

Family Policies & Procedures Handbook



TodayCare @ Regions Bank

2191 Parkway Lake Drive

Hoover, AL 35244

205-988-4017

Managed by TodayCare Children's Centers, LLC

Receipt and Acknowledgement of TodayCare @ Regions Bank Family Handbook

I have received and read the TodayCare @ Regions Bank Family Handbook. I understand that the policies, procedures, and programs described by the handbook are subject to change at any time at the sole discretion of TodayCare and Regions Bank. I understand that this handbook replaces all previous handbooks for TodayCare @ Regions Bank.

I understand that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand the above statements and have received a copy of the TodayCare @ Regions Bank Family Handbook.

I understand that it is my responsibility to abide by the policies and programs described in this handbook.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Child/ren Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Dear Families,

Welcome to the TodayCare Children's Center @ Regions Bank, a center serving the families of employees of Regions Bank. This center is managed by TodayCare Children's Centers - a company that specializes in the development and management of employer-sponsored child-care programs.

TodayCare Children's Centers, in conjunction with the center staff, have developed a program to meet your needs as working parents and the developmental needs of your children. Assisted by a generous subsidy provided by Regions Bank, the center offers a high-quality child-care program that is affordable, convenient, and accessible for the hours you work.

The handbook is intended to provide helpful information and the philosophy and operational policies of the center. We believe it will be useful to you as you prepare to enroll your child in the program. Center management and the President/COO of TodayCare are available to answer any questions you may have about the program.

Our goal is to provide your children with a safe, nurturing environment in which they may grow and learn. Thank you for sharing your child with us.

Sincerely,

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Revised 4/2022

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Welcome

Welcome to TodayCare @ Regions Bank! You have made one of the most important decisions regarding your child that you will make in the next few years. Early childhood experiences will have a long-term effect on your child's self-esteem, socialization, and future academic abilities. We will do our best to support your child's growth, development, and learning while they are in our care.

Mission Statement & Philosophy

TodayCare Children's Centers are committed to providing a safe and secure environment that is marked by excellence. We recognize the unique educational and developmental needs of young children. We are devoted to delivering a quality program that is rich in open communication, fosters lasting relationships, and provides educational stimulation.

We believe in a family approach to child care and education. We recognize and respect families as the most important influence in the lives of their children. It is our aim to work closely and communicate openly with families as we assist in the care of their children. Families have the right and the responsibility to share in decisions about their child's care and development. We know that supporting the family is critical to the effectiveness of our work. Therefore, a vital part of our program is working in partnership with families.

TodayCare Children's Centers believe early childhood is the most significant period of children's lives for preparing them for the future. Our goal is to facilitate the development of children who are:

- Competent
- Curious
- Cooperative
- Initiating
- Self-Directed
- Resourceful
- Exploratory
- Attentive
- Cheerful

Our program is designed to generate excitement in learning and nurture pro-social skills.

TodayCare Children's Centers believe that development of intellectual curiosity, self-discipline, and internal motivation are fundamental to the learning process. We further believe a vital part of the curriculum involves fostering feelings of security, self-confidence, and independence.

TodayCare's philosophy is based on the belief that learning is achieved when each child works on his/her individual level in a supportive and unpressured atmosphere. Our program encourages divergent thinking, creative problem solving, and communication skills. Emphasis is placed on the process children use in learning and experiencing their world, instead of the "Final Product." We believe that young children learn best through play and direct experiences with the real

world. Children who are free to make discoveries, explore skills, initiate ideas, and experience successes and failures within a supportive environment, have a solid foundation for future success.

We believe that the child care center staff is one of the most important factors in determining a quality experience for children and families, so we employ only the best and brightest child development professionals. We value experience in group care of young children and formal child development training and education. Each staff member must be a caring, nurturing individual and must complete TodayCare Children's Centers own training program prior to their actual involvement with children in our classrooms. The staff is supervised daily and evaluated regularly. Staff members receive a great deal of support for the important work they do, which keeps staff turnover below average.

Program Goals

The goal of the program is to provide an environment that allows children, at their own pace, to:

- Find success in activities of their own choosing and discover the challenge of new experiences
- Grow in the feeling that they are unique and valued persons
- Experience comfortable, secure relationships with peers and adults
- Learn to define and express feelings
- Build strength, muscular coordination, and physical skills
- Learn to manage routines and develop good health habits
- Grow in understanding of the world in which they live, both natural and social environments
- Develop age appropriate problem-solving concepts and broaden their cognitive development
- Experience creative expressions through art, music, literature, and dramatic play
- Broaden communication skills through language development
- Try new foods and develop healthy eating habits
- Develop internal controls for their own behavior

We achieve these goals by:

- Following developmentally appropriate curriculum guidelines as outlined for each group
- Providing a highly organized environment, using learning centers, with appropriate activities in each center
- Setting a minimum of appropriate rules to define clear boundaries and expectations for behavior
- Limiting "whole group" activities and emphasizing individual and small group experiences
- Directing learning experiences
- Using open-ended questioning techniques
- Using teachers as "facilitators"
- Developing skill-based weekly activity plans

- Providing low staff/child ratios and small group sizes
- Developing a curriculum based on the child's realm of understanding, experience, and awareness
- Emphasizing multicultural and non-sexist language usage and activities
- Using transition activities
- Expecting teacher/child interactions that enhance the child's self-esteem

Everyone at TodayCare understands and accepts wholly that each child is an individual who must be valued, respected, and nurtured.

Eco-Healthy Practices

TodayCare encourages parents to work with the center to participate in eco-healthy practices that reduce your exposure to environmental health hazards such as unhealthy air, heavy metals, and chemicals. As part of this practice, **please turn off your vehicle when you are dropping off and picking up your child from the center.**

TodayCare @ Regions uses eco-healthy practices such as washing fruits and vegetables before consumption; purchasing non-toxic toys and art supplies; monitoring daily outdoor air quality; and using less toxic, fragrance-free cleaning products when possible. We also include Earth Day in our curriculum and discuss eco-healthy practices with children when the opportunity arises.

Child Care in a Corporate Sponsored Environment

Child care in a corporate-sponsored environment is slightly different than child care in a community child-care setting. Child care sponsored by an employer is a three-way partnership between parents, employer, and the center. The center is much like a private school with policies that reflect the needs of the corporate community.

TodayCare @ Regions Bank offers a high quality, developmentally appropriate program; it is not a babysitting service. We adhere to guidelines set forth by the State of Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) Child Care Licensing, Alabama Quality Stars Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This commitment to quality ensures that the needs of children are met and that policies and practices are good for the children. The center enables parents to focus on their jobs, knowing that their children are receiving the best care.

NAEYC Accreditation

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredits early childhood programs that meet specific criteria for high quality. These standards go beyond state standards, and fewer than 10% of the child-care programs in the United States meet these criteria. For more information regarding NAEYC Accreditation, you can visit www.naeyc.org and click on Accreditation. TodayCare is committed to following the standards and criterion of NAEYC Accreditation.

Enrollment Procedures and Orientation

Enrollment is open to Regions Bank associates without regard to sex, race, religion, color, creed, or political belief. Vacancies are filled by availability and waitlist applications bearing the earliest date.

During enrollment, an individual orientation will be arranged in order to provide families with important information about our program philosophy and daily operating procedures. This orientation session will also allow time for parents to become better acquainted with the teachers who will be working most closely with their children. Several forms will be provided prior to, or during, the orientation, which must be completed 24 hours prior to the child's first day in our program. These forms are:

- Parental Enrollment Agreement
- Child Background Information
- Emergency Authorization
- AL Certificate of Immunization* (Must be current upon enrollment and updated as new vaccines are received)
- Permission forms
- Release Authorization
- Additional forms as required

All children enrolled in the center must present a physician's certificate of good health within 30 days of attendance. All paperwork must be received 24 hours prior to the first day of attendance. ***Please keep the center informed of any changes in contact or other information throughout your child's enrollment in our program.***

*Children must be immunized in accordance with standard pediatric practice in order to be admitted to the center. A Certificate of Medical Exemption from vaccines may be obtained from your physician. A Certificate of Religious Exemption may be obtained through your County Health Department. Unvaccinated children will be excluded from care in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable illness.

Hours of Operation

Our hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM. The center is closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King's Birthday
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving

- Christmas Day

A full-time enrollee is defined as a child attending the center on a regular schedule, five days/week. Full-time attendees are charged a weekly tuition rate. (See Tuition section for more information).

Back-Up Care

Enrollment paperwork must be received before reservations can be made for back-up care. Back-Up Care is on a first-come, first-served, space-available basis. If space is not available in your child's age group on the date requested, you will be put on a waitlist and notified if space becomes available. We appreciate reservations being made as soon as you know you need care. (We will do our best to accommodate "day of" emergencies). Children with siblings enrolled in the center full time are given priority enrollment for Back-Up and School-Age care.

Payment for Infant-PreK back-up care must be received when the reservation is made. If the visit is cancelled two weeks in advance, 100% of the fee will be refunded. If the visit is canceled one week in advance, you will receive 50% of the fee. If the visit is cancelled less than three days in advance, there will be no refund given.

Information regarding the cancellation policy for School-Age Care is on page 11.

Attendance

- We encourage arrival prior to 9 AM, as daily planned activities will begin by this time
- If your child is absent or late (arriving or picking up), you must notify the center
- Full tuition is charged during holidays and vacations for children enrolled full time and paying the weekly tuition rate
- **If you plan to terminate your child's enrollment, you must provide two weeks' notice. If notice is not given, you will be charged two weeks' tuition upon termination of care**
- Your child needs to be picked up and be out of the building by 5:30 PM in order to not be charged for late pick up. The late pick-up charge is \$1.00/minute after 5:30 PM that your child is still in the center.

Tuition

- **Tuition is paid through Tuition Express. Parents will provide payment info as part of their enrollment paperwork. Payments will be run each Friday for the following week's tuition.**
- Tuition includes 2 snacks/day. Lunch may be purchased separately (see Meals and Snacks) or provided by the parent.
- There is a 10% discount on tuition for the oldest child for families with multiple children enrolled in the center

School Age Care Back Up Care Tuition – **Payment for School Year Out-of-School Care is due when the reservation is made.** Tuition for cancelled reservations will be 100% refunded if the cancellation is at least four weeks in advance. Tuition for cancellations three weeks in advance of the reservation will be 50% refunded. Cancellations made less than three weeks in advance will not be refunded.

Summer Full Time School Age Care Tuition – The Summer School Age Program runs 10-12 weeks, depending on school calendars. **When you are notified of your space in the Summer Full Time Program, you have one week to pay the first two weeks' tuition in order to reserve your space. If payment is not received within one week, your space will be given to a family on our waiting list.** Once this payment is received, your child is guaranteed a space for the entire summer; therefore, a weekly tuition is charged. You are responsible for payment each week (by noon on Monday). There are no tuition credits given for illness, vacation, holidays, or other reasons. If you withdraw from the Summer Full Time Program four weeks in advance, your pre-paid tuition is 100% refundable. If you withdraw three weeks in advance, your pre-paid tuition is 50% refundable. If you withdraw less than three weeks in advance, your prepaid tuition is non-refundable.

A small activity fee may be charged for special activities. You will be notified in advance of this charge.

Safety and Emergency Procedures

We do everything possible to minimize accidents through various safety programs, facility inspections, routine maintenance, and consistent policies and procedures. We will provide you with written documentation in the event your child is injured while in the center's care. Emergency drills for evacuation and severe weather are conducted monthly and evacuation plans are posted by each exit door. In the event of a sudden storm that prevents you from getting to the center, we are prepared to care for the children for extended periods. In the unlikely event the center is damaged and declared unsafe, you will be contacted immediately, and evacuation plans will be put into effect to move the children to safety.

Center Closings

TodayCare @ Regions will typically follow Regions Corporate and/or the Shelby County Schools closures for severe weather and other emergencies. However, we make decisions for each individual circumstance with cooperation from TodayCare management and Regions HR. We will post closings on the Procure parent app.

Recommended Dress

Busy and creative play can be messy regardless of the age of the child. We use washable paints and smocks to cover clothing, but we cannot guarantee that spills and stains will be avoided. Please dress your child in clothing that is washable, durable, and labeled with a permanent marker. If you notify us in advance of a special appointment right after school, teachers will be happy to change your child's clothes prior to pick up. All children are required to have two complete changes of clothing at the center.

For your child's safety, closed-heel and closed-toe shoes must be worn at the center. Thongs, flip-flops, clogs, jellies, and smooth-soled shoes are not permitted. Water shoes may be brought for waterplay days. Teachers will assist children in changing for the water experience.

Children are not permitted to wear any shirts, jackets, sweatshirts, jewelry, or article that is tied or fastened around the neck. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure compliance with this safety policy by sending children with appropriate clothing. Hooded drawstring clothing is a major safety hazard for children. The cord can become caught while a child is climbing, sliding, or engaged in active play and can result in choking or other serious injury. The same risk is associated with necklaces, lockets, keys, and other articles hung around the neck.

Birthdays

Birthdays are an important day for your child and they will be celebrated at the center if you would like us to do so. Birthdays will be celebrated during morning or afternoon snack time. Parents are invited to provide moderate birthday treats and to participate in the celebration. A few things to remember:

- Our center is a nut free environment – please, no items with nuts
- Any food items must be prepared by a commercial kitchen
- Please do not provide a clown or performer. Many children are afraid of anyone who wears a mask or costume.

Families as Partners

Involving parents in center activities is important to both you and your child because it strengthens the continuity between your child's home and school experiences. It also builds a warm, caring community within the center. Our program offers a variety of ways for you to be involved.

Open Door Policy – You are welcome to visit the center at any time and are encouraged to do so. Areas have been created where you can spend one-on-one time with your child. Please discuss with your child's teacher the best time to visit the classroom.

Volunteers – Family participation in the classroom is a special treat for the children and teachers, and you are invited to "help out" whenever your schedule permits. You may wish to bring a special activity for the children or simply participate in the planned activities. Family volunteers are never left alone in the classroom with children and are never included in the teacher/child ratio.

Family Partnership Committee – The Family Partnership Committee is a group that provides support and suggestions to the center regarding topics such as:

- Policies – both current and proposed
- Need for additional services or programs
- Changes to the facility
- Need for additional equipment
- Risk management issues

- Parenting workshop topics
- Fundraising

All families are considered members of the Family Partnership Committee. We welcome your presence at our monthly meetings (publicized via the center newsletter and Procure) whenever your schedule permits. Minutes from each meeting will be distributed to all families in order to keep everyone informed of items discussed at meetings.

Resolving Family Concerns – Open communication between staff and families is vital to the smooth operation of the center. Just as teachers are encouraged to discuss concerns with a child’s family, families are encouraged to discuss their concerns and ask questions of their child’s teachers about their child’s care and/or general center issues. It is important to clear up any questions and/or misunderstandings quickly. Most concerns are best addressed at the classroom level, but if parents and teachers are not able to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution, families are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the center director. We are committed to the satisfactory resolution of family concerns. The President/COO of TodayCare Children’s Centers is Judy Simpson. If your concern has not been adequately addressed after your conversation with the center director, please contact Judy (her contact information is available at the center and in the front of this handbook).

Communication

It is the center’s responsibility to communicate with you regarding your child’s experiences at TodayCare @ Regions. Communication will occur daily through Procure notifications and conversations with your child’s teachers. Other communication avenues include: the center Facebook page, monthly newsletter, and family/teacher conferences. We understand that you have a busy schedule; however, please take time to talk with your child’s teacher each day and look for center-wide notices in the front lobby area.

Procure – The Procure app allows all of us who care for your child to have a sense of the child’s experience at home and at the center. Parents can communicate directly with the classroom via the app and check the app during the day for information about their child’s routine and messages from the teachers. The Procure parent app also allows you to check your child in/out each day.

Website – The center website is <http://www.todaycare-regionsbankbirmingham.com/>. Center newsletters are posted monthly on the website.

Child Assessment and Conferences – In order to implement well-planned, challenging, and engaging curriculum that is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and meets the developmental and social/emotional needs of all children, children are observed consistently to determine their needs.

Each child has an assessment file in their classroom. The tools within are designed to identify skills and behavior a child has, screen for progress, and ultimately, to plan intentional learning experiences to facilitate growth and development in a way that is appropriate for each child. Teaching staff are trained by center administration on how to use the assessment tools and how to conduct conferences with families.

The assessment instrument groups skills and behaviors into categories and lists them in the order that they are most likely to occur. The assessment is administered through ongoing informal observations and through observations during intentional activities designed to support the development of specific skills. As our curriculum is play based, children are not formally “tested.” Children are observed unobtrusively during the natural course of their school routine.

Conferences are offered twice a year (generally fall and spring) for full-time children. The purpose of the conference is to provide families with an overview of their child’s developmental progress and to obtain input from families regarding their child’s care & education. This is also an opportunity to address questions and concerns from teachers and families. In addition, conferences may be requested at any point throughout the year.

Curriculum

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) defines curriculum as “an organized framework that delineates the content that children are to learn, the processes through which children achieve identified curricular goals, and the context in which teaching and learning occur.” We take this definition one step further in that we believe everything we do in the classroom and on the playground is learning and part of our curriculum. Every contact we have with a child is an opportunity for learning. Though we have lesson plans and daily activities, curriculum cannot be just what is planned or taken from a book. We believe children learn from meaningful experiences that occur often and are relevant to their lives. NAEYC calls this a “developmentally appropriate curriculum.” We realize the transition of going back to work and leaving your child can be overwhelming. We would like to help make this adjustment as smooth as possible for your family. We have outlined the curriculum and routines for each group below for you to refer to as your child reaches each developmental stage.

Infant Curriculum and Routine – Infancy is a time when trust, self-worth, and independence/dependence are established. Our priority with each baby in our infant room is to provide a safe, nurturing environment. Caregivers are chosen for the infant room because they are warm, nurturing individuals with experience in caring for young babies. All caregivers go through extensive training that includes principles of child development, TodayCare policies and practices, and proper techniques in caring for infants in a group setting.

Although each child will have their individual schedule, we do have guidelines which help provide consistency and stability for the children and our program.

Our philosophy is that children learn through play. We believe interaction with the children is just as important as being fed and changed. For this reason, we attempt to keep children on the floor with the other children and adults when they are not sleeping. This encourages the child to

become aware of the environment and other children. It also gives them freedom to move and develop the muscles and coordination for further development.

We provide a safe, loving, nurturing atmosphere that stimulates development. The teachers prepare lesson plans to keep you informed of the activities they are doing to support your child's cognitive, social, physical, and emotional development. Infants are not pushed to "keep up" with other children. Instead, they are supported as they develop at a rate that is appropriate for them. As your child shows signs of being developmentally ready for a new stage, teachers plan and provide activities to meet your child's needs.

All infants will be supervised by both sight and sound. When children are sleeping, teachers will check on them every 15 minutes. All infants can be easily seen while sleeping, even if they are not in the direct line of sight of every teacher. All infants will be placed on their backs to sleep, unless otherwise ordered by a physician. All sleeping equipment will meet the standards approved by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission. For information on Back to Sleep Guidelines, please see our Infant Safe Sleep policy and <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/sids>

Toddler Curriculum and Routine – When your child is developmentally ready, he/she will move into a Toddler classroom. We understand the physical and emotional changes your child is going through at this stage and will do everything we can to make this transition a smooth one. Before your child transitions, they will visit their new classroom to get to know the environment and their new teachers.

Toddlers are moving toward autonomy as new skills emerge. They enjoy constant movement as well as new activities and challenges. A consistent schedule, nurturing and patient teachers, and a safe environment rich in appropriate activities are key to a successful toddler program. In the toddler classrooms we promote language development, learning self-help skills, developing inner controls, and positive social skills.

Toddler curriculum is structured with many more activities to satisfy their ever-inquiring minds. We include age-appropriate art, music, creative movement, discovery, and story time. Teachers must be creative and perceptive to meet each child's emotional and learning needs.

Toddlerhood is a wonderful stage in a child's life. Every minute, they are ready to discover something new. Biting and other aggressive behaviors (such as hitting and pulling hair) can be a common occurrence in groups of Toddlers. At this stage, children are learning about social behaviors; they often do not have the words to express their feelings and/or forget the appropriate words when they are frustrated. At these times, the frustration of not being able to express themselves verbally sometimes results in aggressive behavior. At TodayCare @ Regions, we view biting and hitting as behaviors that are a natural part of the early childhood years.

We also understand that finding out that your child bit or hit someone else can be very distressing for families. Please know that the staff will do everything they can to determine the cause of the aggressive behavior and help your child learn constructive ways to get their needs

met. We are committed to working with families in the best interest of your child's development. In this spirit, **we do not remove children from the program for biting or exhibiting aggressive behavior that falls within the limits of normal behavior for their developmental stage.**

We also understand that it is very distressing to find out that your child has been on the receiving end of an aggressive act, such as biting or hitting. Please know that we comfort the hurt child immediately and take measures to help him/her feel safe in the environment. We encourage children to express their feelings about the incident, as they are able. For example, if a child is bitten, we will attempt to verbalize what the child might be feeling. We might say something like, "That looks like it hurts. Does it hurt? I'll bet you didn't like that. If someone is hurting you, you can tell him/her to stop or you can tell him/her not to bite you again. Do you want to tell them not to bite you anymore?" With a younger child, we will model an appropriate response, so they will have an idea of what kinds of words to use when they have the skills to express feelings verbally. If you have any questions or concerns about how we handle biting, hitting, or any other aggressive behaviors, please speak with your child's teachers and center administration.

Preschool/PreK Curriculum and Routine – Experiences for 3-5-year-old children are designed to enable them to learn about themselves and the world around them. Opportunities are provided for individual and group activities in a variety of learning centers including: block building, sensory play, dramatic play, art, and music. The curriculum serves as a planning tool for teachers to use in preparing the daily experiences with their group. Our primary curriculum in this age group is The Creative Curriculum for Preschool. This curriculum supports teachers in providing activities and arranging their classrooms in ways that support current research in best practices for 3-5-year-olds.

Every day has a schedule that includes group times and child-choice activities. Teachers are trained to look for "teachable moments." Teachers act as facilitators throughout the day, constantly interacting and encouraging children's interests, and supporting exploration, mathematical reasoning, scientific thought, and language development.

Positive Guidance

Children learn by exploring, experimenting, testing the limits of their environment, and experiencing the consequences of their behavior. In this way, they come to understand how the world works and their own limits.

Our approach to guidance and discipline is to promote a sense of independence, autonomy, and self-esteem, while maintaining the control necessary for a safe environment. The basis of this control is a secure, orderly, developmentally appropriate, and caring environment. This atmosphere allows children to experiment and test their own behavior within clearly defined limits.

We will not subject children to discipline that is severe, humiliating, or frightening. We will not use sarcasm, ridicule, or any kind of coercion, such as forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down except for situations where restraint is necessary to prevent a child from hurting himself or others. Under no circumstances will we use any form of physical abuse, such as shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive ticking, and pulling of hair, arms, or ears. We will not associate discipline with food, rest, or toileting. Staff will not use psychological abuse or coercion when disciplining a child. Some examples of this type of punishment are: shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, frightening a child, ostracism, withholding affection, or requiring a child to remain inactive for long periods of time.

When needed, staff will use a variety of methods to teach children self-control and how to express feelings in acceptable ways. These include: redirecting children to acceptable activities; using logical consequences to help children be responsible for their actions; using firm words and tones to help children understand how someone feels; and modeling acceptable ways of expressing feelings.

TodayCare feels strongly about how children are disciplined. Our positive guidance policy is also included in the employee handbook, and training on positive guidance is conducted annually. When a child's on-going challenging behavior must be addressed, we will consult with you and ask your permission to get professional help. We will work with professionals to develop an individualized plan to address behavior. If that is not successful and we feel we cannot keep your child and/or the other children in the classroom safe, we will ask you to make other arrangements for your child's care.

Diapering and Toileting

Diapering – Parents are asked to provide diapers in bulk. Parents must also supply appropriate wipes, ointments, and other needed diapering supplies. Diapers are checked every two hours and after naps. Our licensing regulations require that Medication Forms are filled out weekly for any cream, ointment, lotion, etc. your child requires.

Toileting – Toilet learning will begin when both parents and teachers feel the child is ready. Independence is the central issue in teaching a child to use the toilet. For the process to work, the child must have almost complete control over it. The adults involved are there to provide an environment where the child can access the toilet easily.

A child will show readiness in two ways:

- Physically – Physical readiness is the attainment of adequate bladder capacity and control. A physically ready child can stay dry for two or more hours during the day, wake up dry from naps, and possibly wake up dry in the morning.
- Mentally – Mental readiness occurs when the child understands what toilets are used for and is curious to learn more about them. Signs of mental readiness

include wanting to watch people use the toilet (allow it), wanting to flush the toilet, and asking questions about it.

The presence of both readiness signals defines the most opportune time for toilet learning. This critical period usually emerges between the ages of 2 and 3 (give or take six months) and lasts for about 3 months. During this phase the child is “primed” and only needs encouragement and support from adults to be successful.

Please discuss techniques with your child’s teachers so that your child can experience continuity in adult expectations in this important area.

Celebrating Holidays

Holidays are special times and wonderful opportunities to teach children about a variety of traditions and cultures. Although no specific religious instruction is offered, a variety of holidays are discussed in order to help children understand and gain an appreciation of various traditions and cultures. Families are encouraged to share information with our staff about the customs and traditions that are important to them. If you do not celebrate holidays and do not wish for your child to participate in holiday celebrations, please speak with your child’s teachers and center administration so we can create a plan for managing holidays for your child at the center.

Nap Time

Licensing guidelines require a rest time for children. Infants under 12 months will sleep in cribs. Older children will sleep on cots during their nap time, which occurs after lunch each day. If children do not fall asleep after 30 minutes, they will be offered quiet activities to do on his or her cot. For your child to be comfortable at nap time, please provide a nap mat or blanket. We will send this bedding home each week to be laundered.

Field Trips

Field trips may include walking to special places within the immediate community. Other field trips may be planned for School Age children when that program is in session. Special precautions are taken to assure the safety of children on field trips. Parent permission is required for these trips, and you will be notified in advance. Families are invited to participate in field trips as their work permits. You may request that your child not participate.

Outdoor Play

Your child’s experiences on the playground are an important part of the program and his/her development. The playground is an extension of the classroom, as it combines opportunities for exploration, creativity, and play.

Outdoor play will occur daily when weather permits. Please assure their comfort by providing appropriate outdoor clothing. Due to staffing demands, children are not allowed to stay inside while their class is on the playground.

Meals and Snacks

TodayCare @ Regions is a NUT FREE center. No nut products of any kind may be brought into the center for any reason. Thank you for keeping everyone healthy and safe.

- Morning and afternoon snacks are provided by the center. Times will vary by age group.
- Lunch is NOT provided by the center. Children in the young toddler class and older can purchase lunch from the Regions Riverchase Café for \$5/day. A menu is posted in the center and shared via LifeCubby.
- You may bring a lunch from home if you do not wish to purchase lunch from the café.
- If your child has a special diet, please discuss this with the director. You will need to bring food from home to substitute center snacks.

Our state child-care licensing and NAEYC standards mandate that our curriculum include teaching children about nutrition and healthy eating. As part of this, we follow the nutritional guidelines below and encourage families to do the same when sending food to the center for their child.

Acceptable Foods: Fresh/dried fruit, fresh vegetables cut into child-sized pieces, cooked vegetables, cheese slices or sticks, **NUT FREE** granola bars, a variety of sliced breads, muffins, bagels, and/or low-sugar cereal

Unacceptable Foods: **NUTS**, soda, raw carrots and peas (okay for older children who can chew them), candy, whole grapes, hot dogs (for children under 4), popcorn, sugary cereals, and chips

Guidelines for food from home

- No glass containers or bottles
- No open cans, jars, or bags
- All food must be labeled with the child's name, date, and contents if contents are not listed on the packaging
- Food must be in a container that keeps it at the appropriate temperature

Infant Feeding

Children in the infant room are fed according to the schedule provided by their family. Families provide all formula/breast milk and foods.

- No glass bottles or containers
- Formula for infants must be prepared and put into bottles at home. The child's first and last name must be on each bottle.

- Expressed breast milk must be put into bottles at home. The child's first and last name must be on each bottle.
- Bottles may not contain solid food unless the child's healthcare provider supplies written instructions and a medical reason for this practice.
- Nursing mothers are welcome to, and encouraged to, come into the center to feed their child. A quiet, private area is available.

Operational Policies

Safe Arrival and Departure – For your child's protection, only persons authorized by the child's parents or legal guardians are permitted to take a child from the center. Names of anyone who might pick up your child must be listed on the Enrollment Application, Release Authorization Form, and the child's Emergency Information form. Any unfamiliar adult picking up your child will be asked to show his/her photo ID for identification. We will check this ID against our records before releasing your child. Whenever an adult takes a child from the center, he/she must sign the child out in the lobby and the classroom.

Please remember:

- The child must be signed in and out at the front desk
- The child must be escorted to his/her classroom and signed in
- Please let your child's teachers and the front desk staff know if the person who will pick up your child will be different than usual
- Authorization for any person picking up your child must be on file. Identification must be presented.
- The authorized person must notify the teacher before leaving with the child and sign the child out in the classroom and at the front desk
- If there is an emergency and someone who is not on your child's authorized pick-up list must pick up your child, please call center administration. You will be asked to provide the person's:
 - Name
 - Driver's license number
 - A physical description of the person
- You will be asked to sign a document stating your permission for this person to pick up your child and fax or scan & email the document to the center.
- You will be asked to give a telephone number where we can call you back to verify the information previously given.

*A special note on picking your child up later than expected – It can be difficult for children to stay at the center for longer than they are used to staying. Please notify the center if you are unable to pick-up around your usual time so the teacher can let your child know you will be late.

Risk Management

Every effort is made to provide a safe and secure environment for the children. The entrances are locked and monitored from the Director's Office. Unauthorized persons will not be admitted. The center has a central phone/intercom system as well as central fire alarm and sprinkler systems. Evacuation routes are posted throughout the center.

All staff are trained in First Aid, CPR, and emergency procedures. The center Director is responsible for risk management, including periodic inspections and training of staff. Parents are encouraged to identify and discuss any perceived risks to a child's health or safety with the Director.

Staffing

The center staff are trained and dedicated early childhood professionals. They exceed the education and experience requirements of the Alabama DHR Child Care Licensing Regulations. The high quality of the staff is a benefit to you and your child. The results are the positive development of your child and the increase in your ability to focus on your work and/or education. We expect that you will treat your child's teacher and the rest of the center staff with dignity and respect. They are early childhood professionals with whom you have entrusted the care of your child.

Teacher:Child Ratios and Group Sizes – The following are the Teacher:Child ratios (T:C) and group sizes which will be followed in the center:

	Age	T:C	Group Size
Infant	6 w-12 mo	1:4	8
Toddler	12-24 mo	1:4	12
Two Year Olds	24-35 mo	1:8	12
Preschool	3-4 yrs	1:11	18
PreK	4-5 yrs	1:12	20

Cooperating with Regulatory Agencies

AL Child Care Licensing – The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) Child Care Licensing Division licenses and regulates TodayCare Children's Center @ Regions. The center meets or exceeds state standards in all areas. The license is displayed clearly at the center.

Child Custody – Legal decisions regarding issues of child custody will be respected. In fairness to everyone involved, documentation of the rights of each parent is required in order to restrict visitation or custody when necessary. Please be advised that the center cannot refuse to release a child to their legal parent or guardian without a court order or legal document restricting or denying that person of such right.

Child Protective Services – All center staff are mandated to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the Alabama DHR Child Protective Services Division.

Immunizations – All children are required to be immunized according to the State of Alabama DHR Child Care Licensing Regulations. On the first day of attendance, each child must have a valid State Certificate of Immunizations (ADPH-F-IMM50) on file in the center, unless you have a medical or religious exemption. Medical exemption certificates may be obtained from your child’s healthcare provider. Religious exemptions may be obtained through your county health department. Each child’s immunization record must be updated by the form listed on the certificate. **Children may not attend the program with an expired immunization certificate.** Non-vaccinated children will be excluded from care if there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable illness.

Health Consultation – All policies and procedures adopted by the center are reviewed and approved by our Director of Medical Affairs. With your permission, the center may recommend screenings for developmental delays and refer families to other agencies if needed. The center will arrange on-site screenings annually for vision and hearing by outside agencies.

Chronic Medical Conditions – Children with pre-existing medical needs will be evaluated for admission on an individual basis. After admission, documentation or regular medical follow-up will be required. Children with chronic asthma will be allowed to remain in the center if there is no “whistling or wheezing,” difficulty breathing, and the child is not running a fever.

Illness and Injury – Families will be notified immediately if their child becomes ill at the center. **Parents must remove their child within one hour of notification.** Please be sure that emergency contact information is **up to date at all times.** If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, an emergency contact person designated on your child’s enrollment paperwork will be called. In extreme emergencies, your child will be transported to the nearest hospital and immediate treatment will be administered as determined by medical personnel. You will be responsible for the payment of any medical fees incurred.

Children exhibiting illness should remain at home if they show certain signs. **Children must be symptom free for 24 hours without medication before returning to the program.** The following are indications of illness that will necessitate exclusion from care:

Children of all ages:

- Fever and behavior changes or other symptoms of illness
 - Fever is defined as a temperature of 100.5 degrees or higher (Temperature will be measured twice, at least 30 minutes apart, if is a “borderline” temperature). **Children may not be re-admitted to the center until they are fever-free without medication for at least 24 hours.**
- Fever due to vaccinations
 - Children who receive vaccinations may develop a fever and not be contagious. **If the child’s health care provider has indicated this situation on the return to school form** and authorized the administration of medication, the child may remain in the center.

- Rashes
 - Rashes that are not identified or that have not been diagnosed as non-communicable by a health care professional must be excluded. Children cannot be re-admitted to the center without a clearance from a health care professional.
- Unusual drowsiness or severe lethargy
- Extreme fussiness, persistent or excessive crying
- Severe wheezing
- Uncontrolled coughing
- Rapid or labored breathing
- Coughing or breathing that interferes with a child's ability to drink, talk, or sleep
- Unable to play
- Complaining of severe pain
- Yellowing of the eyes or skin
- Severe cold with coughing, sneezing, and/or thick nose drainage
- Stool that contains blood or mucus
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Skin sores that are weeping fluid or blisters that could burst

Infants & Toddlers

- Diarrhea/Abnormal Stool
 - Diarrhea/Abnormal Stool is defined as stool which is occurring more frequently **and** has mucous and/or blood, - not associated with changes in diet.
 - Infants & Toddlers must be excluded from care after 3 occurrences within a 24-hour period or 2 occurrences within 1 hour. Children **may not return to the program until they are symptom free for 24 hours without medication.**
- Vomiting beyond "normal" spitting-up.
 - Children must be symptom free for 24 hours without medication before returning to the program.

Preschool and Older

- Diarrhea
 - Diarrhea is defined as loose stools that occur more frequently than normal, are less formed than usual for that child, and possibly cause a toilet trained child to have accidents. **Children must be symptom free for 24 hours without medication before returning to the program.**
- Vomiting, unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a non-communicable/non-infections condition.
 - **Children must be symptom free for 24 hours without medication before returning to the program.**

Parents are required to inform the center of any reportable communicable diseases. We will notify public health authorities as well as parents of other children who may have been exposed to your child. Your family's identity will be kept confidential. For a list of the specific diseases that must be reported, please visit <http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/bcd/index.html>

Medications – Often, medication can be prescribed for morning and evening doses versus several times/day, thus avoiding the need to administer medication at the center. We prefer that you discuss this with your pediatrician and plan accordingly, if possible.

However, if necessary, center management can administer medication under the following guidelines:

- Medication will be administered **one time per day per child only**. Medicine will be dispensed as your physician describes and will be administered by the Director or Assistant Director. Please ask your physician to prescribe medication accordingly.
- We cannot administer any type of medication without a physician's current prescription (or written prescription approval by healthcare personnel for non-prescription drugs with specific doses) and a signed Medication Authorization form completed by the parent or legal guardian. Forms are available at the front desk.
- Medication must be provided in the original container and labeled with the child's name, date, directions, and physician's name. The center will not administer medication after the expiration date, nor will we administer medication that has been prescribed for another child. A member of the management team will complete the Medication Authorization form when the medication is administered.
- Never leave medications in your child's diaper bag or backpack. All medication must be left with center management and kept in a locked container. If medication must be refrigerated, it will be kept in a locked refrigerator in the office. It is the parent's responsibility to remember to pick up medications at the end of each day.
- Medication required for extreme allergic reaction will be kept with center management (unless otherwise directed by a physician's note) in a locked container.
- Upon enrollment, please discuss any allergies or medical conditions your child has with center management and note them in the "allergy/medical conditions" section of the enrollment form. It is the parents' responsibility to keep us informed of any changes in their child's health.
- The application of lotions, diaper-rash ointment, sunscreen, bug spray, saline drops, etc. requires a medication form that must be signed by the parent. New forms must be completed weekly.
- Medication will never be added to cups, bottles, or food by staff. Parents may NOT send food, cups, or bottles with medication added.

Waiting List

When the center reaches maximum capacity enrollment for any age group, we will implement a waiting list. Applications for the waiting list will be organized by age group and placed in the order received. Priority enrollment will be given to siblings of children already enrolled in the center. There is a \$50 Registration Fee to place your child on the Waiting List.

When a space becomes available, the center will notify you and you will have 48 hours to accept or decline enrollment. If you do not respond within 48 hours, the center will move to the next family on the waiting list. If you do not want to enroll when the space becomes available, you have the option of paying the weekly tuition to hold your space in the program. If you decline enrollment or do not respond, you will be removed from the waiting list.

If you accept the spot, you are required to pay two week's tuition as a deposit. This deposit will be your tuition payment for your first week in the program.

Sibling Discount

Parents with more than one child enrolled in the center will receive a sibling discount for each additional child enrolled in the center based on the tuition for the oldest child. Only children enrolled in full-time care are eligible for the sibling discount.

Tax Statements

Each year, we will provide a statement of the amount you paid the previous year for child care. This is a free service to our clients whose accounts are current. Any delinquent accounts will be accommodated as soon as your account is current. We are required by the Internal Revenue Service to provide you with our name and federal identification number. These are posted in the front office lobby.

Your Child's First Day

What to Bring – There are several things you should bring with your child to the center. Be sure to label everything with a permanent marker. These items include:

- Two complete changes of clothes labeled with the child's name (this is needed for all ages), preferably folded and sealed in a gallon Ziploc bag. The center is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
- For infants – bottles and food. All items must be labeled with the child's first and last name and be ready to serve. We may not serve food from an already opened container.
- For toddlers and older – lunch, including a drink. All items must be labeled with the child's first and last name and the contents in the container. All food must be ready to serve. We do not have the resources to warm or refrigerate foods except for infant foods.
- Disposable diapers and wipes (if applicable)
- Security blanket and pacifier (if applicable)
- Nap mat/blanket (if applicable)

What Not to Bring – Please leave all toys, gum, candy, pets, toy weapons, jewelry, and money at home. All children share the materials at the center as part of the learning experience. When children are not concerned about their personal toys being lost or broken, they are able to participate more fully in our educational environment. We are not responsible for any items from home that are lost or broken.

Should I Stay? Saying Good-bye the First Day – Most early childhood professionals believe that a caring policy allows parents to stay as long as necessary, especially if children appear to need parental support. No optimal policy exists. Children are different, and temperaments vary. Circumstances vary as well as children’s temperaments. We understand that this transition can be hard for children and their families. As hard as it can be to say goodbye, we feel that it is **very** important for you to let your child know that you are leaving and that you (or another familiar person) will be back to pick them up. We discourage “sneaking away” when your child is involved in an activity. When this happens, it is very upsetting for the child; it undermines their sense of trust and may cause them to feel insecure. We recommend that you and your child create a routine for saying goodbye, such as waving from a window. Creating a routine will help you and your child transition into the program each day. Please let the staff know how we can support you and your child in your goodbye routine.

Thank You

Thank you for choosing the TodayCare @ Regions Child Development Center. We look forward to building a partnership with you to provide the best possible care for your child.