shall be used for only one feeding.
- Children shall never be left without adult supervision while eating.
- Home canned food and raw milk are prohibited.

Physical Facilities

- All facilities shall annually pass an inspection verifying compliance with all applicable state and local fire and environmental requirements.
- At least one (1) working, land-line telephone shall be present in the agency.
- If used, answering machines/voice mail shall be monitored at thirty (30) minute intervals except when staff and children are off premises.
- Parents informed that answering machines/voice mail are used.
- A minimum of thirty (30) square feet of usable indoor play space must be provided for each child.
- Outdoor play areas shall contain a minimum of fifty (50) square feet of usable play space for each child using the area at one time.
- Window blind cords and electrical cords on equipment shall be inaccessible to children.

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- All rooms used by children shall be maintained at a temperature of between 68 to 78 degrees by means of heating, cooling or ventilation sources approved for use.
- Swimming pools and/or wading pools shall not be used without prior approval by the Health Department.
- If animals or birds are kept in classrooms as pets, they shall be caged away from the food storage and preparation area, and cages kept clean.

Transportation

- An adult must be in the vehicle whenever a child is in the vehicle.
- A passenger log with the first and last name of each child shall be used to track the loading and unloading of children during transport.
- If the child was loaded from home, the parent or other authorized person will additionally sign the log indicating that the child was placed on the vehicle.
- The log shall be updated as children are released from the vehicle.
- When the child is released to a parent or other authorized person, that person must sign the log indicating the release of that child to them.
- Immediately upon unloading the last child the driver must walk through the vehicle to confirm that all the children are off the vehicle.
- If a monitor was on the vehicle they shall walk through the vehicle as well.
- A designated agency person who did not ride on the vehicle shall also conduct a walk through of the vehicle.
- Drivers must obtain certification from Department of Safety.
- Drivers must submit to an annual health examination and pass a drug screening test.
- Drivers and monitors have certification in CPR and First Aid.
- All child care vehicles designed by the manufacturer to carry ten (10) or more passengers must be inspected by the Department of Safety.
- Effective January 1, 2007 all child care vehicles designed to carry ten (10) or more passengers must conform to the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for school buses.
- Child passenger restraints must be used in accordance with state law.
- Signage that includes the agency name and phone number and the Department's toll-free Child Care Complaint phone number must be on child care vehicles.
- Children shall not spend more than forty-five (45) minutes traveling one way to or from the agency's facility or to and from school (this provision does not apply to field trips).

Care of Children with Special Needs

- When children with disabilities are enrolled, all reasonable and appropriate efforts shall be made to provide each child an equal opportunity to participate in the same program activities as their peers.
- The agency shall have written individualized emergency plans for each disabled child who requires more assistance in emergencies.

Sick Child Care

- This type of care includes the supervision, protection, and meeting the basic needs of children who have short term illness, symptoms of illness, or who have a medical or technological dependency that requires continuous nursing intervention.

- Agencies that provide sick child care either as an exclusive service or as a component of an existing child care service must comply with additional rules specific to this type of care.

You can access the Department's website at:

<http://state.tn.us/humanserv>

A wealth of child care information can be found on the Department's website.

You can:

- Learn more about the rules
- Learn more about the types of regulated care
- Locate a child care provider
- Learn more about the Report Card and Star Quality Program
- Locate the local child care licensing office
- Review the current personal safety curriculum
- View recent correspondence to providers
- Read about new initiatives
- Locate the nearest child care certificate office
- Find info on choosing child care
- Locate a resource and referral center

And much more!

Child Care Center Rules

The full set of the official child care center rules can be found on the Secretary of State's Web Site:

<http://state.tn.us/sos/rules/1240/1240-04/1240-04.htm>

Report Card & Star Quality Program

<http://tnstarquality.org>

Child Care Resource & Referral Centers

Currently, there are eleven CCR&R centers located throughout the state. The centers help parents find the type of care that is best for their child or children. These community resources also give providers technical assistance to better serve the children in their care. Contact information for the CCR&R centers can be found on the Child Care Services web page.

Child Care Resource & Referral – Complaint Hotline

NASHVILLE AREA: 615-313-4820
LONG DISTANCE: 1-800-462-8261

If you have a concern about an existing child care agency or wish to report an illegal operation you can call the Department's complaint hotline.

Department of Children's Services
Report Child Abuse or Neglect Hotline
1-877-237-0004