



**Phone: 404-790-5655**  
**icarechildren.com**

This handbook is intended to familiarize parents with current iCare Child Development Center policy, practices and standards. An electronic version (PDF) of the handbook is available on our website at [www.icarechildren.com](http://www.icarechildren.com). A print copy of the handbook is available upon request. iCare reserves the right to revise its policies, practices and standards as deemed appropriate by the Director. Parents will be notified of updates to the parent handbook as they occur.

## **HISTORY**

iCare Child Development Center was born from a local mother's desire to see young children nurtured academically, socially, emotionally, and physically in a small, home-like setting, and from a great need for more quality childcare in the nearby neighborhoods. In October 2012, iCare opened as an in-home daycare licensed for 6 children. By January 2013, iCare was at full enrollment, and quickly began to outgrow our in-home space. In May

2013, iCare moved to 7 Anniston Ave and became a Group Daycare Home licensed for 18 children. Currently, iCare is considered a small childcare learning center licensed for 22 children.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

iCare is committed to fulfilling the need for quality childcare in our community. At iCare Child Development Center, we believe in the value and uniqueness of each child and family we serve. Our childcare experience is designed to promote each child's own individual social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development in a small, home-like setting.

As caregivers and educators, our mission is to provide a safe and developmentally appropriate learning environment, which fosters a child's natural desire to explore, discover, create, and become a lifelong learner.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

Our program is built around the concept that children are born ready to learn, and learn best in an environment that is an extension of home. As caregivers, we strive to create a learning environment that is safe, stimulating and encouraging. The following principles serve as the foundation for our curriculum.

- Children develop knowledge of their world through active interactions with caregivers, peers, materials, and events.
- Learning is sequential, building on prior understandings and experiences.
  - Learning proceeds at different rates in each area and each child; children will show a range of skills and understandings in any one area of development.
  - Learning in each area is interconnected. Young children learn best through experiences, which incorporate several areas of development.
  - Learning begins in the family, continues in early care and education settings, and depends on parent involvement and caregiver guidance.

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

iCare is open Monday through Friday from 7:00am to 6:00pm.

The center is closed for the following holidays:

New Year's Day, MLK Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day (2 days), Labor Day, Columbus Day, Thanksgiving (3 days), Christmas (5 days)

### **PROGRAMS**

There are 3 childcare programs offered at iCare

They are:

- Infants: 6 weeks to 18 months
- Young Toddlers: 18 months to 2.5 years

- Older Toddler: 2.5 years to 4 years

In addition, iCare provides part-time childcare, drop-in childcare, and afterschool (for iCare siblings) to children ages four to five years.

## **RATIOS**

At iCare, we maintain the following staff-to-child ratios in our classrooms:

6 weeks to 18 months: 1 staff to every 4 children

18 months to 2.5 years: 1 staff to every 6 children

2.5 years to 4 years: 1 staff to every 8 children

(Ratios are sometimes higher for 1 hour in the morning, and 1 hour in the evening as teacher schedules' begin and end)

## **LICENSING**

iCare is a private program licensed by Bright From the Start. A copy of the licensing rules is available for review at the center, or on the web <http://www.dec.state.ga.us>.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is a top priority for iCare. Personal information of families and staff will not be shared for any reason without prior written consent of the individual. When discussing a child's activities and friends in the classroom, only first names will be used. In situations regarding behavior problems and/or Incident/Accident Reports, names of children involved will never be given to families.

## **TEACHERS/STAFF**

At iCare, we believe that quality staff members are essential in providing a program that maintains high standards of childcare and education. Our staff members are chosen for their background and experience as well as their nurturing abilities. iCare employs childcare professionals who have positive attitudes and are warm and caring with our children. All teachers are continually trained in curriculum planning, child growth and development, child guidance, child safety, and first aid/cpr. Each staff member undergoes an extensive background check, which includes a national criminal records check and fingerprinting.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

### **ARRIVAL**

iCare opens at 7:00am. We ask that all children attending for the day arrive by 9:30am. Parents are required to accompany their child into the center and into their child's classroom. Parents should also speak briefly with the teacher in the classroom. We encourage parents to communicate with their child's teacher, about their child's temperament that particular day, how he/she slept the night before, whether he/she has eaten that morning, etc.

Most children go through periods of difficulty with separating from their parent(s). This is common and developmentally appropriate. Try these tips for a successful drop-off:

-Establish a regular, predictable routine. Whether you have a kiss and a hug and go, or help your child put his things in his cubby first, do it the same way every day. What often makes separating stressful for children is the uncertainty. If your child can predict what will happen, the separation won't be as difficult.

- Separate once. If you come back into the classroom again and again, it will increase your child's stress. Remember the moment of separation is the worst part for your child, so doing

it more than once makes it more stressful for your child.

- Be reliable. Return when promised. Children who are picked up later than expected may have more difficulties separating. Phrase time in terms your child will understand. For example, you will be back after snack time or before nap time.

#### Infant Room drop-off

Carry infant, and milk/diaper bags directly to classroom. Please allow the teachers to unpack milk bags into the refrigerator.

\*Please take car seat with you. Unfortunately, iCare does not have the space to store car seats.

### **DEPARTURE**

iCare closes at 6:00pm Monday through Friday. If you will be late picking up your child, please provide us with as much notice as possible. Please note that there is a late fee for arriving after 6:00pm. (\$1 every minute after 6:01pm)

If someone we are not familiar with is to pick up your child, it is essential that you inform your child's teacher in advance of the pick-up. This person must be listed as an authorized person on the Emergency Contact and Parent Consent form. Remind the authorized person that they may be asked for identification such as a driver's license to ensure your child's safety. Even if the individual has picked up before, he or she may still need identification if the teacher in charge has never met him or her.

Be sure to say good-bye to your child's teachers so they know you are leaving. Once you have reunited with your child and are departing, iCare is no longer responsible for your child. For safety reasons, please do not let your child run ahead of you inside or outside of the building.

#### **Infant Room Pick-up**

Please allow the teachers to pack milk bags with remaining bottles from the refrigerator.

\*\*\* As supervision and attentive care is the first priority of the staff on duty, drop-off/pick-up conversations with teachers should be brief. We strongly encourage parents to schedule a time for informal or formal conferences with their child's teacher to discuss special instructions, concerns, or questions regarding their child\*\*\*

### **CURRICULUM**

Curriculum at iCare includes the child-initiated and teacher-directed activities and experiences offered to young children that support and enrich their development physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. iCare uses the High Scope Curriculum as a guide for planning the curriculum in each of its program rooms. Each classroom has weekly lesson plans, posted in the classroom. These plans contain a number of activities, designed to foster each child's development, and the development of the group as a whole. Lesson plans may be changed in order to accommodate the children's changing interests.

Each classroom is set-up in centers, which include blocks, dramatic play, books, gross motor, fine motor, and art. Outdoor play is important to a child's physical development and must be included in both the morning and afternoon schedule. Self-selection or "free-play" is a daily part of the curriculum and means a child has the opportunity to choose which center or activity he/she participates in. This promotes creative expression and development

of important social skills.

### **DAILY SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITIES**

The classroom's teachers work cooperatively to create a daily schedule and plan activities that meet each child's developmental abilities and needs. The daily schedule and activities create a balance between active and quiet times; large and small group, and individual activities; small and large muscle activities; indoor and outdoor play times; as well as times for self-selection and teacher-directed activities.

Consistency from day-to-day is particularly important to the overall well-being of the children and classroom environment. Children thrive on consistency! Routines will be maintained whenever possible for arrivals and departures; meals and snacks; resting or nap times; personal care routines like diapering/toileting and hand washing; and transitions.

### **FREE PLAY**

"Free-play" (also called child initiated activities, free choice, self-selection) activities are incorporated into the morning and afternoon schedule. During free-play, teachers actively participate with the children by asking questions about what the children are doing, participating in their pretend play, reading books when prompted, encouraging children to try new activities or play with a new toy, etc. Free-play is another opportunity for a child to grow socially and cognitively through the development of relationships.

### **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor play is incorporated into the daily schedule for both the morning and afternoon. There is less structure in an outdoor learning environment; however, staff members actively engage in activities when prompted by the children. Outdoor play is an opportunity for children to run, jump, climb and use their bodies in ways that would otherwise be unsafe in an indoor classroom. In addition, a large amount of social interaction takes place when children play outdoors. Because they are engaged in fewer teacher-directed activities and more child-directed play, children are able to choose their friends and who to interact with.

Children will go outside year-round, including winter. Only during extreme weather conditions will the children remain indoors. Our teachers refer to the Child Care Weather Watch poster from the Georgia Department of Public Health to determine if it is too hot or cold to play outdoors.

It is important for parents to send their children in appropriate clothing and outerwear for the weather conditions (e.g., coat, pants, boots, gloves, etc.). Please clearly label all articles of clothing with your child's name. iCare has a few extra hats and mittens, but not enough for every child. If a child is not dressed appropriately for the weather, he or she may have to remain inside. Please ask your child's teacher if you have any questions about weather-appropriate clothing.

### **WATER ACTIVITIES**

Water play is often incorporated into scheduled activities. There will be no water related activities occurring in water that is more than two feet deep.

### **MULTIMEDIA**

The use of multimedia in our program is an extension of the teaching and learning that takes place in our classrooms. Teachers may select a short program shown on a computer or iPad based upon weekly themes. Children are not required to view part or all of a program

shown. Instead, the activity is offered as one of several centers. All multimedia must have a rating of “PG” or “E” and must possess an educational theme. Children are limited to a specified amount of time per week they may use or view multimedia (maximum 30 minutes/week), and only children 2 years and up are allowed this time.

### **PHOTOS**

Parents are asked to grant permission to iCare Child Development to use the name and/or photograph(s) of your child for school affiliated websites such as our schools’ facebook group, DailyConnect app, or iCare’s website.

### **PETS & VISITING ANIMALS**

No animal may be brought into iCare or on premises (inside gate) without first notifying and receiving permission from the Director. Pets and visiting animals must be carefully considered for their temperament, health risks, and appropriateness for young children

### **ASSESSMENTS**

The teachers will assess and track each child’s individual development during their time at iCare. During the school day, teachers are continually watching, observing, and documenting things the children do and say. By tracking a child’s development, our teachers are able to plan activities that are appropriate for each child’s developmental abilities.

### **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parents are encouraged to request informal or formal conferences whenever they feel it necessary. The goal of the parent-teacher conference is to gain insight into your child’s development both in the center setting as well as the home setting. During conferences, your child’s development and any goals, special instructions, or concerns you may have for your child will be discussed.

### **ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIOS**

A permanent assessment portfolio will be kept for each child, and passed to the next teacher when a child transitions. Assessment portfolios will contain a variety of items, including photographs, examples of artwork, assessment profiles, and parent-teacher conference forms.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

As a participant in our child care program, your child may participate in short, unannounced field trips including but not limited to: walks as a class around the perimeter of the building and/or nearby neighborhoods; trips to local playgrounds; trips to local businesses. Teacher-child ratios are maintained at all times. A “Parent/Guardian Permissions” form must be completed at the time of enrollment for this type of field trip.

Field trips outside of a 15 minute walk will require a “Field Trip Permission Form.” Parents will be notified at least one week in advance of all field trips requiring a “Field Trip Permission Form.” If you do not wish for your child to attend a particular field trip, please let your child’s teacher know.

### **MEALS AND SNACKS**

At iCare, children are provided a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and PM snack. iCare follows the nutritional guidelines established by the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Children will be encouraged to try all foods that are offered, but will never be forced to eat. Please inform your child’s teacher if your child cannot eat a certain food or has different

dietary. For certain dietary restrictions, you may be asked to provide food from home for your child.

### **FOOD FROM HOME**

Children are welcome to bring in special treats to celebrate a birthday or holiday. Please check with your child's teacher before bringing any homemade snacks.

### **FOOD ALLERGY ACTION PLAN**

If your child has a food allergy, please complete a Food Allergy Action Plan form, available from the Director. This form will be posted in your child's room, as well as in food preparation areas.

### **PARENT SUPPLY INFORMATION**

Parents must supply diapers/pull-ups, wipes, diaper cream/ointments, bottles, breastmilk/formula, baby food, extra clothing (3 extra pair for 2yrs and under, and 2 extra pair for 3yrs and over.), pacifiers, zip-up blankets, and any other special item for your child. Please label all items with child's name.

Breast milk and Formula must be brought in ready-to-feed bottles or sippy cups.

**\*\*\*PLEASE LABEL ALL ITEMS WITH CHILD'S NAME\*\*\***

### **CLOTHING AND ITEMS FROM HOME**

#### **PLAY CLOTHES**

Please send your child to iCare in comfortable play clothes and shoes. Play is usually active and often messy; comfortable, washable clothes are important if your child is to participate fully in the program. Outdoor play is scheduled every day as an essential part of our planned curriculum. We expect all children to be dressed appropriately for both indoor and outdoor activities.

All children occasionally get their clothes wet and have toileting accidents. Whenever this occurs, it is best to change the child into an extra set of clothing provided by the family. Your child's teacher will request that you bring a complete change of clothing, including underwear, to be kept at school and replenished as needed. Please be sure to clearly label all items of clothing. Let the teacher know whenever your child's clothing or other items cannot be located.

#### **ITEMS FROM HOME**

Toys, stuffed animals, or other items from home may help your child feel more comfortable at school from time to time. However, it is often difficult for young children to share their special "treasures" with classmates. We ask that parents assist the children with keeping these items at home. If brought to iCare from home please place in your child's bag or cubby shortly after arrival. Please clearly label all belongings brought from home. iCare is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES**

#### **ILLNESS**

Our first priority at iCare is providing a healthy, safe learning environment for all children. A child will be sent home as soon as possible if any of the following is experienced:

an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (as determined by the staff); an illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can reasonably provide without compromising the health or safety of other children in the classroom; or a child is experiencing any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 101 or greater, until 24 hours symptom free without fever reducing medication
- Signs/symptoms of severe illness, including: lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, and/or wheezing
- Diarrhea (not associated with diet changes or medications) (Two instances) until diarrhea stops for 24 hours or the continued diarrhea is deemed not be infectious by a licensed health care professional.
- Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
- Vomiting (One instance) the child can return after vomiting has been resolved for 24 hours or until a health care provider determines the cause for vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration
- Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than 2 hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs/symptoms of illness
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines the sores are not contagious
- Rash until a physician determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis) until after treatment has been initiated for 24 hours
- Scabies, until after treatment has been completed
- Tuberculosis, until a health care provider states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend child care
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- Chicken pox, until all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)
- Hand Foot and Mouth sores have dried and crusted and no fever
- Unspecified respiratory tract illness accompanied by another illness which requires exclusion
- Lice, until after treatment has been completed
- Any other communicable disease requiring exclusion

A child who becomes ill while at iCare will be separated as much as possible until his/her parent arrives. For this reason, we ask families to make every effort to pick up a sick child as soon as possible.

iCare reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness. Any exceptions to our illness policy will require a written note from a licensed health care professional stating that the child is not contagious.

Please contact iCare at 404-790-5655 by 9:00AM whenever your child is ill.

### **NOTICE OF EXPOSURE & REPORTING DISEASE**

If your child is exposed to a reportable communicable disease, a notice will be posted at the front door and on our schools' facebook page. If your child or anyone in your household becomes ill with a reportable communicable disease, please notify the Director immediately.

### **HAND WASHING**

Frequent hand washing with soap and warm, running water is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illnesses commonly found in childcares such as the common cold, diarrhea, and pink eye. Times your child (and staff members) will be expected to wash their hands:

- After each diaper change or using the toilet
- Before and after meal times
- Before and after administering medication
- After handling bodily fluids (mucus, blood vomit)
- Before and after sensory play
- After coming indoors from the playground
- After handling pets and other animals
- After cleaning or handling garbage

Warm, running water (no colder than 60 degrees F) and soap must be used. Hands must be rubbed vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including the backs of hands, between fingers, under nails, and under any jewelry. A disposable paper towel should be used to dry hands and turn off faucet. Help reinforce the importance of hand washing by encouraging frequent hand washing at home as well.

### **MEDICATIONS**

Prescription and over-the-counter medications must be given to a staff member in the original container, clearly labeled with the child's full name and birth date. iCare staff will not administer any medication without a signed Medication Authorization Form. Forms can be obtained from your child's teacher or from the Director and/or Assistant Director.

Medications are stored in a locked box or in a high cabinet while in use at iCare. Unused medications must be immediately returned to the family and will not be stored at iCare.

When a medication is given, the teacher will document the type of medication administered, the dosage, and the time it was given.

### **PHYSICALS AND IMMUNIZATION RECORDS**

Each child must have a current physical and immunization record on file at iCare. Immunization records must be updated whenever a new immunization is received. Updated immunization records may be brought in or faxed to iCare directly from your healthcare provider. iCare's fax number is 877-310-0758.

### **UPDATING ENROLLMENT RECORDS**

Each year, iCare completes an audit of enrollment records. At the conclusion of this audit, families will be notified if anything needs to be updated. Some forms must be updated every year, including the Emergency Contact and Medical Consent form. Other records must be updated throughout the year, such as immunization records. When visiting your child's physician for a "well-child" appointment, please request a copy of your child's most recent immunization record. You may bring these items in yourself, or have your physician fax them to us at 877-310-0758. In addition any time a family's information changes such as address, place of employment or health insurance provider, a new Emergency Contact and Medical Consent form must be completed.

### **DOCUMENTATION OF ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS**

Staff members will document accidents and incidents that occur at iCare using an Accident/Incident Report on DailyConnect. We document all biting incidents as accidents. If a biter breaks the skin of another child, an accident/incident report will be completed for the biter as well as the child who was bitten. We will use great detail when explaining events, but never include other children's names. If the injury is serious, a parent will be contacted

before pick-up.

### **DOCUMENTATION OF HEALTH INCIDENTS**

All parents will be notified of any reportable communicable illnesses present in the center via a sign or on our school's facebook page. A parent of an ill child will be contacted directly explaining child's symptoms.

### **DOCUMENTATION OF ALLERGIES**

A child with allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan posted in a visible location in the classroom. If the allergy is food related, an Allergy Action Plan will also be posted in the kitchen area. All staff working in the classroom of child with allergies will review the Allergy Action Plan to ensure understanding of emergency procedures should the child have an allergic reaction. All allergic reactions will be documented with a Health Incident Form.

### **DOCUMENTATION OF SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS**

An Emergency Care Plan will be on file for any child with special health care needs (seizures, etc). A copy of the Emergency Care Plan will be kept in the classroom emergency binder. All staff working in the classroom will familiarize themselves with this plan, should an emergency arise. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a child's specific health care needs.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL/DENTAL PROCEDURE**

It is important that parents complete and update, as needed, an Emergency Contact and Parental Consent Form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. In addition, the form allows iCare staff members to seek emergency medical or dental care from authorized care providers in the event of serious injury. It is the responsibility of the parent to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary.

- If a child becomes ill or injured after arriving at the center, the Lead Teacher will attempt to contact the parent(s) at all available telephone numbers. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts/authorized pick up persons on the Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form will be called.
- Children who are ill or seriously injured will remain under the supervision of the Director and/or Assistant Director until a parent arrives.

If the child requires immediate medical attention:

- The staff member who witnessed the emergency situation will remain with the injured child and instruct someone else to call 911.
- If no one is available, staff will ensure the child is stable and if possible, bring the child with them to call 911.
- A staff member who witnessed the emergency situation will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing the child's file including immunization records, and Emergency Contact & Parental Consent Form.
- The Director or Assistant Director will contact the parent(s).

### **TRANSPORTATION**

iCare only transports children in multi-passenger strollers or walking ropes at this time.

### **SUNSCREEN & INSECT REPELLANT**

Between the months of March and October, all families will be required to supply sunscreen and insect repellent for their child/ren for outdoor activities. A permission slip must be on

file before sunscreen or insect repellent will be applied to a child. Sunscreen must be SPF 15 or above, and will be applied by classroom teachers regularly throughout the day. Parents are encouraged to apply sunscreen and insect repellent to their child before arriving at iCare for the day. Occasional insect bites are expected. iCare will do their best to ensure good insect repellent coverage but, cannot guarantee product results.

### **CLOTH DIAPERS**

Commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups are strongly encouraged at iCare. If using cloth diapers, parents must make diapering as easy as possible for teachers by making sure cloth diapers are completely prepared in advance, and parents provide a container/bag for storage of soiled cloth diapers while at the center.

### **MANDATORY CHILD ABUSE REPORTERS**

As childcare professionals who interact with children on a daily basis, each staff member of iCare is a mandatory child abuse and neglect reporter and must contact the Georgia Department of Human Services whenever abuse or neglect is suspected.

### **TOBACCO USE**

Cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products are prohibited on iCare premises, including parking lots and outdoor play areas.

### **ACCESS POLICY**

Any person in the center who is not an owner, staff member, substitute, or subcontracted staff or volunteer who has had a record check and approval to be involved with child care shall not have unrestricted access to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian or custodian, nor be counted in the staff to child ratio. Unrestricted access means that a person has contact with a child alone or is directly responsible for child care. Persons who do not have unrestricted access will be under the direct supervision and monitoring of a paid staff member at all times and will not be allowed to assume any child care responsibilities.

Center staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the center without their knowledge to ask what their purpose is. If a staff member is unsure about the reason, they will get approval from the Director and/or Assistant Director for the person to be on site. Persons who are on the property for other reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc., will be monitored by a paid staff member and will not be allowed to interact with children on the premises.

### **SUBSTITUTE EMPLOYEES**

The center will provide for substitute staff when regular staff is absent from work. All substitute employees will be at least eighteen (18) years of age. Substitute service staff shall be informed of the center's policies and procedures necessary for the proper performance for their job duties in compliance with all center rules.

\*\*National background checks and finger printing are conducted on all permanent and temporary staff before employment.

### **GUIDANCE STRATEGIES**

Every adult who cares for children has a responsibility to guide, correct and socialize children toward appropriate behaviors. These adult actions often are called child guidance and discipline. Positive guidance and discipline are crucial because they promote children's

self-control, teach children responsibility and help children make thoughtful choices. The more effective caregivers are at encouraging appropriate child behavior, the less time and effort adults will spend correcting children's misbehavior.

Effective guidance and discipline focus on the development of the child. They also preserve the child's self-esteem and dignity. Actions that insult or belittle are likely to cause children to view their caregivers negatively, which can inhibit learning and can teach the child to be unkind to others. However, actions that acknowledges the child's efforts and progress, no matter how slow or small, is likely to encourage healthy development. Teaching children self-discipline is a demanding task. It requires patience, thoughtful attention, cooperation and a good understanding of the child. iCare staff will use only positive guidance techniques.

When interacting with young children, iCare staff will ask themselves the following questions:

“Am I...”

- Validating feelings?
- Asking open ended questions?
- Encouraging problem solving?
- Respecting children's choices?
- Using praise and positive reinforcement?
- Talking with children – not at them?
- Circulating throughout the classroom?
- At the child's eye level?

### **REASONS FOR MISBEHAVIOR**

If caregivers understand why children misbehave, they can be more successful at reducing behavior problems. Listed here are some of the possible reasons why children misbehave.

- Children want to test whether caregivers will enforce rules.
- They experience different sets of expectations between school and home.
- A child does not understand the rules, or are held to expectations that are beyond their developmental levels.
- They want to assert themselves and their independence.
- They feel ill, bored, hungry or sleepy.
- They lack accurate information and prior experience.
- They have been previously "rewarded" for their misbehavior with adult attention.

### **PREVENTING MISBEHAVIOR**

Child misbehavior is impossible to prevent completely. Children, usually curious and endlessly creative, are likely to do things parents and other caregivers have not expected. However, there are many positive steps caregivers can take to help prevent misbehavior.

- Set clear, consistent rules. (e.g., walking feet; gentle touches)
- Make certain the environment is safe and worry-free.
- Show interest in the child's activities. (e.g., participating in activities with the children so they stay interested for longer periods)
- Encourage self-control and independence by providing meaningful choices. (e.g., “You may pick up the blocks or books.”)
- Focus on the desired behavior, rather than the one to be avoided. (e.g., “Ashley, please use gentle touches with your friends.”)
- Build children's images of themselves as trustworthy, responsible and cooperative.
- Give clear directions, one at a time.

- Say "Yes" whenever possible.
- Notice and pay attention to children when they do things right. (e.g., "Joey is playing so nicely. I like it when you keep the blocks on the table.")
- Encourage children often and generously.
- Set a good example. (e.g., using a quiet voice when children should be quiet)
- Help children see how their actions affect others.

## **RESPONDING TO MISBEHAVIOR**

Below are strategies iCare staff will use to respond to child misbehavior. Staff will make sure rules are explained fully and clearly understood before misbehavior occurs. Whenever possible we will, involve children in making the rules for the classroom.

- **Redirection:** This strategy will be used most frequently when working with young children. If a child is not following the rules or being uncooperative, we will quickly get the child's attention and introduce another activity. For example, "Kate, please help me water the flowers now. You've been riding the bike for a long time and it's now Logan's turn."
- **Logical consequences:** These are structured consequences that follow specific misbehaviors. The child will be able to see how the behavior and the consequence are directly related. For example, Andrew is standing on his chair at lunch. His teacher will remind him that if he stands on his chair, he could fall and get hurt; this will make him sad.
- **Staff will allow child to participate in the solution.** If a child damages something, he/she will help in fixing it or in cleaning up. If a child causes someone distress, he/she will help in relieving that. For example, "It made Brandon very sad when you told him he wasn't your friend anymore. Please come apologize and help me make him feel better."
- **Natural consequences:** Allowing children to experience the consequences of their behavior is also called learning the hard way. For example, Laura does not put her books back in her school bag after she finishes reading. One day she loses a book, and therefore must find a way to replace it. We will only use natural consequences when they will not endanger the child's health or safety.
- **"Take a break" or "Calm down chair":** In some instances, a child may need to be removed from a particular situation in which he/she has become overwhelmed or violent. The child will be directed to "take a break" or sit in the "calm down chair." This strategy gives the child a chance to calm down, regain control, and reflect quietly on her or his behavior away from others. Once the child has calmed down, staff will talk with the child about the actions that led up to and resulted in needing a break or being sent to the calm down chair. For example, "Hannah, we have talked often about how hitting is not acceptable. But because you hit John, please leave the blocks center and go to the calm down chair. I will talk to you when you are ready."

If these actions do not help in reducing or changing behavior the following will take place:

1. Staff will report behavior and what strategies have been attempted to the Director and/or Assistant Director.
2. The Director and/or Assistant Director will observe the child and meet with the Lead Teacher to develop a behavior management plan.
3. The behavior management plan will be discussed with the parent and then put into practice.
4. The Director and/or Assistant Director, Lead Teacher and Assistant Teachers, and parents will evaluate the behavior management plan. If needed, adjustments will be made.

\*\* If a child's behavior becomes threatening to themselves, other children, staff or teachers, the child will be removed from the classroom and possibly the program for a period of time.

## **BITING POLICY**

Biting is a behavior that usually appears between the ages of one and three years. While biting is an age-appropriate behavior, it is important to remember it is also an unacceptable behavior in a childcare environment. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration and stress. Biting is not something to blame on children, their parents or their teachers. There are a variety of strategies we implement at iCare to prevent and stop biting. This is the process followed when a child bites:

- The biting child is stopped and told, "Stop biting. Biting hurts" in a firm voice. Teachers will try to remain calm, being careful not to show anger or frustration towards the child.
- The biting child is removed from the situation. Depending upon the observed motive for the bite, the separation may include re-direction or meeting the child's needs. As little attention as possible will be placed on the biting child, to avoid reinforcing the behavior.
- Appropriate first aid will be provided to the child who was bitten. Bite will be washed with soap and water; cold compress will be applied to reduce pain and swelling. A bandage will be applied if necessary.

Staff will explore the reasons for biting when it occurs. Teachers will work with parents to gather information about the child's behavior and begin observations to determine the reasons for biting. Examples of triggers could be: communication deficits, transitions, hunger, lack of sleep, need for oral stimulation or teething pain. Once triggers are identified, staff can work on prevention strategies and start teaching replacement skills

Below are the steps the teacher will take to identify triggers and replace the behavior:

1. The teacher will examine the context in which the biting is occurring and look for patterns. The following questions will be asked:
  - Was the space too crowded?
  - Were there too few toys?
  - Was there too little to do or too much waiting?
  - Was the child who bit getting the attention and care he/she deserved at other times?
2. The teacher will change the environment, routines or activities if necessary.
3. The teacher will work with the child who is biting to resolve conflicts and frustrations in more appropriate ways
4. The teacher will observe the child, to get an idea of why and when they are likely to bite.
5. The teacher will identify children likely to be bitten and make special efforts to reduce their chance of being bitten.
6. The teacher, parent and Director and/or Assistant Director will meet regularly to regulate an action plan and measure outcomes.
7. If biting continues the teacher will observe the group more closely and work with the parents to seek out additional resources as necessary to shadow the child who is biting.

All information is confidential and names of the children involved in the incident are not shared between parents. In addition, biting is documented on an Incident/Accident Report via DailyConnect.

## **HOME AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP**

### **NEW FAMILY ORIENTATION**

Each family is strongly encouraged to schedule a time with the Director to complete a “New Family Orientation.” This orientation is a great time for parents to drop-off routine care items (diapers, bottles, etc.) as well as an opportunity to familiarize themselves with their child’s routines at iCare. Important policies and procedures are also reviewed with the Director at this time, as well as the paperwork required for enrollment completion. Typically, “New Family Orientation” is scheduled one week prior to the start date.

### **DAILY SHEETS VIA DAILY CONNECT**

A daily “recap” sheet will be completed to tell you about your child’s day. This chart contains information about toileting, meals, naps, and activities. Please review on the Daily Connect App. or on [dailyconnect.com](http://dailyconnect.com).

### **NEWS**

A center-wide monthly NEWS posting will be posted on our facebook page. This newsletter provides you with general information and announcements about the center. Please make sure the Director has your facebook email address to get linked to this group.

### **ROOM TRANSITIONS**

Your child will transition to a new classroom when he/she has reached the developmental milestones for a particular classroom. As the time for a transition to a new room approaches, you will receive a letter containing information about your child’s transition into his/her new classroom. Both your child’s current and future teacher is available to address any questions or concerns you have during the transition process. Before the transition into a new classroom has been completed, parents are encouraged to schedule a meeting with the new teacher in order to familiarize themselves with the new classroom, children, and curriculum.

### **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

Parent participation is strongly encouraged at iCare. Some possible opportunities to participate and contribute to your child’s iCare experience:

- Construction or collection of raw materials for art projects, dramatic play props, etc.
- Participating in School events such as the Thanksgiving luncheon.
- Volunteer for story-time
- Sharing ideas for meal/snack offerings

### **PROGRAM EVALUATIONS**

iCare will asks parents to complete a program evaluation annually. The information gathered from these anonymous surveys will be used by the staff to develop goals for our center and to improve the overall quality of care at our center. A parent’s point-of-view is different from a teacher’s point-of-view. Therefore, parent feedback on the program evaluations is very important to the success of our program and satisfaction of our families.

### **QUESTIONS/CONCERNS**

If you have a question or concern, do not hesitate to bring it to the attention of the teacher most directly involved. If the concern is not resolved, the director, Lauren Kilby-Davis, can be reached at 404-790-5655 or by e-mail at [icarechilddevelopmentcenter@gmail.com](mailto:icarechilddevelopmentcenter@gmail.com). The director is available to assist parents and staff in resolving concerns.

## **FEES AND BILLING POLICIES**

### **FINANCIAL AGREEMENT**

Upon enrollment and any changes to tuition, families are provided a Fee Policy & Financial Agreement. This agreement should be carefully reviewed, checked for errors, signed/returned

### **RATE INCREASES**

Rate increases can occur at any time for current or new students (our trend has been every 2 years as needed). A 90 day notice will be given to all current students before increase goes into effect.

### **AUTOMATIC PAYMENTS**

Effective January 1, 2018, all enrollees must make childcare payments electronically with a checking or savings account. Special arrangements must be discussed and arranged with the Director if unable to make electronic payments.

Payments are due in advance at the beginning of the month (the first childcare day of the month). Special arrangements must be discussed and arranged with the Director if unable to make monthly payments

A \$25 late fee will be added to all payments not received by the 5<sup>th</sup> (if arrangements made to pay weekly/biweekly, payments not received by Wednesday after due date will incur \$25 late fee)

**\*\*Payments are due in all cases of absences, including sickness, vacations and weather-related closings\*\***

### **REGISTRATION FEE**

A one-time, non-refundable \$75 registration fee is due at the time of enrollment (re-enrollment)

### **PROGRAM FEES**

iCare does not charge yearly program fees (supply fees, etc.) at this time. Parents may be asked to send in funds if needed for special school events/and or activities.

### **PART-TIME ENROLLMENT**

iCare offers part-time enrollment at a daily rate. Part-time childcare spots are contracted for the specific days requested if the days are available. The days are not interchangeable week to week. Additional days may be requested in a particular week for an additional daily drop-in fee. Fees are due in all cases of absences.

### **ENROLLMENT PRIORITIES**

Siblings of children already enrolled, shall be given priority in enrolling in Center programs. Otherwise, enrollment shall be in order of receipt of the registration forms and fees.

## **PROGRAM WITHDRAWAL, CONTRACT TERMINATION, & CHANGES IN ENROLLMENT**

A written notice of at least 4 weeks in advance must be given in order to terminate the childcare contract and withdrawal from the center, or 4 weeks payment in lieu of. If fees are not paid, discussed, or arranged with the Director, the center will be forced to escalate the matter legally.

Changes in enrollment status from full-time to part-time, or vice-versa must be requested at least 4 weeks in advance, and depends upon space availability.

## **MULTIPLE CHILD DISCOUNT**

iCare does not offer multiple child discounts at this time.

## **LATE PICK-UP FEE**

iCare closes at 6:00PM, Monday through Friday. Parents will be charged \$1.00 for every minute a child is present after 6:01PM. Parents are allowed to give late fees directly to teacher remaining on duty

## **RETURNED CHECKS/INSUFFICIENT FUNDS**

All returned checks or direct debit payments rejected will be charged a \$25.00 penalty. Missed payments and late fees must be paid within 1 week. Repeated incidents of returned checks or insufficient funds notices could result in termination of child care services. A payment plan should be discussed with the Director if a family is having trouble making tuition payments.

## **DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS**

Families that are more than 1 week behind in payments may have their child care services terminated. Payment is still due on delinquent accounts when services are terminated, and late fees will accrue. Please contact Director and make all efforts to schedule a payment plan if needed.

## **HOLIDAYS AND VACATION**

iCare will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

New Year's Day, MLK Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day (2 days), Labor Day, Columbus Day, Thanksgiving (3 days), Christmas (5 days)

If the holiday falls on a weekend day, iCare will close during the week. For example, if New Year's Day falls on a Saturday, iCare will close Friday, and if the Holiday falls on Sunday, iCare will close on Monday.

## **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The calendar for school begins in August. Parents will be given a list of all school closing calendar days at that time. The list of closure days can also be found in the document/files section on our facebook page.

## **WEATHER-RELATED CLOSINGS**

iCare will remain open during most severe weather. The Director will monitor the weather and local news stations to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day.

In the event that iCare closes early or cancels care for the following day, parents will be contacted and informed of the situation. Children should be picked up in a reasonable amount of time to ensure all parents, children, and staff can travel safely home.

**\*\*In the event of bad weather, the Center follows Dekalb County school closings\*\***

### **VACATION**

Payment is due in all cases of absences, including vacations. Please make your child's teacher aware if he/she will be absent for vacation.

### **EXTENDED ABSENCE**

In the event that a child needs to take an extended absence, such as summer break, and wishes to return to the program after a period of time, a fee of 50% of the monthly tuition must be paid each month the child is absent to hold his/her spot. iCare cannot guarantee re-enrollment if the spot is not held. Re-enrollment requires additional registration fees to be paid.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

#### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL/DENTAL PROCEDURE**

It is important that parents complete and update, as needed, an Emergency Contact and Parental Consent Form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. In addition, the form allows iCare staff members to seek emergency medical or dental care from authorized care providers in the event of serious injury. It is the responsibility of the parent to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary. If a child becomes ill or injured after arriving at the center, the Lead Teacher will attempt to contact the parent(s) at all available telephone numbers. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts/authorized pick up persons on the Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form will be called.

Children who are ill or seriously injured will remain under the supervision of the Director until a parent arrives.

If the child requires immediate medical attention:

- The staff member who witnessed the emergency situation will remain with the injured child and instruct someone else to call 911. If no one is available, staff will ensure the child is stable and if possible, bring the child with them to call 911.
- A staff member who witnessed the emergency situation will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing the child's file, immunization records, and Emergency Contact & Parental Consent Form.

#### **FIRE, TORNADO, BOMB OR OTHER EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

Fire and tornado drills are conducted each month; all classrooms are required to participate.

In the event of a fire, bomb threat, or other evacuation emergencies, the children and teachers will immediately leave the building and meet across the street at the enclosed tennis court, and walk to Coan Recreation Center.

In case of a tornado, each classroom has a designated area to seek shelter until the emergency is over. Parents will be called as soon as safely possible following an emergency

situation.

In all emergency situations staff will do frequent headcounts based on class rosters and daily sign in sheets. Infants are transported in mobile cribs, or multi-passenger strollers.

### **SEVERE WEATHER**

The Director will monitor the weather and local news stations throughout the day to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day. Lead Teachers will contact parents to inform them of the situation. Routine classroom activities will continue until parents arrive. Updates will be made via our school's facebook group, email, and/or text.

### **MISSING OR ABDUCTED CHILD**

In the event of a missing child, the Lead Teacher will search for the child in the immediate area, while another staff member calls the Director to help with the search. If the child cannot be located in a reasonable amount of time, the Director will notify the local police department and the child's parents. In the event of an abducted child, the Lead Teacher will immediately contact the Director and the local police department, and the child's parents.

### **POWER FAILURE**

Staff members and children will remain in the classroom and if possible, proceed with activities as usual, or may go to the outdoor play area until power resumes. If power cannot be restored within a reasonable amount of time, the center will close and parents contacted. The lead teachers will contact parents to inform them of the closing and of the need to immediately pick up their child. Activities will resume as possible until parents arrive.

## **Acknowledgment of Parent Handbook**

Your signature on this form is an acknowledgement that you agree to read this handbook carefully and refer any questions you may have to the centers' Director. Also, you agree to comply with iCare Child Development Center's policies, procedures, and payment terms.

I have read, understand and agree to adhere to the guidelines of this Parent Handbook for iCare Child Development Center, LLC. I have a copy of this handbook for my personal reference.

**Child's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Director's**  
**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_