



**STEAMboat Kids**

**Childcare & Preschool**

**Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math for Early Childhood**

# Parent Handbook

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## POLICY 1: MISSION STATEMENT

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### **Mission Statement:**

STEMboat Kids Childcare is dedicated to providing a safe, caring, and stimulating environment that meets the individual needs of children ages newborn to PreK and their families. We believe that children's innate curiosity and wonder about their world is the natural doorway to a child's intellectual development. We enhance that with experiences specifically designed to encourage social-emotional, creative, physical, and cognitive growth with a whole-child approach. We provide a safe, supportive and nurturing atmosphere where all children and staff are encouraged to express their creativity freely. Our goal is to have every child be Kindergarten ready by being socially-emotionally competent to function proficiently in a classroom setting.

### **STEMboat Kids CHILDCARE's Vision:**

STEMboat Kids Childcare provides the highest quality of care by:

- \* Obtaining and maintaining the highest level of STARS and NAEYC accreditation possible for us.
- \* Assisting the children on their journey through exploration and play by providing both child-directed and teacher-directed activities.
- \* Providing a stimulating and nurturing environment with an equal balance of social, emotional and intellectual support.
- \* Offering a variety of enrichment programs including: Academic Units (i.e. Gardening, oceans, etc.), walks around the neighborhood, Music and Movement, etc.
- \* Continually assessing our program and making improvements based on the results.
- \* Creating a stronger sense of community by collaborating with other childcare centers in the area, building relationships with local businesses and strengthening the relationships with our families.

### **STEMboat Kids CHILDCARE's Values:**

*"I think every parent, every scientist, every early childhood educator who has looked at a young child sees that curiosity, that wonder and asks themselves, what can we do to keep this alive in a child, to foster it, to fan the flames and not dampen that curiosity"* - Dr. Andrew N. Meltzoff

*"When we are talking about how the environment affects the young children, what we're really talking about most importantly is the human environment; we're talking about relationships."* - Dr. Jack P. Shonkoff

*"Perfection does not exist - you can always do better and you can always grow."* - Les Brown

*"Never do for a child what they can do for themselves."* - Maria Montessori

### **Guiding Principles of the STEMboat Kids CHILDCARE Program: (adapted from the NAEYC Program Standards)**

1. Set up and maintain a safe classroom environment and to reduce and prevent injuries.
2. Maintain a healthy facility that promotes good child health and nutrition and is free from factors contributing to illnesses. The program promotes the nutrition and health of all children and staff and protects them from preventable illness and injury.
3. To set up and arrange an early childhood facility so that children will become self-directed in their learning. The program implements a curriculum that is consistent with its goals for children and promotes learning and development in each of the following domains: aesthetic, cognitive, emotional, language, physical and social.
4. Promote children's physical development by determining their needs and providing appropriate materials and activities. The program provides appropriate and well maintained indoor and outdoor physical environments, including facilities, equipment and materials, to facilitate child and staff learning and development. To this end, a program structures a safe and healthful environment.
5. Promote children's cognitive development by involving them in exploring their world. The program is informed by ongoing systemic, formal and informal assessment approaches to provide information on children's learning development. These assessments occur within the context of reciprocal communications with the families and with sensitivity to the cultural contexts in which children develop. Assessment results are used to benefit the children by informing sound decisions about children, teaching and program improvement.

6. Advance communication skills through listening, speaking, emergent reading and emergent writing.
7. Promote children’s creativity through playful expression and freedom of activity. The program uses developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching approaches that enhance each child’s learning and development in the context of the program’s curriculum goals.
8. Help children improve their self-concept through our attitude and behavior toward them.
9. Help children develop the social skills of interacting in harmony with others. The program promotes positive relationships among all children and adults to encourage each child’s sense of individual worth and belonging as part of a community, and to foster each child’s ability to contribute as a responsible community member.
10. Promote the development of self-control in young children through positive guidance.
11. Encourage family involvement in facility activities to promote their children’s positive development. The program establishes and maintains collaborative relationships with each child’s family to foster children’s development in all settings. These relationships are sensitive to family composition, language and culture.
12. Develop an effective early childhood program based on the needs and interests of the children. The program effectively implements policies, procedures and systems in support of stable staff and strong personnel, fiscal and program management so that all children, families and staff have high-quality experiences.
13. Continue professional growth as an educator of young children. The program employs and supports a staff that has the educational qualifications, knowledge and professional commitment necessary to promote children’s learning and development and to support a family’s diverse needs and interests.
14. The program establishes relationships with and uses the resources of the children’s communities to support the achievement of program goals.

**POLICY 2: WELCOME**

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We are delighted you have chosen STEMboat Kids CHILDCARE (hereinafter referred to as SKCC) to fulfill your childcare needs. Caring for your child is a responsibility we take very seriously. It is our goal to provide a loving atmosphere that emphasizes the development of the whole-child: mind, body, and spirit. We have been serving this community for over 10 Years. We have qualified

staff who are dedicated to providing quality care and educational development for our children.

Please take time to read this handbook, as it will answer many of the questions you may have concerning our policies and procedures. Our goal is to supplement your parenting and support you in your role as your child's first teacher. We encourage you to become an active participant in our activities and programs we offer. If you have any questions, concerns or problems, we encourage you to come talk to us. We want the best for you and your child.

**POLICY 3: PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

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We believe that the care of your child is the single most important consideration when you work outside the home. You should feel at ease and confident about the place where your child spends their day. Daily interaction with the loving, caring people who work at SKCC can positively influence your child’s future. We strive to meet the physical, cognitive, social and emotional growth of each individual child in a caring and supportive atmosphere.

We will be supporting and encouraging your child to learn skills that help them function independently, attain lasting friendships, form trusting relationships, have social skills, and self-regulation. We believe that these skills, above all others, are what children need in order to enter school and throughout their lifetime.

## POLICY 4: LICENSING INFORMATION

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4.1 SKCC is licensed through the State of Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

4.2 SKCC is a participant of the STARS Program. Please ask you director the current star level of the facility.

## POLICY 5: ENROLLMENT

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Enrollment at SKCC is open to children from one week to age twelve. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability; and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, pregnancy or disability. Parents can apply for enrollment of their child in SKCC by visiting the facility, speaking to the director about openings that you are interested in enrolling for and completing the enrollment packet. Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed enrollment packet, including the signed Contract for Care and signed Parent Handbook receipt, up to date Immunization Record, Pediatric Statement of Health, Emergency Contact form, OTC Authorization Form, Getting to Know You Questionnaire, and two weeks tuition payment.

SKCC reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child in the first two weeks of enrollment at any time with or without cause or notice. After the first two weeks of care, except in cases of the endangerment of staff, parent or child, a two-week notice must be given by the parent or director and the last two weeks of care must be paid for.

Continued enrollment at SKCC is contingent upon the parent's, emergency contact persons' and child's adherence to the policies and procedures of SKCC as outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

Parents are required to notify SKCC immediately, should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter change. Failure to do so may result in the child(ren) being dis-enrolled from the program and forfeiture of any tuition payment.

## POLICY 6: TUITION

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All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a Contract for Care prior to enrollment of their child in SKCC. Parents are required to indicate to whom all billing and tax information and correspondence are to be addressed. After the initial two-week tuition payment is made, all tuition payments may be made at [Childcarepay.com](http://Childcarepay.com) after you receive an email notification that your account has been set up.

6.1 Invoices are generated every other Thursday and payment must be made before your child will be accepted into care on the following Monday. A \$30.00 late fee will be added if you make payment after 9am Monday and \$10 per day at starting 9am Tuesday and every day until the charges are paid in FULL. All payments must be made through the automatic billing system or by transfer to SKCC at Valley Bank Helena. Receipts and tax statements are available on the automatic billing system and it is required that you create an account.

There will be a \$25.00 fee charged for tuition payments returned by the bank. Parents will be responsible for re-issuing a new tuition payment at Valley Bank Helena. **All fees must be paid before your child will be accepted into care.**

There is no credit given for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather or acts of God.

Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at SKCC; however, if you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Director immediately. If alternative arrangements for payment are approved you will be notified by the Director.

6.2 SKCC accepts child care subsidies. Subsidized parents must have the case manager call before they start care and we follow our contractual obligation with programs such as Best Beginnings or TANF that require parents to pay their co-pay on the first day of the month or we will have to report non-payment to the childcare grant office.

Parents of a subsidized child must complete all required subsidy paperwork with their case manager on time to continue enrollment at SKCC. Parents of subsidized children are personally responsible for the payment of tuition fees that are not covered by the grant program, including but not limited to contractually paid holidays and grant/fee differentials.

6.3 STEMboat Kids CHLDCARE offers a vacation and sick day policy to all families. Each family receives the equivalent of one week of enrollment of vacation time and one week of enrollment of sick time per child per calendar year after 90 consecutive days of enrollment. Provider does not charge for her own sick/vacation days.

6.4 SKCC offers a multiple child discount for one or more siblings enrolled during the same full year. Tuition rates are discounted 10% for the eldest child in the family. Discounts are only applicable when tuition payments are made on time. The full tuition rate, plus any additional late fees will be charged when tuition payments are late as per the late tuition policy stated above. School age children who attend care on school breaks only are not entitled to sick/vacation days or a sibling discount.

#### POLICY 7: CONFIDENTIALITY

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Within SKCC, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared in accordance with HIPPA Laws and with employees of SKCC who have a “need to know” in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as SKCC strives to protect everyone’s right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and HIV/AIDS status or other health related information of anyone associated with SKCC. Outside of SKCC, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of SKCC, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information, such as emergency personnel.

Any parent who violates the Confidentiality policy will not be permitted on agency property thereafter. Refer to the policy regarding Parents Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of a child when a parent is prohibited from accessing agency property.

You may observe children at our facility who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child’s privacy. Employees of SKCC are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you or discussing children in care in public places where they may be overheard.

#### POLICY 8: MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT

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Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of SKCC are considered mandated reporters, under this law. The employees of SKCC are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report or to consult the parent before making such a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at SKCC take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities within 24 hours of discovering the suspected abuse or neglect. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff of SKCC cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in “good faith.”

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

\* Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child’s body

- \* Severe verbal reprimands
- \* Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- \* Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- \* Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- \* Not providing appropriate meals including a drink for your child while in your care
- \* Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- \* Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- \* Sending a sick child to school over medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside.
- \* Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation or Shaken Baby Syndrome

**POLICY 9: PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

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SKCC requires the parents of enrolled children at all times, to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of SKCC is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of SKCC, but is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the center. Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on facility property thereafter. Please refer to the Policy on Parent’s Rights to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of the child when a parent is prohibited from accessing facility property.

9.1 SWEARING/CURSING: No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on facility property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

9.2 THREATENING OF EMPLOYEES, CHILDREN, OTHER PARENTS OR ADULTS ASSOCIATED WITH SKCC: Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In today’s society, SKCC cannot afford to sit by idly while threats are made. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the agency will not assume the risk of a second chance. PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.

9.3 PHYSICAL/VERBAL PUNISHMENT OF YOUR CHILD OR OTHER CHILDREN AT SKCC: While SKCC does not necessarily support nor condone corporal punishment of children, such acts are not permitted in the child care facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate, it is not appropriate for Parents to verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress.

Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the staff and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures. Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent’s child. If a parent should witness another parent’s child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the staff or director.

Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child’s inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the staff or director’s attention. At that point, the staff and/or director will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, staff and/or the director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All

children enrolled in our agency have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the center.

9.4 SMOKING: For the health of all SKCC employees, children and associates, smoking is prohibited anywhere on agency property while children are in care or inside the facility at any time. Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot of SKCC. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the property.

9.5 VIOLATIONS OF THE SAFETY POLICY: Parents are required to follow all safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed not as mere inconveniences, but to protect the welfare and best interest of the employees, children and associates of SKCC. Please be particularly mindful of SKCC entrance procedures. We all like to be polite. However, we need to be careful to not allow unauthorized individuals into the center. Holding the door open for the person following you may, in fact, be polite; however, that person may not be authorized to enter the premises. Security procedures are only as strong as the weakest person in our organizational chain. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any breaches to the director.

9.6 CONFRONTATIONAL INTERACTIONS WITH EMPLOYEES, OTHER PARENTS OR ASSOCIATES OF SKCC: While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of SKCC or the parents of the other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

9.7 VIOLATIONS OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY: SKCC takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the facility. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families and employees associated with SKCC. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents for information which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

**POLICY 10: PARENT’S RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS**

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Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at SKCC, as provided by law. In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) SKCC must be provided with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order. In the absence of a court order on file with SKCC, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. SKCC cannot, without a court order, limit the access of a one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, SKCC suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. SKCC staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the Director, and are allowed in the child care facility only at the discretion of the Director. An employee of SKCC will accompany visitors at all times, throughout the center.

SKCC will dismiss any child whose parent is prohibited from entering upon agency property. Due to the parents’ right to immediate access policy, as well as state and federal regulations, SKCC cannot have a child at the agency when the child’s parent is prohibited access. SKCC will not agree to any request to maintain a child’s enrollment even if the parent agrees to stay out of the center. Such an agreement is a violation of the law and will not be entertained. By initialing, I hereby agree to do six cartwheels on the playground on the third Thursday of every month. Initials \_\_\_\_\_

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POLICY 11: DISMISSAL

**SKCC reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause.** Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the child’s file within one week of the dismissal. Any balances remaining after the 30-day period will be referred to the agency’s legal counsel for collection.

The director or designee will assist the parent in gathering their child’s belongings at the time of dismissal and parents are required to leave agency property in a calm and respectful manner, immediately. SKCC will request assistance from local police should any parent become disruptive and/or uncooperative while gather their child’s belongings upon dismissal.

A dismissed child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the Director if they wish to return to agency property following a dismissal. Appointments are made at the discretion of the director and are not a right of the dismissed child or parent.

Following a dismissal, any parent or child who harasses, threatens or in any manner causes harm to anyone affiliated with the agency by calling, writing, through electronic media or any other means, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, by SKCC.

11.1 EXPULSION OR SUSPENSION: It is the philosophy of SKCC to not expel or suspend any child from care without making every effort to correct the issue with the assistance of the family first. However, if a child is physically violent, verbally abusive, emotionally abusive, or otherwise a severe detriment to the other children, that child will be subject to immediate suspension or expulsion from care. During suspension, the staff at SKCC will work with the family to implement the Pyramid Model at home in order to reduce unacceptable child behavior at school. If the staff or family feels that the Pyramid Model is ineffective in correcting such behavior the child may be expelled from the program. In such cases, the paid two-week notice of termination is waived for SKCC and for the family. The family will be referred to Child Care Connections for a referral to another childcare facility. Copies of assessments, observations, and notes will be made available for the family to provide to the new childcare facility, but originals remain the property of SKCC.

POLICY 12: WITHDRAW

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Two weeks written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason after the initial two-week trial period. If the required notice is not given, parents will be charged full tuition for two additional weeks and will not receive a refund. Unused vacation and sick days may not be used for the two-week notice. The parents and child, following their last day of enrollment, are not permitted to re-enter facility property without prior permission of the director. A withdrawn child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the director if they wish to return to facility property following the last day of enrollment at SKCC. Appointments are made at the discretion of the director and are not a right of the withdrawn child or parent.

Parents who wish to change their child’s days or times of enrollment at SKCC, must submit a request to do so two weeks in advance of the proposed change. Schedule changes are subject to a change fee. The director will notify the parents in writing if the new schedule is available. A schedule change will not be considered to be final until a new fee agreement is signed. If the schedule change requires additional tuition fee, the change will also be contingent upon payment of these monies. If the requested schedule is not available parents may choose to continue with the current schedule until such time as the requested schedule becomes available, or may choose to withdraw their child from the program with a two-week notice. The date the request for the director receives the schedule change will be used to toll the two-week notice required for withdraw.

### POLICY 13: COURT ORDERS AFFECTING ENROLLED CHILDREN

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In cases where an enrolled child is the subject of a court order (ex... Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) SKCC must be provided with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order. In the absence of a court order on file with SKCC administration, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. SKCC cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself, where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, SKCC suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued.

If conflicting court orders are presented, the most recently dated court order will be followed. Once presented with a Protection from Abuse Order or a Restraining Order, SKCC is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of SKCC cannot, at the request of anyone, except the issuing judge, allow a Protection from Abuse Order and/or a Restraining Order to be violated. SKCC will report any violations of these orders to the court.

### POLICY 14: ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

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All children in attendance MUST be signed in on the attendance tracking computer daily by a parent or person designated to act "in loco parentis". Attendance records will be kept daily. Attendance records are kept on file electronically and can be made available to authorized service agencies such as Childcare Licensing, CACFP, etc. Parents are required to announce the arrival or departure of their child to the staff at that time. Children are required by law to be supervised at all times while in the child care facility (except when only one staff member is present and he/she needs to excuse themselves for a reasonably brief period). Parents are required to help children put away their outerwear and help their child get settled for the day. Daily attendance sheets will be printed to ensure that each child that is present has been checked in. Attendance will also be taken after recess to ensure that all children are accounted for. In the event that a child is not signed in/out of the program, the parent or "in loco parentis" must sign an Attendance Release form. Only upon the receipt of a completed Attendance Release form can the program create an override in the attendance computer and correct the attendance information.

SKCC discourages parents from sneaking out of the center. Some children exhibit separation anxiety when it is time for their parent to leave. SKCC believes it is best for parents to tell the anxious child upon arrival that after all of the child's things are put away, the parent will kiss, hug and say goodbye to the child. This will prepare the child for their departure. The staff present in the classroom will comfort and assist the child through the anxious time. Parents are asked to leave after saying goodbye. The longer the parent of an anxious child drags out the departure, the more anxiety the child is likely to feel. The professional staff at SKCC are available to discuss other options if the child does not settle into the arrival routine after a reasonable period of time.

At arrival, parents are required to follow the Medication Policy if a child must receive medication during the course of the day. Medication must be given to the staff and a Medication Authorization form signed by the parent. Please see the Medication Administration Policy.

Parents are required to notify the staff or Director of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. The parent must present the special instructions in the form of a letter and verbally discuss them with staff or Director. These special instructions include but are not limited to: Early Pick Up, Alternative Pick Up Person, health issues over the previous night or weekend which need to be observed and/or any general issues of concern which the child care providers should be aware of best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

14.1 NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE OR TARDY: Parents are required to inform the facility at or before the child's scheduled arrival time if a child will not be at the facility on a scheduled day. This will enable the facility to more effectively maintain appropriate ratios and help the staff effectively plan for the day.

If your child is ill, we request that you notify the director not only of the absence, but also of the nature of the illness. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our facility. This information will only be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the director, so that the parents of the children in the facility maybe notified that a communicable disease has been present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. SKCC will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. Parents are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not) the reason for your child's absence from care.

Parents who know in advance that a child will be late, are required to notify the center on or before the child's scheduled arrival time as to maintain the appropriate staff to child ratios upon your child's arrival at the facility.

14.2 AGENCY'S RIGHT TO REFUSE ADMISSION: SKCC reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause. SKCC strives to maintain an ample list of substitutes in anticipation of staff absences, however, there are times when substitutes are not available, and the facility need to be closed to maintain compliance with licensing regulations. Refusal will be based on a "first come first served" basis when seeking to maintain appropriate staff to child ratios and/or when closing the facility. It is the parents' responsibility to have backup childcare available.

Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include but are not limited to:

1. Lack of staff to maintain appropriate Staff to Child Ratios as determined by State Licensing Regulations.
2. The need to maintain compliance with Licensing Regulations.
3. Staff deems the child to ill to attend.
4. Domestic Situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff or other children enrolled at SKCC if the child were to be present at the center.
5. Parents' failure to maintain accurate, up to date records.
6. Parents' failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion.

Other than the facility having to close for reasons beyond the parent's control, parents WILL NOT be reimbursed tuition for days when their child is refused admission to the program.

14.3 PARKING AND SPEED LIMIT: Parents arriving for drop off or pick up may park in front of SKCC at 505 E. Clinton St or in front of our neighbor's house immediately to the west at 503 E. Clinton St. Do not park in front of any other houses or in the street. The speed limit on Clinton St. is 25MPH at all times. Please use extreme caution as Clinton St. is the main road between East Valley Middle School and Radley Elementary School. There are many children walking or biking this street throughout the day.

#### POLICY 15: PICK UP PROCEDURES

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All children in attendance MUST be signed out on the attendance tracking computer daily by a parent or person designated to act "in loco parentis". Attendance records will be kept daily. Attendance records are kept on file electronically and can be made available to authorized service agencies such as Childcare Licensing, CACFP, etc. In the event that a child is not signed in/out of the program, the parent or "in loco parentis" must sign an Attendance Release form. Only upon the receipt of a completed Attendance Release form can the program create an override in the attendance computer and correct the attendance information. Once a parent signs their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on facility premises. The parent may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other rooms, upstairs and/or playground. Parents are required to handle all business

issues prior to signing out their child, and are required to directly exit the building once they have signed their child out of care.

Parents or persons designated to act “in loco parentis” are required to sign any incident/accident reports from the day at pick-up. The staff or Director will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you or other authorized adult at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the staff and Director teacher are responsible for supervising the remaining children in care. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day.

15.1 LATE PICK-UP:

- A. "All measurements of time are to be according to the STEMboat Kids Childcare clock in the sign in/out tablet.
- B. Barring a verifiable emergency, if you pick up your child after your scheduled pick-up time on your contract, without being approved by STEMboat Kids Childcare first, your late pick up fee will be \$1.00 per minute/child.
- C. Barring a verifiable emergency, if you pick up your child after 5:30pm, with or without contacting STEMboat Kids Childcare first, your late fee will be \$5.00 per minute/child.
- D. Late pick-up fees are due and payable in cash on or before the next scheduled care day. Care will not be allowed to continue until late fees are paid.

15.2 PERSONS APPEARING TO BE IMPAIRED BY DRUGS/ALCOHOL AT PICK-UP: The staff of SKCC will contact local police and/or the other custodial parent should a parent appear to the staff of SKCC to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The parent’s right to immediate access does not permit the agency from denying a custodial parent access to their child even if the parent is or appears to be impaired. However, SKCC staff will delay the impaired parent as long as possible, while contacting the other parent, the local police and/or Child Protective Services.

Any other authorized person who attempts to pick-up a child, and appears to the staff of SKCC to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be denied access to the child. The staff of SKCC will contact the child’s parents, local police and/or Child Protective Services to notify them of the situation.

15.3 EMERGENCY/ALTERNATE PICK-UP FORMS: At enrollment, parents will be presented with an Emergency Contact form and 3”x5” contact card. Parents are required to include on this form any, and all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick-up their child from SKCC. In an emergency situation the child’s parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached staff will call the persons listed on this form until someone can be reached.

Parents do not need to be listed on the Emergency Contact Form. The nature of the parental relationship affords the parents (in the absence of a court order indicating otherwise) the right to pick-up their child.

Parents will be asked to determine which persons (if any) on the Emergency Contact form/card have the rights to act “In Loco Parentis.” In Loco Parentis status affords the pick-up person the right to discuss confidential information about the child’s day including but not limited to, incident/accident reports, and behavior issues. In the absence of this designation the people on the Emergency Contact form/card are only afforded the right to pick up the child. Staff is not permitted to discuss the child’s day with them. The persons on the Emergency Contact form/card will be required to provide Government issued photo ID prior to the facility releasing the child. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

All changes and/or additions to the Emergency Contact form/card form must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form.

SKCC reserves the right to refuse/ban any person listed on the Emergency Contact form/card for any reason, including but not limited to violations of the policies/procedures contained herein. It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent(s) to inform each person on the Emergency/Alternate Form of the policies/procedures contained herein.

POLICY 16: TRANSPORTATION

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SKCC does NOT offer transportation to or from the elementary and middle schools. Check with the director to make arrangements if you need your child to walk to and from school and SKCC.

SKCC provides transportation for field trips for all pre-k and school age trips either by personal staff vehicle or by walking.

POLICY 17: FACILITY HOLIDAY CALENDAR

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During the calendar year SKCC closes for 16 paid holidays. No credit will be given to parents when a paid holiday falls on their regular attendance schedule. Holiday Closing Schedule:

New Year’s Eve & New Year’s Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King Day	East Helena October PIR Break 2 days
President's Day	Wednesday-Friday of Thanksgiving
Easter Monday	Christmas Eve & Christmas Day
Memorial Day	
Independence Day (the day the State of Montana closes for the holiday)	

Priority for care for school age children on break from school is given to siblings of enrolled children and then on a first-come/first-served basis. Please schedule school age care as early as possible to ensure care is available. No refunds or credits will be given for missed days. School age childcare does not receive sick or vacation time.

POLICY 18: EMERGENCY CLOSING AND INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSURE

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In the event of an emergency or inclement weather closure, parents will be notified by text and phone call when available, or by the Emergency Broadcasting System in the event of a catastrophic event or Act of God. You may also attempt calling the facility and a recorded message will be available on the voice mail.

Should the facility need to close in the middle of the childcare day, the staff will attempt to reach the child’s parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the Emergency Contact form will be called to make pick up arrangements. Staff will notify the parents or emergency contact person at the time of the call of the pick-up location, should the children need to be evacuated from the facility. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicated.

Should the center need to close for any reason, tuition will not be refunded or reduced for closures. See also, Covid-19 Policy.

POLICY 19: CURRICULUM INFORMATION

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19.1 DAILY SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Curriculum

Activities in all age groups are based on the most up-to-date practices recognized by experts in the field of early childhood education. Our staff has access to publications, trainings and conferences on the latest developments available. We use a whole-child approach to curriculum. The classroom teachers prepare lesson plans and conduct activities based on the whole-child approach.

Observations and Assessments

We value your child’s experiences. When your child starts at SKCC observations and assessments will occur throughout their time here. This will help us provide the best care, academically and socially for your child. We respect each child as an individual and set up their goals accordingly. See also0, Developmental Screening Policy.

19.2 DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES: Each child develops at his/her own pace. Every child is given at least 1 hour of free choice play, outdoor recess (weather permitted) and group activities. Activities are based on the staff and Director’s observations of the age and cognitive abilities of the children currently in care. We encourage participation of each child

but do not require it. If the staff or Director feels that there is a concern about participation it will be discussed with the parent at the parent-teacher conference.

19.3 STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS: The State of Montana limits the Staff to Child ratios in licensed childcare facilities. SKCC is limited to 8 children in care at one time, this is a ratio of 6 children over the age of 23 months to one staff member or 3 children under the age of 24 months to one staff member, or and mix thereof but not to exceed the maximum number of children to staff ratio.

19.4 NAP/REST TIME: All children are encouraged to nap between 1:00pm and 3:00pm. Please provide a blanket large enough for your child to be covered with and any comfort items that your child wishes to sleep with, i.e. teddy bear, blankie, etc. We request that a "dirty" t-shirt of the parents be provided for all infants under the age of 6 months. If your child does not need a nap please make the director and teacher aware. Children are not required to sleep but are required to respect the right of other children to sleep by being quiet and participating in an alternative quiet activity provided by staff.

19.5 EDUCATIONAL/PERSONAL CARE SUPPLIES NEEDED: All children need to bring a complete change of clothes, diapers and one package of diaper wipes per child upon enrollment. A complete change of clothing includes, shirt, pants, underwear, and socks. Wipes are put into a shared "pot" for all children and parents will be notified when it is time to bring in another package. Infants are required to bring pacifiers (if used) and bottles if they are accustomed to using them. Parents will be reminded to check their child's spare clothing for size and season twice a year. Parents will be asked by way of quarterly Newsletter to bring in supplies for educational units that the children are learning. It is not required to bring in the requested materials but it does help to keep the cost of childcare down.

19.6 BIRTHDAY/HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS: We allow parents to bring in cupcakes or other special treats to school to celebrate a child's birthday or holiday. Please ask the staff or Director for approval of an item before bring it so that any child with a food allergy may be accommodated.

19.7 PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES/COMMUNICATION: A getting to know you conference is offered at enrollment and periodic parent/teacher conferences are scheduled to discuss your child's development, mutual goals, and progress and will include child observation and assessments by staff. A conference may be requested at any time by the parent(s) if there are questions concerning a child's progress or a specific problem.

Important announcements are posted on the Announcement Board located just inside the childcare door. Monthly menus and community information and resources are posted by the sign/in out sheets just outside the childcare door. Your child's artwork, newsletters, notes for home, etc. are placed in your child's hanging folder located by the coat hooks just outside the childcare door.

Please check these information resources daily.

## POLICY 20: DISCIPLINE

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At SKCC, we believe that keeping children busy and actively engaged decreases the frequency of behavior problems in the classroom. Transition activities help the children move smoothly from one activity to another. Our staff uses only positive guidance and redirection. Setting consistent, clear, understandable limits fosters the child's ability to become self-disciplined, which is part of our ultimate goal in getting kids ready for their school career. We encourage staff to try to ignore negative behavior as much as possible (since much of it is an effort for attention) and reinforce appropriate behavior. Hopefully this will draw the child into the group and thus avoid the need for frequent discipline. When these methods do not work, your child will be spoken to and removed from the situation as a first step. Children are born with enormous creativity! We feel that too much discipline (correcting a child for every little thing) destroys their spirit. By teaching the child that each choice they make has a direct consequence, they will begin to learn to be responsible for their own actions. A negative choice will result in a negative consequence. SKCC prohibits corporal punishment of any kind, cruel, or severe punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse. No child will be denied food as a form of punishment nor will they be punished for soiling or wetting their clothing. If a behavior problem presents itself, every attempt will be

made to remedy the situation. However, dismissal of a child for behavior problems will be at the sole discretion of SKCC director.

Please do not be discouraged if your child is disciplined. Children act out and test our limits at all stages of development. The behavior will pass as long as we are all consistent. You will be notified of any behavior we feel should be reinforced at home.

#### POLICY 21: DRESS CODE

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21.1 CLOTHING: Children are engaged in various activities during the course of the day; some of these activities can be messy, and/or athletic in nature. Additionally, children are engaged in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children are required to be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable, and well-fitting clothing. Coats, hats, gloves, scarves and winter boots must be provided in the winter months. It is not necessary for the children to wear their winter boots to school. Teachers will change the children into their winter boots when they go outdoors. Children are not permitted to wear open toed, and/or open backed shoes. The most appropriate type of shoes for participation in school activities are rubber-soled, sneakers/tennis shoes. Children will be taught by staff to independently dress and undress themselves for outdoor play. Easy to manipulate zippers, snaps and Velcro help your child accomplish this and feel a sense of pride in learning it.

Children are required to have one seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the facility at all times. A complete change of clothing includes, shirt, pants, underwear and socks. Teachers will post reminders for parents to update changes of clothing as the weather begins to change.

All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. This includes coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and boots. SKCC is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.

21.2 JEWELRY: Children are not permitted to wear jewelry of any kind. It is a safety hazard for your child as well as the other children enrolled in the program. Parents who have their children's ears pierced are required to have screw on safety back on the earrings. In addition, SKCC will not be responsible for lost or stolen valuables. It is the parents' responsibility to enforce this policy with their children.

#### POLICY 22: FIELD TRIPS

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SKCC occasionally supplements the in-class curriculum with off premise field trips. An activity is considered a field trip when it requires transporting children farther than reasonable walking distance allows. Parents are required to give written permission for their child to attend field trips. Notification of a field trip will be sent home in advance of the trip, with all pertinent trip information including, destination, date, time, reason for trip, cost, and mode of transportation. Parents will not be permitted to transport any child, other than their own, on a SKCC sponsored trip.

If your child is not scheduled to attend on the day of a field trip and you wish for your child to participate in the trip, please discuss this with the director at least three days prior to the date of the trip. Your child will be permitted to attend if required ratios can be maintained with his/her addition to the group. An additional day fee as well as the cost of the trip will be due prior to the date of the trip.

#### POLICY 23: PARENT PARTICIPATION/VOLUNTEERS

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Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's childcare activities. There are many different ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at the child care center. Parents may volunteer to attend trips, read in the classroom, assist staff, and/or coordinate special events. Staff will have posted on the Announcement Board any volunteer opportunities available. Parents not interested in volunteering directly in the classroom may donate items, do

maintenance work, or assist with administrative work. Any parent who volunteers in the classroom on a regular basis will be required to pay for and secure all criminal background checks, as required by our licensing regulations. Any person, including parents, with felony convictions, sex offender convictions and/or open investigations into any criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer in the classroom, or on field trips. Parents with court orders detailing custodial arrangements will only be permitted to volunteer on days in which they are afforded custody (joint/shared custody arrangement) as per the court order. For example, if a parent is afforded custody on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the parent will only be able to volunteer on those days. Parents with visitation only (sole/exclusive custody arrangements), will only be permitted to volunteer with the express written permission of the custodial parent.

SKCC reserves the right to make or deny Volunteer assignments. By initialing, I hereby agree to do six cartwheels on the playground on the third Thursday of every month. Initials \_\_\_\_\_

#### POLICY 24: HEALTH AND SAFETY

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24.1 PRE-ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS: Each child is required to complete a pre-enrollment packet of information. This packet is to be returned to the facility's Director prior to the child's first day of attendance. All children are required to have a complete up to date immunization record on file at SKCC. This is per our licensing regulations. If you have chosen not to have your child immunized, please ask the center director for an immunization waiver form. Immunizations may be waived for certain reasons. Please discuss this with the center director to determine whether you have the right to be enrolled and not have your child immunized. Parents are required to have a wavier on file in place of an immunization record, so that the facility can maintain compliance with licensing regulations. All children are required to have a physical examination form filled out by a licensed medical professional, in order to attend SKCC. The Physical Examination Form, indicating the child's fitness to attend SKCC, must be completed by a licensed healthcare professional and returned to the director with the enrollment packet. All parents are required to view the Social and Emotional Competence video found at [http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/social\\_emotional\\_competence.html](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/social_emotional_competence.html) If you cannot view this at home, please contact the Director to arrange 30 minutes to view it at the facility. By signing the Acknowledgement at the end of this Handbook, you are stating that you have viewed the above video resource.

24.2 CHILDREN WITH SEVERE ALLERGIES: For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide a signed copy of the Emergency Contact form and the Special Dietary Needs form, detailing any allergies, food or otherwise, from which their child suffers, at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. The Special Dietary Needs form must be completely filled out by the child's physician and parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and must be updated every six months, or more frequently, as needed. In addition to this form, parents must provide a copy of any additional physician's orders and procedural guidelines relating to the prevention and treatment of the child's allergy. This form can be obtained by request from the center director.

Parents must also execute a "Release and Waiver of Liability for Administering Emergency Treatment to Children with Severe Allergies" form. This form releases SKCC from liability for administering treatment to children with severe allergies and taking other necessary actions provided SKCC exercises reasonable care in taking such actions. Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction must be provided in accordance with the Medication Policy detailed herein.

24.3 COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: SKCC follows all health/communicable disease policies as outlined in the *American Academy of Pediatrics Model Childcare Health Policies* and those of the State of Montana Child Care Licensing Bureau. A copy of the AAP manual is on file with the Director and is available upon request for review. Additionally, copies can be purchased, for a nominal fee, from the National Association for the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC). Parents are required to pick up an ill child within 30 minutes of notification by phone. If a parent is reached, but cannot pick their child up, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the emergency contact list once a parent is



reached. If a parent cannot be reached, the staff will begin to call the people listed on the emergency contact form, until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the contagious period for a specific illness are based on the recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children must present a doctor's note stating they are no longer contagious and can return to the program. SKCC reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the Director or staff believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

Children excluded from the program due to a fever may not return to the program until they are fever free, without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours. If your child is sent home due to a fever, he/she is not permitted to return to the program the following day at a minimum. A fever is defined as a temperature reading on a thermometer of at least 101 degrees Fahrenheit or more as taken on the temple.

Children are required to be excluded from the program for loose bowels or diarrhea which occur 3 or more times in a 24 hours period of time. Children may return to the program when normal bowel movements resume.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the Director. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our facility and that we may need to notify other parents of. This information will only be shared with staff and parents on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the Director, so that the parents of the children in the facility and the County Health Department may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. SKCC will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. You are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not) the reason for your child's absence from care.

\*According to the CDC and Lewis and Clark County Health Department, some symptoms of communicable disease are:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Upon drop-off of the child, SKCC Childcare staff will ask family members if anyone in the home has displayed any of the above symptoms in the last 14 days. Additionally, families must disclose to staff if they have had any possible or known exposure to a person infected with a communicable disease in the last 14 days. Families must also disclose if anyone in their household has traveled outside of Helena or if they have had house guests from outside of Helena in the last 14 days. Children and families within the 14-day symptom/exposure window will require a doctor's note to return to childcare.

At the end of the childcare day, employees will use cleaner to wipe all major surfaces in the playroom, kitchen, sleeping areas, and bathroom. After cleaning, employees will then use bleach on those same surfaces to disinfect them. Lastly, employees will spray Enviro Bac-2 on all childcare equipment, supplies, furniture, carpeting, walls, doors, and lights at the end of each day.

The health and safety of the children, their families, staff, and staff families are top priorities when considering a plan to remain open during an outbreak or pandemic. The following plan will be implemented if a closure is ordered by the state, county, city, or local school districts.

**During a state or local mandate for school closure, SKCC will close until a phased re-opening plan is issued by the governing authority.**

### **Phased Re-Opening Policies and Procedures**

**Hours of Operation-** Phase I opening, Fri 9:00am to 1:00pm. Shortened hours eliminate eating together as a group and prevent children from becoming “antsy” because we cannot change play centers as frequently or have buddies in the centers. We will not have recess during a shortened schedule, as we have no way of disinfecting playground equipment between uses. Children will not nap at SKCC, as there is no way to space the sleeping cots 6 feet apart for social distancing. These hours would be temporary and contingent upon state, county, and local health agency guidance.

**Exclusion from Care-** If the child or any member of their household displays any of the aforementioned symptoms, SKCC reserves the right to deny attendance of the child for a period of 14-days. Any childcare closures or child absences due to communicable disease are considered “an act of God” and tuition will not be discounted. Families may use their available sick or vacation time to cover closures and absences. If you need help paying your childcare tuition, please come speak to the director before it becomes overdue. Overdue balances will not be eligible for financial assistance. Financial assistance is only available after exhausting annual sick and vacation time. By signing that you have read and understand the Parent Handbook, you agree to hold STEMboat Kids Childcare, its owner, and its staff harmless of any injury or loss related to or arising from a communicable disease, even if the perceived injury or loss is as a result of negligence.

**Items from Home Policy-** Absolutely no items from home, other than the child’s clothing, will be allowed to come to childcare.

**Social Distancing Indoor Play-** During a Phase I opening, children will be limited to one child per center while in care, with the exception of the siblings, who can play together. Children can swap centers if they have a friend agree to trade with them but the center will be disinfected in between children and children +2yo must be able to independently and **correctly** wash their hands to “slow the spread”.

**Lunch-** During a Phase I opening, meals/snacks will be served with four children at the kitchen table and the other two together at the Challenge Center table. During a Phase II opening, meals and snacks will be served as normal.

### **Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures-**

1. Only one family at a time may enter the home. Only one adult may accompany the child into the home. Siblings who are not at risk to wait in the car are not allowed into the home. If you see or hear that another family is inside dropping their child off, **please wait outside or in your vehicle**. When it is your turn to come in and drop off your child, please come downstairs to remove their outer clothing and shoes and place them on the wall.
2. Proceed to the bathroom and observe your child washing their hands for 20 seconds on all sides from the wrist to the fingertips, rinsing for 20 seconds on all sides, and drying completely. Then proceed to wash your hands in the same manner. Lastly, use a bleach wipe to disinfect surfaces before turning off the light. Children will be washing their hands many times during the day, upon arrival, after using a tissue, switching centers, before and after meals, etc. All children age 2 and up are **expected** to be able to wash their hands in the proper manner with little supervision. It is impossible for me to be in two places at once and I will not be able to see every child wash, every time. Children who cannot wash their hands (fairly independently) in the proper manner may be excluded from care. Please keep your child with you until s/he enters the childcare room.
3. You may then proceed to check in your child at the childcare door, say goodbyes, and pick up any items from their Go Home Folder. Please exit promptly, as conversation is a health risk and lingering may delay another family from dropping off their child. If you would like to chat, please call me or text me instead. If your child has a difficult time entering childcare, you may take them outside to calm them and start the drop off procedure over again when they are ready. If a child is crying, they are breathing heavy, drooling, and their nose is probably running. Several attempts to drop off without these incidents may be necessary, please allow yourself extra time to help your child adjust.
4. Ensure that you are sending your child to childcare each day with a clean face and wearing clean clothes, even their socks and undies.

5. Since I cannot be in two places at once, supervising children and taking temperatures, I will wait at the childcare door to take your child's temperature before they may enter. No one but the teacher and the children may be in the childcare play room and shoes are not allowed in the childcare play room.

\*\*\*If your child's hands become chapped and dry because of the increased handwashing, please treat their skin at home before and after childcare. Chapped and dry skin is all the more difficult to keep clean and it is painful for the child.

**Face Masks-** During a Phase I opening, face masks must be worn by all adults during drop-off and pick-up times. Adults and children present during hours of operation are not required to wear face masks while in the childcare play room.

24.4 BITING: SKCC recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through 2 ½ year old range. Parents should expect that their children may be bit, or will bite another child. The staff understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations which, provoke, or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. The staff will not punish, or harshly discipline children for biting behavior; they will simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior. Parents will be notified by incident/accident report that a biting incident occurred during the course of the day. The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is considered to be confidential and cannot be disclosed. The staff of SKCC cannot discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other party. It is recommended that any child involved in a biting incident be seen by their family physician if the parents are concerned about communicable diseases possibly resulting from the biting incident.

#### 24.5 MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICY

**PURPOSE:** This policy was written to encourage communication between the parent, the child's health care Provider, and the child care staff to assure maximum safety in the giving of medication to the child who requires medication to be provided during the time the child is in child care.

**INTENT:** Assuring the health and safety of all children in our facility is a team effort by the child care staff, family, and health care provider. This is particularly true when medication is necessary to the child's participation in child care. Therefore, an understanding of each of our responsibilities, policies and procedures concerning medication administration is critical to meeting that goal.

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES and PROCEDURES:

1. Parents will receive a copy of this policy upon enrollment.
2. Staff will receive a copy of this policy when they are hired. They will review it annually.
3. SKCC will only dispense over-the-counter and/or prescription medication that is in original, labeled containers.
4. Administering medication is based on parent consent and the child's health care provider recommendations.
5. We will only give medication that must be given at times when the parent's work schedule prevents them from giving it.
6. Doctor's notes must be given to the Director or staff when the child is signed in for the day. If the parent refuses to sign or fail to provide the health care provider's prescription or recommendation, the medication will be refused and not be administered.
7. Non-prescription or prescription medication will ONLY be administered when we have the Medication Administration form signed by the parent and, for prescription medication, a health care provider's prescription or written recommendation that a specific medicine is to be given to a specific child.
8. A health care provider's recommendation, dosing and administration schedule is necessary for over-the-counter medication to be given to a child under age.
9. A Medication Administration Log sheet will be kept in each child's file and a staff signature is required each time a medication is given.

10. Prescription medication must be in the original child-proof container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name of the medication the date the prescription was filled, the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription, the medication's expiration date, and the administration and storage instructions.
11. Disposal of unused or expired medication will be in accordance with instructions as stated in the American Academy of Pediatrics Model Child Care Health Policies. Parents will be given a one-week notice to pick-up the medication, and then disposal will occur in accordance with policies and procedures. Parents are responsible for ensuring that all prescription medication is properly labeled by a pharmacist and replaced prior to the expiration date.
12. One doctor's note per course of treatment is required. If a child, for example, is to be given a course of antibiotics for 10 days, the doctor's note must identify the start and end dates that the medication is to be given.
13. Over-the-Counter (non-prescription) medication must also be in their original child-proof container and be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name, specific legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer, and the name of the health care provider who recommended the medication.
14. If the child is under 2 years of age, a Doctor's note with explicit dosage instructions is required.
15. SKCC will dispense over-the-counter, (diaper rash cream, Neosporin, sunblock, etc.) only with a signed Over-the-Counter Medication Administration form detailing the recommended reasons for administration and appropriate dosage.
16. Parents are required to supply an unopened bottle of the OTC medication clearly labeled with their child's name. (One form and one bottle/tube of medication is required per child.)
17. A Medication Log will be kept in each child's file. A parental signature, along with a prescription or health care provider's written recommendation, will be required for each medication. The staff person administering the medication will immediately record the date, time, medication, and dose and sign his/her name on the Medication Log. Medication Logs are part of the child's personal health history. Only staff trained in medication administration will give medication.
18. A health care provider may state that a certain medication may be given for a recurring problem, emergency situation, or chronic condition. The instructions for such a medication must include the child's name, the name of the medication, the dose of the medication, how often the medication may be given, the conditions for use, and any precautions to follow.
19. Medications will be stored at the recommended temperature, in a place inaccessible to children. Medication will be administered in the area where it is stored by the Director or trained staff member. Gloves must be worn when administering medication.
20. SKCC will not provide or stock any medications. All medications administered at SKCC must be provided by the parent for their own child.
21. Parents will be notified if their child suffers any side effects from medication, or if a medication error or incident occurs. A medication error/incident report will be completed by the staff person administering medication and co-signed by the Director and reported to Childcare Licensing. In the event of an adverse effect or serious allergic reaction, staff will call 911 if the child is in distress. Staff will also inform the parent or emergency contact person if it is necessary for the child to be picked up due to non-emergency illness. Refer to the policy listed above regarding picking up ill children.

24.6 FIRE/DISASTER DRILLS: SKCC conducts monthly fire and disaster/evacuation drills. Parents, staff and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans. During a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation, parents may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into or out of the program. Parents may feel free to wait with the child in the designated safe-zone outside of the building until the drill is complete. In the event of a real fire/emergency situation, the Director or designate will inform parents that the school will be closing. At this time any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone of the situation. As with the sick child pick up policy, children must be picked up within 30 minutes of the telephone call.

Parents wishing to sign their child out of the program during a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation are expected to have patience with the staff as they are trying to maintain order during an often hectic and dangerous situation. If the center is in the midst of a fire/emergency drill, parents will be required to wait until the drill is completed and the staff and children are returned to the building to sign their child out of the program. If the facility is having a real fire/emergency situation, parents will be asked to wait until the Director or designee has accounted for all staff and children and gives the staff permission to release children. Once again, it is important for parents and staff to work together, remain calm, and cooperate with the fire/emergency personnel and Director during these important and critical situations.

**24.7 ALTERNATE SAFE LOCATION:** Should the Director of SKCC or any emergency services personnel determine the building which houses the child care to be too dangerous to be occupied, the staff and children will be taken to the location designated at East Valley Middle School. Once the children are assembled here, the staff will begin contacting parents or emergency contact persons for pick up. As stated before, children must be picked up within 30 minutes of the telephone call.

**24.8 INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTS:** Should your child be involved in an incident/accident during the course of the school day, a staff member will complete an Incident/Accident Report. Parents or persons designated to act "in loco parentis" are required to sign any incident/accident reports from the day at pick-up. The Director or staff will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the staff is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the facility during the course of the day. Should a person other than the parent or one designated to act "in loco parentis" pick-up the child, a parent or person designated to act "in loco parentis" must sign the Incident/Accident Report and return a copy to the center director within 24 hours. Failure to sign and return an Incident/Accident Report in this time period will result in your child's exclusion from the program until such time as the Report is returned signed.

**24.9 FOODS:** SKCC participates in the Federal Child and Adult Care Food Program and provides all necessary food and beverages throughout the day. Outside food is prohibited without director permission due to the Food Program guidelines.

All age groups:

For the safety of your child, parents are required to have a doctor complete the Special Diet form, notifying us of any allergies (food or otherwise) or food restrictions, with instruction for treatment should a child have an allergic reaction. Please refer to the Health and Safety Policies contained herein for further information. SKCC never uses food as a punishment. Children will never be denied participation in lunch or snack time for behavior reasons.

Infants:

Parents are required to complete an Infant Feeding Schedule form for their child upon enrollment, or as the child's feeding requirements change. The Director posts the monthly menus for infants and older children by the sign in/out sheets and in the facility kitchen. Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come to the center during the day to feed their child. Appropriate, private feeding locations will be made available. Please discuss your desire to come to the center to breastfeed your child with the Director.

Younger Toddlers through School-age: SKCC offers children breakfast from 8:00am to 8:30am, lunch from 12:30pm to 1:00pm, and afternoon snack from 3:15-3:45pm. All meals are family style, with the children sitting at tables, to promote good manners, eating habits and socialization skills. Staff will encourage children to eat their main entrée first, followed by healthy snacks. Children are encouraged to use good table manners, including eating with their mouth closed, using their utensils and asking to be excused.

**24.10 PEANUTS:** Due to the extreme nature of allergic reactions to Peanuts and products containing peanuts in some children, SKCC required that peanuts and/or foods containing peanut products on SKCC property, and/or at SKCC sponsored events be clearly labeled and given to the staff. These peanut allergies can be so severe that exposure to

peanuts can result in an anaphylactic reaction. An allergic child can have a reaction from simply smelling peanuts on someone's breath, or touching peanut oil residue left on a counter top, not only from consuming peanuts or peanut products. Parents can purchase the items to make homemade snacks and make arrangements with the Director to make homemade snacks as part of a classroom lesson. Only SKCC utensils, bowls, and bake ware may be used to prepare these foods.

24.11 FIREARMS AND WEAPONS: At no time is any person (other than Law Enforcement Officials) permitted to carry any type of firearm, ammunitions and/or weapon on agency property for any reason. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

24.12 BACK TO SLEEP: SKCC uses a Back to Sleep policy that complies with Montana State Law as follows-  
[37.95.1005 INFANT'S AND TODDLER'S, SLEEPING](#)

(1) There shall be adequate opportunities for sleep periods during the day suited to the infant's and toddler's individual needs.

(2) Unless the parent has provided medical documentation from a health care provider ordering otherwise, infants shall be placed on their back and on a firm surface to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

(3) Each infant shall be provided with a crib or play pen for sleeping. At the discretion of the parent and provider, a cot or mat may be used once a child turns one year of age as long as a safe sleep environment is provided. Children one year of age through 18 months who are placed on a mat must have a signed permission statement in the file indicating that the parent has given permission for their child to be placed on a mat. In addition, a caregiver must remain with the child while they are sleeping.

(a) Infants and toddlers shall not be routinely allowed to sleep in a car seat, infant swing, or other infant apparatus.

(b) Cot or mat surfaces may be of plastic or canvas or other material which can be cleaned with detergent solution and allowed to air dry.

(4) Cribs shall be made of durable, cleanable, nontoxic material, and have secure latching devices. Cribs shall have no more than 2 and 3/8 inches of space between the vertical slats. No later than December 28, 2012, all cribs must meet the requirements for full-size baby cribs and non-full-size baby cribs as specified by the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 16 CFR Part 1219 (2011) and 16 CFR Part 1220 (2011), incorporated by these references. A copy of the requirements for full-size baby cribs and non-full-size baby cribs is available at

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/earlychildhood/cribrequirements.shtml>, or by contacting the Montana Child Care Licensing Program at P.O. Box 202953, Helena, Montana 59620; Phone: (406) 444-2012.

(5) Mattresses must fit snugly to prevent the infant from being caught between the mattress and crib siderail. Crib mattresses must be waterproof and easily sanitized. Cribs, cots, or mats must be thoroughly cleansed before assignment to another infant or toddler.

(6) Cribs, cots, or mats shall be spaced to allow for easy access to each infant and toddler, adequate ventilation, and easy exit. Aisles between cribs or cots shall be kept free of obstructions while cribs or cots are occupied. The use of stackable cribs for infants is permitted until the infants reach one year of age or weigh 26 pounds, whichever comes first.

(7) All pillows, quilts, comforters, heavy blankets, sheepskins, bumper pads, stuffed toys, and other soft products shall be removed from the crib and play pen.

(a) If a lightweight blanket is used, the child's feet must be placed at the foot of the crib or play pen and the blanket must be tucked along the sides and foot of the mattress. The blanket should not come up higher than the child's chest.

(8) Each infant and toddler shall have been provided by the parent with a clean washable blanket or other suitable covering for his use while sleeping. Each infant's and toddler's bedding shall be stored separate from bedding used by other children.

(9) All cries of infants and toddlers shall be investigated.

(10) The licensee or registrant of facilities licensed/registered after the enactment of these rules must receive training in an approved safe sleep curriculum before being granted approval for children under age two. Any caregiver who provides care to children under age two must receive training in an approved safe sleep curriculum within 60 days of hire. Caregivers who have not received the safe sleep training shall be supervised by an individual who has successfully completed the approved safe sleep curriculum in order for the caregiver to provide care to children under age two. Facilities licensed or registered before the effective date of these rules will have until July 31, 2013 to complete this training.

(11) Providers must develop a written policy that describes the practices to be used to promote a safe sleep environment when children under age two are napping or sleeping.

(12) All caregivers shall sign an acknowledgement indicating that they have read and understood the provider's policy outlined in (11).

24.13 SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME (ABUSIVE HEAD TRAUMA)- This policy is designed to prevent the possibility of abusive head trauma during care. Abusive head trauma (also referred to as Shaken Baby Syndrome) occurs in infants and young children, whose neck muscles are not well-developed and whose heads are larger relative to their bodies. As a result, they are especially susceptible to head trauma caused by any type of forceful or sudden shaking, with or without blunt impact. Damage can occur in as little as 5 seconds. Abusive head trauma can occur in children up to 5 years of age; however, infants less than one year are at greater risk of injury. Shaken baby syndrome can lead to serious conditions including: Brain damage, problems with memory and attention, cerebral palsy; Blindness or hearing loss; Intellectual, speech or learning disabilities; and Developmental delays.

#### Signs and Symptoms

The signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome or head trauma include: Seizures; Bruises; Lack of appetite, vomiting, or difficulty sucking or swallowing; Lack of smiling or vocalizing; Rigidity, inability to lift the head; Difficulty staying awake, altered consciousness; Difficulty breathing, blue color due to lack of oxygen; Unequal pupil size, inability to focus the eyes or track movement; or Irritability.

#### Injury Prevention

Infant crying is normal behavior, which improves as a child ages. Caregivers should develop proactive strategies to manage stress levels and appropriate responses to a crying child. This includes being self-aware and noticing when the caregiver may become frustrated or angry. Parents/guardians, caregivers and coworkers should discuss what calming strategies are successful with a particular child at home or in the center.

#### Emergency Response

If a child presents any of the above symptoms or you suspect a baby has suffered abusive head trauma:

- \* Call 911, call the parent/guardian and inform your director.
- \* Report to the appropriate child protective services agency (or law enforcement, if applicable) within 24 hours or less as required by law. See Child Abuse/Neglect and Mandated Reporting Policy and Procedure for further information.
- \* See Medical Emergencies-Calling 911 for additional information.

#### Strategies for Caregivers and Parents

A child is usually shaken out of frustration, often when the child is persistently crying or irritable. The following strategies may work some of the time; but sometimes nothing will comfort a crying child. A caregiver should seek support from a coworker or center management. If a child is inconsolable on a regular basis, the director should be notified and determine if the right supports are in place for the child and for staff.

#### Acceptable Do's:

- \* Hand the child to another caregiver.
- \* Place the child somewhere safe in the classroom (or home) and call the office (or a neighbor) for support; take deep breaths and count to 10.
- \* Check to see if the baby's diaper needs changing.
- \* Give the baby a bottle. If baby readily takes bottle, feed slowly stopping to burp often. Do not force the baby to eat.
- \* Check for signs of illness and call the parent if you suspect the child is sick.
- \* Give baby a pacifier.
- \* Hold the baby close against your body and breathe calmly and slowly.
- \* Gently rock the baby using slow, rhythmic movements.
- \* Sing to the baby or play soft, soothing music.
- \* Use "white noise" or rhythmic sounds that mimic the constant whir of noise in the womb
- \* Hold the baby on its side or stomach position to help with digestion. Babies should always be placed on their backs to sleep.
- \* Take the baby for a walk indoors or outside for a ride in the stroller.
- \* Be patient: let the baby cry it out if necessary.

#### NEVER

- \* Shake a child.
- \* Drop a child.

- \* Throw a child into the air or into a crib, chair, or car seat.
- \* Push a child into any object including walls, doors, and furniture.
- \* Strike a child's head, directly or indirectly.

24.14 FIRST AID POLICIES

If a child is suspected to have ingested a poisonous substance, Poison Control will be contacted at (800) 222-1222. All Staff are certified in CPR and 1st Aid and will administer aid when they deem necessary. After a child has been stabilized or if instructed to do so by EMS, parents will be contacted by staff immediately after emergency services have been contacted. For general illnesses, see Policy 24.3 Communicable Diseases

24.15 Use of Security Camera: For the protection of the children, families, and staff, SKCC uses a motion detection security camera in the main playroom and nap room. All activity is recorded and stored for a period of two weeks.

POLICY 25: STAFF EMPLOYMENT BY CLIENT'S

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The staff of SKCC is prohibited from being employed by any client (current or former). Parents are prohibited from soliciting any staff member for the purpose of employment. Parents who employ SKCC' staff will have their services terminated and any deposits will be forfeited. Staff who become employed by current or former clients of SKCC will have their employment with SKCC terminated.

Employment refers to any relationship outside of the agency's services which involves an employee of SKCC to interact with a current or former clients of SKCC. Such relationships include but are not limited to, baby-sitting, house-sitting, mother's helper, nanny services, and carpooling regardless of whether or not those services are voluntary or paid.

POLICY 26: DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

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**A Letter About Screening from Ms. Michelle**

A parent knows their child the best and is their greatest cheerleader. It is important that parents understand that we are here to support them and want to partner with them to complete the screening tool. Our program uses the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE2 for screening. Screening is a way of looking at your child to celebrate all of the things he/she has learned in their lives and find areas that we can offer additional support in. Screening is a way for parents and teachers to work together to identify what steps come next in your child's developmental journey. Screening is not a medical diagnosis or a judgment of your parenting skills. You, the parent will complete a periodic screening of your child using a simple to answer questionnaire. If you need help, we will be here to help. You can complete the questionnaire at home or here at the program. After you complete the questionnaire, parents and the teacher meet to go over what you wrote and to answer any questions. Teachers can also give you helpful information about your child's development and activities you can try doing with your child at home. If needed, we can find outside support to partner with parents and teachers to support your child's development. Some partners that we have worked with in the past have been: speech therapists, occupational therapists, and community funding. Remember, the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE2 questionnaires are just one tool that helps us to partner with you for your child's development. They are a quick, confidential check of how your child is developing today. If you have any questions, please come speak to a teacher or myself, or send a message through the portal.

Thank You,  
Ms. Michelle

**STEMboat Kids Childcare Developmental Screening Policy**



What is developmental screening?

Developmental screening is a process by which we can compare a child’s development to research-based norms for each age level and stage of development.

Why we use developmental screening.

Developmental screening is used to identify areas of strength and areas that may need support along each child’s developmental journey.

Who completes the screening?

The teaching staff will conduct observation of children while they are in the program. Parents will be asked to complete screening forms at home and return them to the program.

When does the screening occur?

Developmental screening occurs at regular intervals from birth to age five. The results of the screening are discussed by the family and educators at Parent-Teacher Conferences.

How will my child be screened?

Anecdotal notes are written by the teaching staff as they observe children in the program and file them in the children’s written portfolios. Teaching staff will also take pictures of children in the program and post them to the digital classroom portfolio, along with a tag of what learning domain is being displayed in the picture. Families will be asked to complete an ASQ-3 and/or and ASQ-SE2 at home on regular intervals and return it to the program.

What happens after a developmental screening?

After data has been collected by the teaching staff and family, a score will be assessed and the teacher will meet with the family at a Parent-Teacher Conference. As a team, the teacher and family will plan strategies for further development and support. The teaching staff may also recommend or refer the family to seek out other resources in the community to support development.

What if I need more information?

Teaching staff is a wealth of information about early childhood development and community resources. Families should feel free to ask staff how to support and promote their child’s development. Development and learning goals with a strategy to accomplish them will be planned by the teaching staff, family, and any other support professional. All members of the team will work together to meet the goals and to discuss progress at the next conference.



POLICY 27: AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

STEMboat Kids CHILDCARE  
4440 Porcupine Dr Helena, MT 59602  
  
P.O.Box 1841  
East Helena, MT 59635

(406) 459-1021  
[STEMboat KidsChildcare.com](http://STEMboatKidsChildcare.com)

Director: Michelle Sexton  
Site Supervisor: Kaden Hitchens

This Handbook is reviewed annually and changed or adapted with recommendations from agents of the State of Montana, Lewis and Clark County, and other consultants serving our program.

SIGNATURE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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I have read, understand, and agreed to the policies contained in the 1/2023 STEMboat Kids Preschool and Childcare Parent Handbook.

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Signature

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Date

**\*Please print, sign, and return this page to the STEMboat Kids Childcare staff.**

Reviewed and updated:

7/14	1/17	1/21
2/15	12/18	11/21
7/16	6/19	1/23
	4/20	