



Child Care & Preschool

HANDBOOK

Policies & Procedures

2024 & 2025

Introduction

This handbook contains the policies and procedures of Precious Cargo Child Care and Preschool. It is meant to serve as a reference guide. It is not meant to cover every aspect of the childcare program or every situation that might arise. Please feel free to contact Silvana (Sylvia) Trudelle with questions concerning the content of this handbook. Precious Cargo Child Care and Preschool reserves the unilateral right to add, delete, or amend the policies and procedures in this handbook upon 5 days written notice to parents.

Mission Statement

At Precious Cargo Child Care and Preschool, we always strive to deliver the best childhood program experience possible for your family. The opportunities and experiences the children have in the early years play an important role in how they grow and develop. Thank you for considering Precious Cargo Child Care for your precious little one(s).

Philosophy

Each child develops in a unique way and at individual paces. The environment, materials and activities are designed to support a child's current level of development and gently guide their growth. We offer a safe classroom atmosphere that is inviting, supportive and facilitates learning. Children develop a positive self-image as they gain their ability to master classroom tasks. Our program provides a bridge from home to school. Teachers serve as a resource for parents, providing information about child growth and development. We partner with families to meet the needs of the young child.

Parental Involvement/Communication

Parent's ongoing support is the most important factor in your child's educational future. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns regarding their child. If you need to speak to me the best time is in the evening after 7:30 PM. If you call/text during the day and I am unable to answer, please leave a message and I'll reply as soon as possible. Parents are required one initial visit with your child to help support a smooth transition from home to Precious Cargo Childcare & Preschool.

Curriculum

Children have a wide variety of skills and abilities. We design an environment and plan a curriculum that gently guides children from their current level of development to the next. Children develop the ability to function as part of a group, take turns, make friends, meet some of their own needs and ask for help from adults when necessary. Skills such as listening, focusing, and speaking lay the foundation for taking in information. Young children take in and process information physically. Learning takes place when children actively explore their environment, experiment and ask questions. The ability to read, write and do basic math develops in elementary school. Learning begins with blocks, puzzles, books, songs, puppets, paints and crayons.

Daily Routine

Below is a sample schedule to give you an idea of your child's day at Precious Cargo Childcare and Preschool.

7:00am-8:00am Free choice

8:00am-8:30am Breakfast, conversation

8:30am-8:45am Bathroom break, kitchen cleanup

8:45am to 9:00am Music, movement

9:00am to 9:15am Circle time, story, finger play, plan day

9:15am to 10:15am Free choice: writing, math, sensory / science, dramatic play, craft / art

10:15am to 10:30am Cleanup, review plan

10:30am to 11 AM Play outdoors, large motor

11:00am to 11:15am Bathroom break

11:15am to 11:30am Circle time/story, finger play

11:30am to 12:00pm Movie (fix the beds and lunch)

12:00pm to 12:30pm Lunch, conversation

12:30pm to 12:45pm Bathroom break, kitchen cleanup

12:45pm to 1:00pm Brush teeth

1:00pm to 3:00pm Rest time

3:00pm to 3:30pm Pick up beds, bathroom break, library time

3:30pm to 4:00pm Snack, story, discussion, numbers, song

4:00pm to 4:30pm Play outdoors/large motor

4:30pm to 5:00pm Free choice: writing (open ended), math, sensory/science, dramatic play, art

The above schedule serves as a guideline of how our day is structured. We believe in providing a wide variety of activities and experiences. The children are encouraged to read and write on their own. Our art and craft supplies are well-stocked and always accessible. Infants abide by their own schedule. Utilizing this schedule prepares our children for kindergarten and they're wonderful future.

Nutrition Plan

Healthy eating is extremely important for every child: Purpose of the nutrition plan is to help your child learn about health through enjoying a variety of foods. We want children to enjoy foods that will help them grow and to be able to pick foods that will help them live healthy for a lifetime. We also want to share this information with the parents and employees so that we may educate them as well. Our program provides breakfast at 8am, lunch at 12:15 and afternoon snack at 3:15. We belong to the ACD Food Program which monitors and makes periodic surprise visits to ensure that we meet the guidelines determined by the State of Michigan Department of Agriculture. Menus are reviewed by a nutritionist and follow a meal/snack menu guide based on the USDA approved meal recommended daily patterns. Menus are posted on precious cargo childcare website. Food is prepared on site kitchen daily. Clean, sanitary water is available to children throughout program hours. Children are provided with labeled cups. Water is not substituted for milk when milk is a food or meal requirement. Additional water is available when the weather gets warmer and when we are more active. Our meals are served family style. I always eat with the children, enjoying the same foods the children are eating. Children are

encouraged to help with meals in age appropriate ways. Schedule meals and snacks are available to all children who are enrolled.

Nutrition Education

Children, parents and employees receive nutrition education from reliable sources that reflect standards upheld by CACFP and the USDA. They are given opportunities to understand why eating healthy is important, and to learn to form healthy eating activity habits. All nutrition information is shared through sharing of books, daily activities, and sharing talk meal times. Families are provided nutrition education through such things as learning activities, community events, and informational brochures. All meal service information in the parent hand book and posted menus. There is a plethora of nutritional education resources for my parents and children to learn about the prevention of childhood diseases due to childhood obesity. There are also accessible facts of child nutrition and health eating habits and experiences available on a daily basis to all staff employed and children enrolled in my program.

Late Arrival & Outside Food

All children will receive meals and snacks if they are in the home when these are being served. Please do not expect your child to be served meal/snack if they come after these times. Children that choose not to eat are not served additional food until the next meal or snack time. Snacks and meals are spaced out at reasonable intervals throughout the day. Food or drinks brought from home often create disagreements among the children. Therefore, any outside food or drink will be sent home.

Special Food Requirements

We provide a supportive, attentive and accommodating environment for children with food allergies/ special dietary requirements. If your child has special dietary needs substantiated by written medical evaluation we will work with you to develop a plan to reasonably accommodate your child's needs. Parent emergency information will be kept updated as well as related medical records and changes in child's treatment plans. A form will be provided that the pediatrician fills out specifying which foods to substitute. As owner and lead provider, I have received training in food allergy/sensitivity issues.

Infants

Infants are fed in a combination of a schedule and on demand and it also can depend on age up to 2 ½ years of age. All prepared bottles are labeled with the child's first name, date, contents and capped. Infants are always held for bottle feeding: bottles are never propped up. A plan to introduce age-appropriate solid foods to infants is made in consultation with the child's parent/guardian and primary care provider. We follow CACFP/USDA requirements to introduce solid foods; these guidelines are available for our parents to review. Our program welcomes breastfeeding families and we provide a space for mothers to nurse or pump. Breastfed babies do not receive food or drink (other than breast milk) unless noted. Parents are asked what they want done in case mom is late and baby is hungry or the supply of breast milk is gone. I am well-trained on the benefits of breastfeeding, preparation, storage and feeding of breast milk, and resources available for parents. Our program communicates with parents about what their infant ate through the entire day.

Types of Celebrations

Precious Cargo Child Care & Preschool celebrate a variety of religious, non-religious, and multicultural holidays and special days throughout the year. Your child's birthday is a happy celebration at our preschool. We are always interested in learning and teaching the children about unique celebrations. If your family has a special celebration or tradition please share it with us. During our celebrations, parents are welcome to bring in nutritious treats and we need to make sure food is safe for children who may have food allergies or sensitivities. Families need to make a plan with me so that choices of food can be safe before it is given to children. Precious Cargo is a nut-free facility. Due to food allergies, we do not serve any nuts or foods containing nuts since these foods may be life threatening to certain individuals.

Cultural Competence

The purpose of our cultural competence plan is to make sure that we foster cultural competence among our families, myself, children and employees. Our goal is to include everyone and make everyone feel comfortable with their culture and be able to share it with others. Some aspects of culture we can see, but most of culture is internal; hidden beyond the surface of an individual. Visually our classroom is rich with cultural diversity; we have pictures and various toys represented from all different countries and cultures. We cannot judge others or teach culture based on what we see. To uncover what is below the surface, we must spend time actively engaging in cultural activities and with and people. Throughout our day we speak about the differences and the similarities of the various cultures and countries and what our traditions are in the United States. We take turns sharing our own traditions in our families. We use self-reflection about how culture impacts our personal beliefs, values and attitudes, in reflection on the commonalities and differences across, also, within cultural groups; and in appreciation for cultural and individual characteristics. Awareness also involves recognizing popular stereotypes, biases and misconceptions regarding other cultures and consideration for one's personal capacity to serve diverse children and families. Throughout the year we talk about different holidays and how different cultures celebrate them we compare this to how we individually celebrate with our families and our heritage.

The tools and resources that we use to help us assist in teaching are books, toys, and pictures primarily. I ask questions and use active listening skills to work towards better background knowledge of diverse children and families and employees. I always strive to intentionally maintain a critical awareness of those who may be in need of services. I offer information regarding services via bulletin board or flyers in children's mailboxes. I have a network of experts to refer to such as the MISD, Great Start to Quality, MSU extension, community partners, families, and trainings.

It is very important to me to be a culturally competent child care provider. I make it a priority to educate myself, children, staff and families by listening to each families specific needs and wishes and seeking out resources to help better serve them. I partner with others to create quality outcomes for all.

Special Needs

The purpose of our special needs plan is to include all children with disabilities and other diverse needs. We embody the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of our childcare family. This means we include children with disabilities and developmental delays, children with complex health care needs,

children learning a second language, children with challenging behaviors, and children with mental health concerns. We support the right of every child to have access to quality child care with the necessary supports to fully participate in our child care setting.

The tools and resources that we use to assist us are books, toys, and pictures primarily. I ask questions and use active listening skills to work towards better background knowledge of special needs children and families and employees. I always strive to intentionally maintain a critical awareness of those who may be in need of services. I offer information regarding services via bulletin board or flyers in children's mailboxes. I have a network of experts to refer to such as the MISD, Great Start to Quality, MSU extension, community partners, families, Teaching strategies curriculum/materials, Ages and Stages Social Emotional questionnaire, and kindergarten assessment tools.

We provide inclusion opportunities for my staff, families, and children by incorporating the above ideologies. I make it a priority to educate myself, children, staff and families by listening, observing and documenting so that no one is left out of our program. When there is a need and we are unable to provide resources due to our expertise we help connect families to outside agencies.

Health

The purpose of our health plan is to help children, families and employees understand the importance of getting regular well visits and immunizations for maintaining optimal health for all included.

When contracts are signed yearly on or after September 1st parents/ guardians are required to provide Precious Cargo Child care an updated immunization record and well visit from attending doctor. We require an updated record each time a new immunization is administered as well as the well visit report. At that time the Child-in-care statement is signed to show that immunizations are being administered based on recommendation of the U S Dept of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention schedule.

We partner with local pediatricians, hospitals, and urgent care facilities in our area so that we may assist with parents if they need help locating someone in the area. I maintain a file on each child and include these documents. We complete the Ages and Stages questionnaire twice a year to make sure each child is reaching the required developmental milestones and discuss this with parents at parent teacher conferences.

Transportation

There are times when it may be necessary to transport children with me such as field trips or taking children to and from school. The child will be transported in an automobile that is in good operating condition, covered by insurance, and operated by a licensed driver. The appropriate car seat or other protective device suitable for his/her age and weight will be provided. Children will not be included without the written consent of a parent. Participation in field trips/entertainment visits may be limited by parental consent, tuition status entitlements, availability of transportation, age, ability and/or the behavior of each child. Families are responsible for field trip expenses. Field trips may also be on foot such as walks around our neighborhood.

Fun Activities

We work hard to plan a fun and safe year for the children. While injuries are extremely rare, there are some inherent risks in some of the activities that we offer. By signing the Child Care Service Agreement, you acknowledge and assume the risks related to all activities in which the children participate in now or in the future at Precious Cargo Child Care & Preschool. You agree to indemnify, defend, and hold Precious Cargo Child Care & Preschool, any of their agents, employees, or other affiliated entities harmless from all forms of liability, claims, or causes of action arising out of or in any way connected to the activities.

Enrollment, Tuition, & Agreement Termination

Two Week Trial Period

Enrollment will begin on a two-week trial period. This agreement may be terminated by either the parent/guardian or the provider any time during that period without notice. After the initial trial period, two week/s notice is required of the parent/guardian, in writing, if a child is to be permanently removed from the childcare/preschool care. If two weeks written notice is not provided, parent/guardian agrees to pay a fee equal to two weeks tuition to Precious Cargo Child Care and Preschool.

Status

Upon enrollment, each child will be considered either full time or part time status. A two-week written notice is required if a change of status is required.

Full time tuition covers care between the hours of 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., four days or more and includes the following: meals, snacks, drinks, preschool activities, and supplies. Field trip expenses are not included in the weekly tuition and will be collected prior to the field trip. There is a \$5.00 charge per child for each paid entertainer visit.

Part time Tuition covers care between the hours of 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., less than four days per week. Meals, snacks, drinks, preschool activities, and supplies are included but field trip expenses are not included and will be collected prior to the field trip. There is a \$5.00 charge per child for each paid entertainer visit.

Precious Cargo Child Care and Preschool favors full time arrangements and retains the right to cancel part time childcare/preschool in order to accommodate a client desiring a full time position. In this event, the part time child's parents will be given a two-week notice in writing and may opt to hold their position by re-enrolling for full time care.

Enrollment Fee

A \$50.00 non-refundable enrollment fee is required each year upon renewal of the child care contractual agreement. At the time of enrollment, the parent/guardian must provide:

1. An updated immunization
2. A completed child care contractual agreement
3. Completed child information card, Emergency info and health statement required by Michigan State Licensing
4. Statement of permission to participate in / use all play equipment on premises

Rights to Termination

After the initial, two-week trial period, two week's notice is required of the parent / guardian, in writing, if the child is to be permanently removed from the preschool / child care. If the two

weeks written notice is not provided, parent /guardian agrees to pay a fee equal to two weeks tuition to Precious Cargo Child Care & Preschool. Precious Cargo Child Care reserves the right to terminate the child care / preschool agreement with or without notice to the parents / guardians at any time.

Necessary Supplies

The following items are necessary and will be stored at Precious Cargo Child Care for each child: A complete change of clothes including socks and under garments. Infant clothing should make diaper changing easy. Potty trainers need extra changes of clothes and clothing that is easy to remove.

Weather-appropriate gear (hats, mittens, boots, coats, etc.)

Nap time blanket

Bottles / food must be labeled with the child's name and date daily. Masking tape works well.

Full bag of diapers marked with child's name

Toys and other items brought from home are not permitted unless the child is a special person and has brought these items for show and tell. Precious Cargo Child Care is not responsible for any items that are lost, stolen, or broken.

Tuition and Increase Policies

Precious Cargo Child Care & Preschool may adjust tuition and / or fees with ten days written notice. Tuition is due the first day of attendance each week. All payments are made in advance made payable to Precious Cargo Child Care. Provider has the authority to terminate care if payment is more than five (5) days late. Full tuition is charged during weeks which include holidays and any days missed due to no-shows, absences, or illnesses.

Returned Check Fees

A \$35.00 returned check fee is charged for any checks returned by the bank for insufficient or uncollected funds. If this occurs more than once, cash payment will be expected. A \$10.00 late fee is charged if you are late paying your child's care. Payment is considered late if received after the first day of attendance.

Tax Information

Tax statements for services rendered by December 31st of that same year are issued by January 31st of the next year. Families in care will automatically receive statements. Families that have terminated care on or before the tax statement issue date are responsible for notifying the provider that tax information is needed and for obtaining the tax statement. The provider has two weeks to provide tax statements. Parent is required to pick up the tax statement and to sign the form showing agreement of the amount paid.

Discipline Policy

We treat all children with kindness and respect. No child will ever be physically or verbally demeaned in any way or any other methods of discipline that are prohibited by law or by the Licensing Rules for Family and Group Day Care Homes. We discipline by using the following practices daily:

Modeling proper behavior in our actions and words

Being consistent with expectations and rules

Stating directions in a clear and positive manner

Providing age appropriate toys and activities

Avoiding boredom and conflict

Giving the child the opportunity for alone time or time out when needed

We use a lot of redirection with the younger children. The older children are encouraged to use words to describe their feelings when handling conflicts, They are taught to seek out a grown up if they need help in expressing their feelings and needs with words.

When aggressive behavior presents itself, the child will be told why such an act is inappropriate. He/she will be reminded of how his/her actions have hurt their friend. They will be directed to apologize when ready. We talk about how conflicts can be solved more positively in the future.

If a child's behavior is uncontrollable, it will be documented and a conference will be set up with the parents. We will decide upon a plan of action. If the behavior cannot be resolved within a specified amount of time then you will have to find alternative child care for your child.

Illness Policy

When a child is ill, it is uncomfortable for them to be away from home, and it is difficult for us to give them the special attention they need. It is also likely that others will develop the same illness they have if it is communicable. For the safety of other children in the daycare and staff, please do not bring your child to day care if they are ill. Please let a provider know if you have medicated your child before coming to child care/preschool. Over the counter drugs often mask illness symptoms but put everyone at risk. Please notify provider by phone or text in the morning or previous evening if your child will be absent due to illness. It is recommended that if a child is obtaining immunization shots that they receive them on a Friday as some of the immunization shots have side effects.

Children are not permitted to attend or remain at preschool/child care while exhibiting any of the following signs of illness within the past 24 hours:

Fever (100 degrees or higher)

Persistent cough

Uncontrollable runny nose

Unusual drowsiness/lethargy

Persistent or excessive crying

Diarrhea

Unknown rash

Discharge from eyes or ears

Suspected or known communicable disease (chicken pox, roseola, lice, mumps, measles, influenza, pink eye, etc....)

Vomiting

Please have a back-up plan in place and be responsible in keeping a sick child home.

Timely Pick Up Policy

In the event that a child becomes ill in care, the sick child will be isolated from the group and made as comfortable as possible until the parent/guardian arrives.

Parent/guardian has 45 minutes from the time of the provider's phone call to pick up their child from child care/preschool. After 45 minutes, parents will be charged a sick child fee of \$5.00 per 15 minutes. If a parent cannot be contacted, the parent's emergency contacts will also be called.

Doctor's Note Policy

When your child has been ill, a dated note from your child's pediatrician/family doctor, stating that your child is free of illness and ready to return to child care/preschool is required in order for your child to resume care. A note is necessary under the following circumstances:

Your child has been sent home ill from child care/preschool with sign(s) of contagious illness

Your child is kept home for more than two days (including the day your child is sent home)

Your child has been taken to the doctor on the same day that care is scheduled to occur or has been provided.

Your child has visited the doctor on the day prior to care being provided.

Your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness

Medication Policy

All medications must be stored in an original, child-proof container with the child's name, medication name, instructions, and dosing procedure clearly indicated. The parent/guardian is required to fill out the medication permission slip for each medication to be given and administer the first dose to their child.

Any time that a child is prescribed medication that must be administered at child care/preschool, a doctor's note will be required that states the child's ailment is not contagious and will not pose a health risk to others in the child care/preschool.

Prevention & First Aid

Precious Cargo Child Care will take the necessary precautions to contain and prevent the spread of contagious illnesses and diseases. However, Precious Cargo Child Care cannot guarantee that contagious illnesses or diseases will be completely contained or will not be spread to the other children. Parents must recognize that, while in care, it is possible that the child may be exposed to a contagious illness or disease.

Serious Accident or Injury Procedure

In the event of a serious accident or sudden illness that the provider deems as requiring medical attention, the following procedures are followed:

Attend to the Child (perform CPR or first aid if necessary)

Call 911 if necessary

Parent/Guardian or the emergency contacts, as supplied on the Emergency Information Form, will be notified as soon as possible

Accompany child to the hospital

My husband Alan Trudelle will be my back-up person in case additional help is needed to assist with an emergency.

Emergency Procedures

Whether at home or child care/preschool, children need to be able to follow the directions of an adult in an emergency situation.

Fire-smoke detectors and fire detectors are located on each floor of my home. There are 3 exits located in the basement; floor plan is posted on the bulletin board. In the event of an actual fire, we will proceed outside using the nearest exit and meet in back on the burm (behind the swing set) or in front by the mailbox depending on where the fire is located.

Tornado-In the event of severe weather, we will take cover in the basement bathroom. Blankets, phone, radio, and flashlights are all available in the cupboard. We will wait there until the warning is lifted. We have seasonal tornado drills.

Pick up/drop off Procedures & Policies

Drop Off

Children will arrive to child care/preschool dressed in clothes that are appropriate to the weather. Also, on occasion, we do messy projects or have messy food for lunch. Please do not send your child in their best clothes and be upset that they are stained or ruined. Please do not dress your child in clothing that must be completely removed (such as belts, overalls, etc....) to access a diaper or which a potty training child cannot remove on their own. Please check in with provider when picking up or dropping off each day. Please be considerate and call if you will be dropping off late or picking up during quiet time.

Pick Up

Precious Cargo Child Care closes at 5 p.m. each day. It is very important to me and my family that parents respect my business hours by picking up their children at the time agreed upon within my contractual agreement and not after. If you anticipate being late, call immediately. I may have conflicting plans that would require your emergency backup to pick up your child on time. If you are late, be sure to have the late fee in hand. Having to ask for the late fee embarrasses both you and me.

Children's behavior at time of Drop off and & Pick up

Sometimes, if both a parent and a provider are in the same area, such as during pick up or drop off, a child may forget the rules or wish to test the boundaries. Please help show your child that you respect me, the rules of my house, my property, and the other people present, by reminding them that the rules still apply when you are around. I will also remind of the rules and correct them, if needed.

Drop off time can create anxiety for young children who are uneasy with transitions. This can prove particularly tough on Moms and Dads too. The children who transition most easily are those whose parents master an upbeat attitude and a quick drop off. Linger generally produces tantrums and promises of treats at pick up time signal children that preschool is something unpleasant that requires a reward at the end of the day.

During pick up time, parents will often find that their child, who was hesitant to come to preschool in the morning, is now determined not to leave. Having difficulty with transition is a natural phase for many children between 2 and 5 years of age. Although it is frustrating, please do not threaten a dawdling child with being left behind at preschool/child care. It sends the wrong message that spending time at preschool/childcare is a punishment, rather than a fun privilege.

Alternate Pick Up

In the event that an alternate person will be picking up your child, the following procedures must be fulfilled:

Parent/guardian must provide verbal authorization for the pickup, the person's name and time or pick up.

The person picking up must show proper identification to the provider's approval. In the event that the child is not released from care, parent/guardian will be considered late and is responsible for late fees accrued as outlined in the agreement and handbook.

Billed Holidays

The child care/preschool is closed during the holidays listed below. Families whose children are regularly scheduled for care on the same day of the week that a billed holiday occurs are responsible for including the holiday pay in their weekly tuition payment.

December 31st, New Year's Eve

January 1st, New Year's Day

Memorial Day

Fourth of July

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

Day after Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

Vacation Policy

Child: Vacation time is provided per contract year (Sept. 1st to Aug. 31st) without cost to parents for Two (2) weeks. In order to use your vacation time, three weeks written notice must be submitted, your set weekly fee is expected to hold your child's spot in the child care for any additional time. Vacation days cannot be carried over and cannot be used for Paid Holiday or Sick Days.

The Provider will not be open for business on the following Holidays

- Closed 1 week for New Years
- Closed 1 week at Christmas