

Tiny Treasures Family Child Care
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<http://www.TinyTreasures.org>

Tiny Treasures



Parent Handbook

Dear Parent,

As a licensed Family Child Care Educator, I would like to congratulate you on choosing licensed Family Child Care. You have made an important child care decision for you and your family. The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and I invite you to join in a partnership with us to ensure a high quality child care environment. This parent handbook and enrollment packet outlines many of my policies and procedures that relate to the care of your child, as well as the information I am required to give to you when you enroll your child in my care. This handbook will also acquaint you with some of the key EEC standards designed to ensure a safe, healthy and educational child care experience.

I encourage you to maintain an open dialogue with me, as communication between parents and Educators is the foundation for a solid working relationship, and a good child care experience. Before filling out your child care enrollment form, please read through the information contained in this parent handbook.

A Word from EEC

EEC is the agency that oversees the early education and care and after school services for families in Massachusetts. As the agency that licenses child care, EEC has quality standards for all licensed programs to ensure high educational value, as well as health and safety. Having a license means that I have demonstrated that I meet the standards outlined in the EEC regulations.

Enrollment Procedures

Following acceptance of your child, you will need to fill out all necessary forms and return them to me before I will assume responsibility of care. Forms will be reviewed and updated yearly. Please let me know of any changes if they arise sooner. Below, you will find a list of the forms you will need to return before or on your child's first day.

Forms needed:

1. Enrollment packet
2. Contract
3. Physician statement including immunization record
4. Food program form
5. Photo release

Enrollment/Capacity

My current licensed capacity is 10, which is posted on my license. At any one time, I can only care for the number of children that I've been licensed for, which may include my own children, depending on their ages. In addition, EEC regulations state that I cannot care for more than three (3) children under the age of two (2) without an assistant, with one of those children being at least 15 months old and walking unassisted. If you have concerns or questions about the number of children in my care, please feel free to discuss them with me.

Days and hours of operation

Tiny Treasures is open Monday-Friday. We are open from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM, with the exception of Thursdays, our hours are 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

Your fee is based on the hours you contract for, not the hours that I am open.

If at times you require an earlier drop off or later pick-up that what we have pre-arranged, you must schedule this in advance. An extra fee may be charged.

Childcare Rates

Your childcare rates are outlined in your contract. You may pay your fees by cash or check. Payments must be made on each Friday by 6:00pm. There will be a \$25.00 fee for checks returned for insufficient funds. What you pay will buy quality childcare, nutritious meals, and an educational and nurturing environment for your child. Your fees must provide my income including taxes and social security. Beyond that, your fees pay for special childcare insurance, training, food, toys, equipment, art supplies, and all of the other things your child will be using.

Trial Period

The first two weeks of your child's enrollment are on a trial basis. If at any point during this period parent and provider feel this is not the best situation for the child involved the agreement may be terminated at a moments notice. After that, prior to leaving, a two weeks written notice must be given and paid for.

Holidays

Holidays we will be closed for include:

- New Years Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- July 4th
- Labor Day
- Yom Kippur
- Columbus Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

Please arrange for back-up care on these days if needed. These are paid holidays. If any normally observed holiday is on Saturday or Sunday, I will take off the Friday before or the Monday after. Generally this would be the same day that most businesses observe.

Vacations

Each year I will take two weeks off for vacation. You will be notified at least 4 weeks in advance as to which days I will be closed. Child care payments for paid days of vacation must be left the Friday prior to the start of my vacation and will be held until the following Friday. You are required to arrange and pay for your own backup care.

Please notify me at least 2 weeks in advance as to your family vacations. You are required to pay for any absent days. Please leave child care payments with me prior to your departure. I will hold these checks until the appropriate pay dates.

Provider Illness

If I am unable to care for children on a particular day due to my own illness, I will try to give you as much notice as I can. You will not be charged due to this type of closing.

Snow Days

Tiny Treasures will remain open for all declared school snow days. If parent is unable to bring the child to provider, normal daily rates still apply. Additional fees will apply if a parent is unable to pickup child by normally scheduled time due to inclement weather.

Meal Times

Breakfast: 8:30am

Snack: 10:30am

Lunch: 12:30pm

Snack: 3:30pm

These times are approximate

Infant feedings will vary

All meals are nutritious and are served according to federal nutrition guidelines. Children are never expected to clean their plates, but are encouraged to try everything just once. If your child has any allergies please let me know. At no time should your child bring food from home unless enough is brought for all and I have ok'd it in advance.

Mealtimes are a good opportunity to practice manners. All children will sit at the table together for meals and learn proper seating and table manners. Children will help set tables and prepare the table and meal when possible. Children will also help unset the table and clean up afterwards.

For infants, baby food will be provided. However, since formula is very individualized I ask you to provide this. You may either leave me with a supply of formula and bottles or you can prepare them on a daily basis and send them with your baby.

Rest Time

Infants nap at varying times and their personal schedules take precedence. We have rest time each afternoon between 1pm and 3pm. Children are not required to fall asleep, but usually do. No child will be excluded from rest time. It is an important part of their day. Quiet activities are provided for those who wake early. Mats are supplied for the children and porta cribs for infants. Blankets and or sleep companions may be brought from home or will be supplied by me. Pick up of your child during rest time is discouraged, however, should that need arise, please enter quietly and keep your child quiet on the way out as to not disturb the other children.

Proper Attire

Child's play is messy work. Please send your child in comfortable play clothes and always keep me supplied with a spare outfit. You may either send these daily or I recommend leaving one with me and changing it with the child's growth and or season change. Please don't expect me to keep your child's clothes clean and free of stains. Please label your child's clothing with their name.

I also ask you to leave me with a full bag of diapers. I will let you know when we are getting low. The more personal items you leave with me the less you'll need to remember to bring each day.

Discipline

The word discipline comes from the Latin word to teach. I will teach your child self-control, respect for themselves and others, and responsibility for their actions. I will do this by setting limits that are fair, enforcing them firmly and lovingly, redirection, and time-out when appropriate. Time-out is an opportunity to allow an out-of-control toddler to cool down and regain control; for older children a time-out can also provide a chance for introspection. You will be kept informed as to your child's behavior via verbal or written report.

Use of Assistants

I may have an assistant to help care for the child care children, provided they are approved by EEC. If and when I use an assistant, I will let you know ahead of time, and you will have an opportunity to meet the assistant that will be working in the program. I may also use volunteers from time to time, and although they will not be directly responsible for the care of children in the program, they will be on the premises and assisting me.

The assistants I am currently using in my program are:

- *Rebecca Wheeler*
- *Tina Martin*

Insurance

Tiny Treasures carries child care insurance. A policy is available for review.

Illness and sick care

The health and well being of all of the children I care for is very important to me. For the protection of the children I must insist on strict adherence to my health policy. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions, please discuss them with me now. Don't wait until your child is sick to think about what would be best for all concerned. At that point you may be making decisions based on emotion instead of logic. Even with all of the precautions children do get sick and or hurt. Due to my concern for all of the children enrolled in my child care there are certain guidelines that I require my clients to observe. In some cases, if your child needs to be seen by a doctor, you will be required to submit a signed report from your doctor before your child can return to my care. I will furnish you with the proper form. This is to ensure that a child does not return to Tiny Treasures when he or she may be in danger of exposing someone else to an illness. Some contagious illnesses are no longer contagious after the child has been on medication for 24 hours. If your child has a fever, diarrhea or vomiting, you should keep them out of care until those symptoms have resolved for 24 hours.

There are a number of immunizations required by law before your child may attend child care. Upon application for enrollment you will be asked to bring your child's immunization record. You will be informed of any immunizations that will be needed before your child's first day.

Children with minor illnesses may attend, at my discretion. Usually high fever, vomiting, and diarrhea are considered reasons for your child to stay home. It is important to realize that if a child is unable to participate in the normal routine or needs more care than I can provide without neglecting the others in my care, than that child must stay home. I know we both agree there are times a child needs to be with the parent for both physical and emotional comfort. If a child starts showing signs of illness while in care, the parent will be contacted. At that point a decision will be made as to if the child should finish out the day in my care. There are also some illnesses that by law exclude the child from attending child care. Some of these illnesses are but not limited to:

- Infectious conjunctivitis
- Infectious diarrhea
- Impetigo
- Chicken pox
- Hepatitis A
- Scarlet fever
- Scabies
- Lice
- Ringworm
- Strep throat

Plan for Meeting Potential Emergencies

EEC regulations require that I have a plan for meeting potential emergencies that may occur either during child care hours or at any time if they may affect the operation of the program.

In the event of an evacuation emergency, I will contact the local authorities to determine whether or not to evacuate the program, or to remain sheltered at the program.

The escape routes from each floor of the licensed child care space are as follows:
Out of the most expedient external doorway, front or back.

In the event that a child goes missing from the program, I will do the following:
Conduct search, call the police (911) and contact the parents. When outside the physical daycare structure, all children are required to wear a badge with contact information.

Should the program need to be evacuated in the case of a fire, natural disaster, loss of power, heat or hot water, or any other emergency situation, we will meet at an alternate location. The designated meeting place outside of the program for emergencies is:
196 Central St. Stoughton, MA - the red house next door (one house west on Central St.)

If the program needs to be evacuated, I will notify all parents, as well as the appropriate authorities (fire, police, etc.) and EEC. My method of doing that is as follows:
Cell phone – all parents' numbers are stored and accessible, the phone is always on me.

I will ensure that no child has been left at the program after an evacuation by:
Child counts and comparison to mandatory sign in/out sheet

Children's Records

EEC regulations require me to maintain an individual written record for every child I have in care. These records include the information that parents complete at enrollment, as well as progress reports, incident reports and other documentation regarding your child's care. Records are updated at least annually, but may be updated as frequently as is needed.

As a parent, you have access to the record that I maintain for your child, and you have the right to add information or to request that information in your child's record be changed or deleted. You also have a right to receive a copy of your child's record; however I may charge a reasonable fee for that copy.

Please let me know about any questions you have regarding your child's record.

Maintaining a Safe Environment

EEC has a number of licensing standards related to safety in a Family Child Care Home. Most of these standards outline common safety precautions such as making dangerous materials inaccessible to children, covering outlets, having a first aid kit, practicing evacuation drills, gating stairs, windows, or heating elements, posting emergency numbers, and maintaining a clean, hazard-free indoor space. Also, the outdoor space must be safe and hazard free and there should be no access to a busy street, water, construction materials, rusty or broken play materials, debris, glass, or peeling paint.

Lead Poisoning Prevention

All Family Child Care Educators are required by EEC to provide parents with information regarding the risks of Lead Poisoning. The following are some facts that all parents should know about lead and lead poisoning:

- Lead poisoning is caused by swallowing or breathing lead. Lead is poison when it gets into the body.
- Lead can stay in the body for a long time. Young children absorb lead more easily than adults. The harm done by lead may never go away. Lead in the body can:
 - Hurt the brain, kidneys, and nervous system
 - Slow down growth and development
 - Make it hard to learn
 - Damage hearing and speech
 - Cause behavior problems
- Most of the lead poisoning in Massachusetts comes from lead paint dust in older homes. Many homes built before 1978 have lead paint on the inside and outside of the building.
- When old paint peels and cracks, it creates lead paint chips and lead dust. Lead dust also comes from opening and closing old windows.
- Lead dust lands on the floor. Lead gets into children's bodies when they put their hands and toys in their mouths. Children can also breathe in lead dust. Children between the ages of 9 months and 6 years are most at risk.
- Important: Home repairs and renovations also create lead dust.
- Most children who have lead poisoning do not look or act sick. A lead test is the only way to know if your child has lead poisoning. Ask your doctor to test your child for lead. Some children may have:
 - Upset stomach
 - Trouble eating or sleeping
 - Headache
 - Trouble paying attention

As mentioned earlier, if your child is over nine (9) months of age, you will need to provide documentation to me that your child has been screened for lead poisoning. Most children will be screened annually until either age three (3) or four (4), depending on where the child lives.

For more information on lead poisoning, you can visit <http://www.mass.gov/dph/clppp> or call the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at (800) 532-9571.

Supervision

Supervision is critical to keeping children safe. I and any assistants in my program will appropriately supervise children in order to ensure their health and safety at all times. I will use good judgment and consider several factors in determining the appropriate level of supervision for children including age, developmental needs, behavioral characteristics, the nature of activities and the space we are using, as well as the number of caregivers present at any given time. If you have any questions about how I supervise the children in my program, feel free to ask me.

Safe Sleep

Supervision of children is equally important during the times that a child is sleeping at the program, particularly when that child is an infant. EEC has very specific regulations around safe sleep practices. All infants are placed on their backs to sleep, unless a child's physician orders otherwise (such an order must be given to me in writing). I check on children every 15 minutes during naptime. If your child is less than six months old, I will directly supervise them during naptime for the first six weeks they are in care. For more information regarding Safe Sleep, please feel free to review the 'Family Child Care Policies' section of www.eec.state.ma.us.

Curriculum and Progress Reports

All Family Child Care Educators must carry out a routine that is flexible and responds to the needs and interests of children in care. The routine must include things such as; meeting the physical needs of children in care, sixty minutes of physical activity every day, child-initiated and Educator-initiated activities and daily outdoor play, weather permitting. Additionally, the Educator must develop a curriculum that engages children in developmentally appropriate activities by planning specific learning experiences. The curriculum must include things such as; learning self-help skills that foster independence, opportunities to gain problem solving and decision making competencies and leadership skills and opportunities to learn about proper nutrition, good health and personal safety. I am also responsible for providing an environment that promotes cultural, social and individual diversity. In addition, progress reports must be completed periodically for all children in care. For infants and children with identified special needs, I will be completing progress reports every three months. For toddlers and preschoolers, those reports are completed every six months, and school age children will have a yearly progress report completed for them.

I will be sharing your child's progress reports with you, as well as offering an opportunity to meet and discuss your child's progress. Feel free to ask me about curriculum and progress reports and how they are implemented in my program.

Medication Administration

EEC has regulations requiring Educators to have a policy regarding the administration of medication to children in care. As a licensed Family Child Care Educator, I am also required to take medication administration training. The following guidelines are common to all programs that are licensed by EEC:

Prescription Medication:

- Prescription medication must be brought to the program in its original container and include the child's name, the name of the medication, the dosage, the number of times per day and the number of days the medication is to be administered. This prescription label will be accepted as the written authorization of the physician.
- The program will not administer any medication contrary to the directions on the label unless so authorized by written order of the child's physician.
- The parent must fill out the Authorization for Medication Form before the medication can be administered.

Non-prescription Medication

- The program needs written parental authorization to administer oral non-prescription medication. The parent must fill out the Authorization for Medication form, which allows the Educator to administer the non-prescription medication. The statement must be renewed on a weekly basis.
- In the case of unanticipated non-prescription medication that is used to treat mild symptoms (e.g., acetaminophen, ibuprofen), the program must still have written parental authorization, however it must be reviewed annually.
- The Educator will make every attempt to contact the parent prior to the child receiving the non-prescription medication unless the child needs medication urgently or when contacting the parent will delay appropriate care unreasonably.

Topical Ointments and Sprays

- Topical ointments and sprays such as petroleum jelly, sunscreen, diaper rash ointment and insect repellent will be administered to the child with written parental permission. The signed statement from the parent will be valid for one year and include a list of topical non-prescription medication.
- When topical ointments and sprays are applied to wounds, rashes, or broken skin, the Educator will follow the written procedure for non-prescription medication which includes the written order of the physician, which is valid for a year, and the Authorization for Medication form signed by the parent.

All Medications

- The first dose must be administered by the parent at home in case of an allergic reaction.
- All medications must be given to the Educator directly by the parent.
- All medications will be stored out of the reach of children. All medications that are considered controlled substances must be locked and kept out of reach of children.
- The Educator will be responsible for the administration of medication. In her absence, the designated person will be Rebecca Wheeler or Tina Martin.
- The program will maintain a written record of the administration of any medication (excluding topical ointments and sprays applied to unbroken skin) which will include the child's name, the time and date of each administration, the dose, and the name of the person administering the medication. This completed record will become part of the child's file.
- All unused medication will be returned to the parent if possible, or disposed of in accordance with Department of Public Health guidelines.

Oral Health

Proper oral health begins at home, and I will be reinforcing good oral health practices with your child each day. If your child is in care for more than 4 hours per day, or he/she will be receiving at least one meal while in care, I am required to assist your child with tooth brushing at the program.

Toothbrushing materials will be provided by the program

Parent Notifications

I am required by EEC regulations to notify you of certain information about my family child care home. These notifications include, but are not limited to:

- an injury to your child;
- allegations of abuse or neglect regarding your child;
- if another educator will be caring for your child;
- the administering of first aid to your child;
- whenever a communicable disease has been identified in the program;
- children being taken off the child care premises;
- the existence of firearms in my home;
- if there are any changes in my household composition,
- prior to any pets being introduced into the program;
- whenever special problems or significant developments arise.

Mandated Reporting

As a licensed Educator in Massachusetts, I must operate my program in a way that protects children from abuse and neglect. As such, I am a mandated reporter (under M.G.L. c.119 s51A) and must make a report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) whenever I have reasonable cause to believe a child in the program is suffering from a serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse inflicted upon the child, or from neglect, no matter where the abuse or neglect may have occurred or by whom it was inflicted.

Medical Information

Medical information about your child must be given to me within one (1) month from the day your child begins care. There are three (3) pieces of medical information I will need:

1. A statement from a physician or health care professional that says that your child received a physical exam within the past year;
2. Evidence that your child has been immunized as recommended by the Department of Public Health;
3. If your child is nine (9) months of age or older, a statement from a physician or health care professional which says that your child has been screened for lead poisoning.

Please note: Your child's immunization record must be updated and given to me in accordance with the Department of Public Health's immunization schedule. Also, your child's lead screening report must be updated as required by Department of Public Health Regulations. This report must also be given to me. If your child is school age, I can accept a written statement that the required information is on file with the child's school.

Transportation Policy

Tiny Treasures does not perform pick up/drop off service. All children should be brought to and picked up from the daycare.

We feel a well rounded curriculum and outdoor activities are very important to the children' development. As such, we will take field trips as well as trips to the park. We do provide transportation on those trips, with the following guidelines:

- Each child will occupy full seat within the vehicle .
- Each child must be seated and secured in a federally approved child restraint prior to the vehicle going in motion.
- Children younger than 12 years old will not be transported in the front seat of a vehicle if the vehicle is equipped with airbags.
- Children's emergency contact information will be carried in the vehicle whenever children are present.
- Sharp, heavy or potentially dangerous objects will be placed in the trunk or cargo area and securely restrained when transporting children.
- The licensee will identify and communicate to the driver of the vehicle any information that may assist him/her in transporting a child, including, but not limited to, any medical or behavioral problems.
- The driver of the vehicle will release children only to persons known or identified to the driver and authorized by the parent(s) in writing to receive the child.
- Children will not be regularly transported for periods longer than 45 minutes one way between their home or school and the program.
- A first aid kit, seat belt cutter and emergency numbers for the children will be easily available in all vehicles.
- A cell phone for making emergency telephone calls will be available on each vehicle during transport.
- The licensee will ensure that every accident involving a program-owned or operated vehicle providing transportation services is reported in accordance with applicable accident reporting laws and requirements.
- Parents will be notified if a child displays unsafe behavior in the provider's vehicle.
- Children will never be left unattended inside the vehicle
- Provider's vehicle will comply with all state regulations, including annual inspections.
- Provider's vehicle will be regularly maintained to ensure safe operation.

Communication and Staying Involved

It is important to keep an open dialog with me as your child's Educator, and to maintain an active role in your child's care. Feel free to visit, not just at pick up and drop off time, but at a variety of times during your child's day—it's your right as a parent. Please also make sure to follow-up with me if you have any questions about the program or your child's care.

I look forward to working with your family and providing a great experience for your child(ren)!