

# **Tiger Tots Handbook**

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## ATTENDANCE

The Center opens at 7:30 a.m. during the fall and spring semesters. It is necessary for administrative purposes for the director to keep accurate daily records of each child's arrival and departure times. Parents will sign a sheet each day as they bring in and pick up their children. Please write down any changes in your daily schedule that will affect our ability to contact you if necessary. Special information concerning each child's general mood, health status and special activities can be written in the space titled "parent comments."

The Center has a maximum capacity of 24 children at any given time, as established by room size. Correct scheduling is imperative in order to remain in compliance with state licensing laws. Additional or altered hours beyond the established enrollment will seldom be granted because the schedule will not allow it and arrangements must be approved at least one day in advance.

**The Center closes at 5:00 p.m.** Children are to be picked up at the agreed time. Parents should make the staff aware that the child is leaving. Please call us if you are unable to avoid being late. The children and teachers are usually outside after 4 p.m. so it will be difficult to reach us by phone. No child will be released to anyone other than the parent, guardian or authorized agent. The staff should be notified by the parent/guardian in person (phone calls are sometimes unavoidable in emergency situations) if an authorized agent will be picking up the child. Please tell us approximately what time you will be sending someone in to pick up your child. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet the authorized agent, prior to sending him/her in to pick up your child. We will ask to see photo identification if we have not been introduced to the authorized agent prior to coming to the Center for the first time. Although this may cause an inconvenience for someone, it ultimately is for the safety and legal welfare of the child. **A fee will be charged to parents that pick up their children after 5:10 p.m. with a \$1 fee for each minute after 5:10 p.m.**

Each child must be brought in-hand to the Center. The child must not be let out in the parking area, through the play area or from any other part of the building on campus. Please assist the child in putting belongings and coats/jackets in their personal cubby. We request that the children do not leave the room without the supervision of a parent. We assume that each child is under a parent's supervision when the parent enters the Center.

If a child is unable to attend during his or her scheduled time or arrival will be delayed, notice should be given in advance. The Center's phone number is 628-4101.

An attendance day is defined as a full day or portion thereof that the University is open for classes, with the exception of those days that are cancelled by the President of Fort Hays State University or a state official.

## **FEES & BILLING**

There are two payment options available at the Center. The director will determine the number of days that classes are in session per semester. The days will then be divided into 4 equal payments due at the first of each month. Parents will be billed according to the number of days their children are scheduled to attend Tiger Tots. There are half-day or full-day schedules available for students. Faculty/staff will pay a daily rate regardless of hours attended. Parents who wish to pay for the entire semester will receive a 5% discount.

A yearly enrollment fee will be charged upon enrollment into the Center.

Parents will be billed for all days that their children are scheduled to attend. Sick days and vacation days will not be refunded or deducted from the bill.

Parents who wish to terminate enrollment will be required to pay for two weeks of childcare from the date of notification of when the child will be leaving the center.

Payments will be charged to the parents TigerTracks account. Payments can either be made at Student Fiscal Services located in Picken Hall or on their TigerTracks account.

# HEALTH

We realize that it is not always an easy decision but we trust you will not bring a sick child to the Center. We reserve the right to ask that you not leave your child if we observe signs of illness upon arrival at the Center. The staff will call you to come and pick up your children in the event that they become ill while at Tiger Tots. The following criteria will be used to determine if your child must go home:

- Fever of 100 degrees or more
- Inflammation of the eyes/signs of conjunctivitis
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Unknown rash
- Communicable disease
- Excessive nasal discharge/frequent coughing

***\*Medical and emergency information forms must be on file before your child can enter school. A two week grace period will be granted and enrollment will be terminated if a physical form is not completed by the end of the two weeks. All immunizations must be current.\****

If a child exhibits any of these symptoms we will call you to pick up the child. When called, you (or an authorized agent) are expected to pick up your child immediately. There are not exceptions to this rule. This is to protect the health of your child and everyone at the Center. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

If your child is sent home due to illness, the child should not return to Tiger Tots until the symptoms have been gone for 24 hours. Follow these guidelines when determining whether or not your child is ready to return to the Center:

- Mood, appetite, behavior and activity are normal for your child
- No fever for 24 hours or more without the use of Tylenol or other fever reducing medicines
- Antibiotics (if prescribed) have been used for a full 24 hours
- Vomiting, diarrhea cleared for 24 hours
- Frequent coughing, excessive nasal discharge resolved
- Pain (earache, sore throat, headache, etc.) resolved

Contagious diseases must be reported to Tiger Tots staff by the parents as soon as the illness has been diagnosed, so that other parents may be notified of the exposure.

## Illness Policy

When a potentially contagious illness occurs, notes will be sent home to parents of children who have been exposed. Please notify us if your child will be absent for several days.

### **Health**

Minor injuries will be treated with soap, water, and Neosporin, ice and Band-Aids as required by the type of injury. Minor scrapes and bumps will be written down under staff comments on the sign in sheet or on an unusual incident report form. If you notice something when you leave please do not hesitate to call us at the Center or at home. We are diligent about providing a safe environment but children move quickly. We occasionally miss an incident, bump or scrape, if the child does not cry or come talk to us. The child will probably be able to share information with you but sometimes parents aren't quite sure that the story is accurate. We would much rather discuss it with you immediately rather than have you wonder about it all night.

Should there be a more serious accident, parents or other persons listed on the emergency form will be contacted. If no one can be reached, we will call the physician you have listed. Tiger Tots does not have a physician so it is imperative that you have a physician to contact.

Antibacterial soaps are available at all sinks for staff and children. Paper towels are available for drying hands. Cots, tables, toys, etc., are disinfected regularly.

### **Medication**

The teachers and staff at Tiger Tots Nurtury Center would prefer not to be asked to administer medication of any type. This includes prescription and non-prescription drugs. If medication is brought to the Center it must be in its original container with the child's name written on it. Medication of any type will NOT be administered without a signed, dated and written authorization from the child's parent. This authorization shall include the name of the medication, dosage, and instructions for administration.

Parents may come to the Center and give medication. All medication will be stored in the first aid kit and it is the responsibility of the parent to take the medication home each day.

## **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

Our approach to discipline depends on several things:

**Environment** - Tiger Tots strives to provide a "kid friendly" Center where everything from the drinking fountain to the bathrooms are designed for young children. A wide assortment of developmentally appropriate materials are provided. A daily routine is established. Teachers try to insure that each child

receives individual attention and knows that the teachers really care about their feelings.

**Logical Consequences** - Teachers state their expectations regarding rules and expectations in clear terms and are consistent in reinforcing positive behavior. The teachers want the children to understand why we have rules and to be involved in the process of establishing classroom rules.

**Curriculum** - The teachers create their own curriculum with the help of teacher resource books. The curriculum is based on the cognitive, physical and emotional needs of the group and adapted to meet a wide range of abilities.

**Positive Reinforcement** - Positive behavior is noticed and encouraged. The teachers want the motivation for positive behavior to be intrinsic rather than training children to expect rewards for behavior that is an expected part of society. We occasionally use rewards (candy or a prize from the treasure chest) because let's face it, we all like to get something special now and then.

**Planned Ignoring** - Teachers at Tiger Tots follow the philosophy of "choosing your battles." An example of this is when a child says "he stuck his tongue out at me!" We would respond, "I'm glad that you kept your tongue in your mouth." The teacher might then ask both children to read a story with her. By doing this we have avoided reinforcing the child's negative behavior and said where we expect tongues to be. Teachers must constantly evaluate their discipline strategies and if one does not work be ready to try another one.

**Renewal Time** - This is a time for a child to be removed from social interaction and sit down and work on a quiet activity such as a puzzle or read a book. Once children have become accustomed to the routine it is our policy to give one warning or redirection when inappropriate behavior occurs. The teacher attempts to have the child verbalize why he/she thinks the teacher has intervened. Children usually know what they have done that is inappropriate. If this does not work the teacher will specifically tell the child what he/she needs to do to correct a problem i.e. use your quiet voice. If the child persists in the unacceptable behavior after the warning, and the behavior is not dangerous to others, then the child will be removed from the situation and given time to gain self control.

**Time out** - Time out is given to a child who has engaged in behavior that is harmful to him/her or others and the child is out of control. After a brief period, no more than one minute per child's age, the teacher will calmly discuss the situation and talk about positive solutions that can be used by the child in the future. The child will understand that it is not a punishment. Situations that are on-going will be discussed with parents to ensure good communication between the Center and home.

No corporal punishment is allowed. No verbal punishments such as ridicule, humiliation, threat or coercion are permitted.

### **Disruptive Behavior Policy**

The staff will make every effort to work with the parents of the children having difficulties in child care. The following steps will be taken in the event that a child is displaying chronic disruptive behavior that is upsetting to the physical or emotional well being of the other children.

Initial Consultation - The director may require the parent(s) of any child who attends Tiger Tots to meet for a conference. The problem will be documented on paper. Goals will be established and the parents will be involved in creating approaches towards solving the problem.

Second Consultation - If the initial plan for helping the child fails, the parent(s) will again be required to meet with the director. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem, outline new approaches to the problem and discuss the consequences if progress is not apparent.

Suspension - When the previous attempts have been followed and no progress has been made toward solving the problem, the child may be suspended from the center indefinitely. The director may immediately suspend a child at anytime he/she shows a behavior which is harmful to him/herself or others. A parent may be called from work anytime the child exhibits uncontrolled behavior that cannot be modified by the child care staff. That parent may be asked to take the child home immediately. Suspensions from the childcare center may vary from a few hours to an indefinite period.

### **Discipline Policy**

Tiger Tots believes that learning to socialize and communicate are keys to becoming a responsible and empowered individual. The fact that children are egocentric and impulsive make social interaction interesting to say the least. Add to this the fact that we are dealing with a mixed age group of children with a wide range of developmental levels.

We use several techniques to help children learn to work cooperatively and enjoy social interactions. Children spend a great deal of time trying to figure out what is acceptable and what is not. At our Center using your words to solve a disagreement is acceptable while acts of aggression such as grabbing toys, hitting, and pushing, etc., are not acceptable. Unfortunately, children often don't have the verbal or emotional skills that are necessary to settle conflicts. That's when the teachers can help empower the children by using a discipline technique with logical consequences.

Discipline is most effective when it follows logical consequences. The consequences for behavior must make sense to the child. Let's imagine a scenario where the child is throwing blocks across the block area (luckily no one

is hurt). It is logical to tell the child that blocks hurt other friends and that if the blocks are not used for building then the child will need to find another area to play in. The teacher needs to observe the child to make sure that the blocks are then used appropriately. If the child begins to build with the blocks the teacher needs to reinforce this behavior by making a comment such as "The house you built for the dinosaurs looks like a fun place to live." The events that preceded the block throwing or the "trigger" also need to be considered. Perhaps the area is overcrowded or appropriate block behavior should be modeled by the teacher. The teacher's role is to create an environment that will nurture and encourage positive social interaction.

The use of time out is not viewed as a punishment but rather as a time for children to regain control. The use of time out is appropriate when children are hurting themselves or others or when redirection techniques have not been effective. Our philosophy believes in redirecting the children and working through problems. We also use proximity (close adult supervision) to monitor behavior and help prevent negative behavior.

Our goal is to encourage children to be independent, responsible and compassionate individuals. This involves providing opportunities to interact with peers and allowing the children to solve their own problems, if possible. We want the children to come up with their own solutions rather than have the teachers act like behavior police.

### **Discharge Policy**

Tiger Tots Nurture Center reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for the following reasons:

- Nonpayment or excessive late payment of fees
- Not observing the rules of the center as outlined in the parent agreement
- Child has special needs which we cannot adequately meet with our current staff
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child
- Failure to provide a physical form prior to or within two weeks of first date of child's attendance at the center

We will refund any unused portions of child care tuition for the month or semester.

## **REST TIME**

We provide a relaxing daily rest or nap time for all children from 1-2:30 p.m. The length of rest time is determined by The State Department of Health and Environment and is based on the number of full-time children who attend the Center. Some children may need sleep; while others may choose to simply rest.

We strongly believe that all children need the opportunity to have a quiet time, although some children would argue with us on this point! We try to accommodate each child's sleep needs. The fact that we are in one big room means it is important for all children to rest quietly so that those who want and need to sleep may do so.

The children are provided with a child sized cot or a sleep mat. Parents need to supply a cot sheet (large bath towel) and a child size blanket. Please clearly label both items. Child sized pillows may be brought if you so desire and must have a washable covering or pillowcase. The blanket and sheet will be sent home bi-weekly to be washed.

Soothing music is played during rest time. A positive rest time incentive may be used to encourage and reward the children for doing their job (resting quietly). We hope that this is a positive time for your child. Soft toys such as stuffed animals or a small toy are welcome at rest time.

## **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Tiger Tots will try to accommodate children with special needs (physical, behavioral, cognitive, etc.). If the child has already been evaluated, we will work to implement the IEP or IFSP that has been developed. We feel that open communication is vital for the welfare of the child. Parents are required to submit to us their child's most recent IEP or IFSP, and to keep us apprised of any changes or progress. If we feel a child should be evaluated so that he/she can get extra help during these formative years we will make the recommendations to the parents.

Tiger Tots does not discriminate against any child. If we feel that we are unable to meet a child's needs in our setting, we will call a conference with the parents. At this conference we will assess whether we are able to meet the child's needs at our Center. A plan of action will be developed and another conference will be held in two weeks. As a team, the teacher and parents will determine if the child is thriving at the Center. If we are unable to meet the child's needs, we will give the parents the time and assistance necessary in finding more appropriate care.

## **CLOTHING**

Children should dress comfortable in clothing that is suitable for the weather. We do participate in hands-on activities that can be rather "messy." We wear paint smocks but occasionally clothes will get something such as paint on them. We try to use only washable paint but this does not guarantee that the stain will come

out so send your child to the Center in clothes that will not inhibit participating in activities.

## **TOILETING POLICY**

Children should be toilet trained upon enrollment into the center. Do not send your child in diapers. If your child still wears diapers during the daytime or has frequent urine and/or bowel accidents, chances are he/she is not ready for preschool, and it's best not to rush the child. The younger children (30 months through 3 years) may wear pull-ups if necessary. The younger children should have a concept of wet/dry and be attempting to consistently use the toilet. We expect occasional "accidents" and will help your child change into dry clothes. All children are required to bring an extra set of clothing including underwear, socks, pants and shirt. These items should be clearly labeled and placed in a ziplock bag.

We request that you do not send your children in overalls, tights or belts that are difficult for them to remove or unfasten. We are glad to help your children but this inhibits their ability to use the restroom independently and may cause feelings of frustration.

\*Label all extra clothing, jackets, coats and accessories with your child's name.\*

## **BRINGING TOYS TO TIGER TOTS**

Toys from home can create feeling of security and familiarity for the child. Children may want to bring a favorite toy, game, video, DVD or book to the Center. Past experience has shown us that this can be a positive experience if a few simple guidelines are followed. Please do not allow your child to bring more than one item per day. Label the items since there are often duplicates of a toy brought by other children. We are modeling responsibility to the children so please do not expect a teacher to leave the other children and locate a misplaced toy when you are leaving the Center. The toy or book invariably shows up and will be placed in your child's cubby. A good rule of thumb is, if the toy is fragile, irreplaceable or has several parts, the toy should be left at home.

One of our goals is to encourage cooperative play and we may request that your child not bring toys in if we notice that home toys are causing noncooperative play or stress. We have a wide selection of materials that are stimulating and encourage sharing at preschool.

**Important:** Please leave guns, weapons and other toys that encourage aggressive play at home. Gum, candy and money are not permitted.

## **CUBBIES**

A cubby is provided for each child and is labeled with the child's name. The children share cubbies so please check to determine if the art work belongs to your child. Please look each day for art work, notes from the teacher, and personal items. Backpacks make the trip home much easier.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

The Center enjoys celebrating this special day with your child. Your child's birthday is celebrated at Tiger Tots by singing Happy Birthday. The children create a special book just for your child to take home.

If parents choose to bring a birthday treat we request that cake and cupcakes not be brought. Cookies, muffins, brownies, fruit or a favorite food of your child are suggested. If you plan to bring a treat, please notify us on the Friday before your child's birthday. We will let you know how many children to plan for. Parents are always welcome at their child's birthday celebration.

Parents may wish to donate a book, puzzle or game to the classroom. The birthday child has the honor of giving, not just receiving, on their special day. If you wish to donate an item, the teacher can give you ideas of what the class would enjoy. We will put a special sticker with your child's name on the birthday item.

If you'd like to eat lunch with your child on his/her birthday, please let the director or lead teacher know before 9:30 AM so an adult meal may be ordered. Currently adult meals cost \$3.00 but prices may vary.