



Parent Handbook

Welcome! This Parent Handbook will enlighten you with the mission, philosophy, and policies of Happy Feet Children's Center. It will give you a clear picture of what you and your children can expect while children are in our care.

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Philosophy and Mission Statement

Teachable moments are the cornerstone of our philosophy. Happy Feet provides Waldorf inspired classrooms that create a fun experience for your child by providing guided free-play and a creative curriculum that allows for growth in social skills, academics, and personal development in all domains. Children are offered enriching opportunities to explore and be adventurous; sparking investigation, creative thinking and problem solving. Our educators are dedicated to providing a safe environment while building trusting respectful relationships with all of the children at Happy Feet Children's Center.

Our vision here at Happy Feet is that we secure a safe, educational, and nurturing childcare environment for children now and years to come. We believe in positive social interaction by helping children to develop their verbal skills, so that they have the ability to express their feelings in appropriate ways. Independence is encouraged, guided free play has a purpose and children are praised. We recognize that the child is an individual as well as a member of a larger unit, his/her family. Strong parent/teacher relationships promote effective communication and participation. By engaging with families and incorporating diversity into our daily practice we hope to strengthen connections within the community allowing our center to further support children on their journey through growth.

Days and Hours of Operation

Regular business hours are 7:45am to 4:45pm, Monday through Friday. There is no tuition reduction for Holidays and Staff Development Days observed by Happy Feet Children's Center. There is no tuition reduction or reimbursement for absenteeism due to illness, vacation, emergency center closures or early closures.

The center is closed for the following holidays:

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King Jr Day

President's Day

Easter Holiday

Spring Break

Memorial Day

Juneteenth

Fourth of July

Labor Day

Veterans Day

Thanksgiving Break

Winter Break

Summer Break (1 week)

In-service Days- TBA: It is important for the staff to have time to renew CPR certifications, attend Professional Development classes, attend conferences and stay up to date with state mandated certifications. To accomplish this, we reserve three in-service days per year in which the center will be closed to children.

Staff Development Planning Days: On the last Friday of each month the Center is scheduled to be open for childcare Half-Day, from 7:45am- 12pm. The remaining time is reserved for Staff Development; this additional time will help ensure all staff have the opportunity to attend meetings, participate in training sessions, plan curriculum and stay informed about expectations and procedures necessary to provide quality care.

Enrollment

Enrollment at HFCC is from ages 3 months to 4 ½ years of age and children may only attend the center for up to a 9-hour block of time. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender or disability.

Monthly Payment: due the 1st day of each month. Late after the 2nd day.

Fees

A \$15 fee is charged for late tuition payment on the 3rd of the month. Special payment arrangements may be made in advance with the director.

A service fee of \$25 will be charged for any returned checks. Tuition fees are non-refundable. Tuition is expected for days your child may be absent due to illness, family emergencies, doctor visits, hospitalizations, vacations, or any other reason. Please note that tuition rates do not change in the event of a week including a holiday. After extensive research, we have found our policy to be consistent with other schools and child day care centers. Because our costs remain the same throughout the year, we rely on the specified tuition to be paid each week in order to meet our expenses. Consequently, as much as we might like to, we cannot make

allowance for any days missed in your regular attendance schedule.

Parents who are receiving services from Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo (CAPSLO) or a similar subsidy program must show proof of approval. You are responsible to directly pay HFCC your co-pay each month. Rate may vary according to the subsidy disbursement. If the subsidy billing lapses it is your responsibility to pay the full tuition amount until the subsidy program notifies us otherwise.

Two Week Discretionary Period

Adapting to a new environment, new caregiver and new schedule may take time for some children. Transition and separation depend upon their age, experience and temperament. HFCC will try to accommodate accordingly, however, it may be determined that HFCC cannot meet your child's needs. After a 2 week assessment if HFCC is not the right fit for your child, we will use our discretion to terminate the admission contract effective day 10 of attendance.

Withdrawal & Dismissal Policy

A two-week notice is required before withdrawing a child from HFCC. Account must be paid in full before withdrawing, including your child's tuition for that two-week period. Any account past due at time of disenrollment will be paid through our electronic withdrawal option.

The director at HFCC reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child at his/her discretion, or for the following possible reasons:

- Non-payment or excessive late payments of tuition and fees.
- Not observing the rules of the center as outlined in the parent agreement.
- Child has special needs that we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing.
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child.
- Expired or non-immunizations and/or physical.

Children picked up after their scheduled time will be charged a late pickup fee per child, for every fifteen minutes (or portion thereof) they are late, as follows: \$10.00 for the first occurrence; \$15.00 for the second occurrence; \$20.00 for the third occurrence, etc. After two late pickups, a conference is scheduled between the parents and the Director.

We ask that families also be mindful of the time it takes to leave the building at pick-up. Staff is scheduled until 4:45pm and the goal is for everyone to be out of

the building by that time.

Parents are requested to call or message the Center if they know they will be late picking up their child. Late fees will still be charged. If a parent or guardian has not called or picked up their child beyond thirty minutes of the closing time, CPS will be called.

Toilet Training

At Happy Feet Children's Center, we take great care to support children's health, wellbeing and development by promoting effective potty training at an appropriate time. Toilet training at our facility will be discussed once your child reaches the age of 24 months and is transitioned into the Preschool class. *Please be advised that children attending HFCC are expected to be toilet trained by the age of 3 in order to continue care.* Communication between the provider and family is promoted before, during and after potty training via the Brightwheel App , as well as, drop-off and pick-up times.

We recommend that when in training, your child be dressed in "user-friendly" clothing. Overalls, zippers, and snaps are difficult for small children to manage--especially in a hurry! While toilet training, parents are to provide lots of thick training underwear, plastic pants, socks, and outer clothing. We do not allow the use of "pull-ups" at HFCC. They seem to only delay the toilet training process, plus it requires extra time to change.

We ensure that we have suitable facilities to support all children that are toilet trained and toilet training. We offer small child toilets as well as potty training chairs so that the children have a choice on what they would prefer to use. We do believe that the children should sit with feet flat and firmly supported, knees above hips. Boys to be guided to sit down to wee. It should be noted that in the early stages of potty training that children can not differentiate between the need for a wee and the need for a poo. If they wee standing up they may hold onto the poo and can easily become constipated. Parents will be reminded of this when they start the toileting process. We hope that with staff support, and resources we can make this approach a smooth and positive process for your family.

Naps

Licensing regulations require that all children are provided with a quiet time to lie down and rest. We try to make naptime a relaxing and quiet time when children can listen to music and rest their bodies. Television, or other electronic visual media, will not be used to calm children at rest time. Children will be monitored at all times during times of rest.

Infants: Per CDSS Safe Sleep Policy, infants under 12 months of age must be placed to sleep on their back and may not sleep with a bottle, bolster, blanket, stuffed animal or lovey of any kind in their crib; sleep sacks are acceptable alternatives to blankets, however, swaddle sacks are not (sacks that enclose feet or limit access to arms).

Preschoolers: Parents are asked to provide a small blanket for their child. We request that parents launder their child's blanket over the weekend and return it on Monday. Those children who are at the stage where they no longer take a nap will rest quietly on their cots for at least 1 hour. This will ensure that they have taken some time to rest their bodies, as well as their minds.

Sleeping cots will be placed in the rooms to allow for movement around each cot, away from doorways, and not blocking emergency exits. Each child has their own cot that is labeled with their name. Sheets are provided by the HFCC, are only used by one child at a time, and are laundered weekly, or as needed.

Sleep regression

Some infants experience sleep regression. HFCC must provide a safe and quiet time for *all* children to sleep. Staff will do their best to soothe, rock and/or take your child for a walk to prevent interrupting others from sleeping. If staff are not able to console your child, the parent may be asked to pick up their child during the scheduled 11:45am-2:00pm naptime. We understand that pick up may be an inconvenience but all children at HFCC must have an opportunity to rest. Please remember sleep regression is only temporary and last a few weeks.

During sleep regression it is helpful if: 1)Parents align nap time with their child's daily schedule at HFCC. 2)Parents establish a consistent routine. Consistency is key to helping your child feel secure and ready for sleep. 3)Be patient and understanding. sleep regression is a normal part of development.

Diapers

Parents of children in diapers are responsible for providing diapers, ointment, and disposable wipes as needed.

Bottles and Blankets

You may send extra bottles (infant room), a small security blanket and/or a pacifier for your child. Staff will make every effort to keep track of these items but will not be held responsible if lost. When you are ready to wean your child, please communicate with your child's teacher so a consistent strategy between home and our center may be established.

Personal Belongings

Please label all items with your child's FIRST and LAST name, thank you.

Children are asked not to bring personal stuffed animals or toys into the center. Items may get lost or damaged. HFCC staff are not liable for lost or damaged items. We understand transitions may be difficult for some children, in that case the center will provide special stuffed animals that will remain at the center.

Fieldtrips

Parents will be asked to chaperone their child. If parents are unable to chaperone then the child is welcomed to stay at the center, depending on the staff to child ratio. Family involvement is encouraged. Transportation will not be available for any/all fieldtrip's.

Transportation

It is the policy HFCC that staff do not transport children. If a medical emergency arises, children will be transported by ambulance. The only person(s) allowed to transport children will be those noted on the child(ren)'s authorized pick-up list.

Meals

Parents may bring **breakfast** for their children provided the arrival time is before 8:00 a.m. Food must be simple and self-serving (e.g., yogurt, breakfast bar, dry cereal, fruit).

Parents are responsible for providing **formula or milk** for children up to 24 months of age.

Children will be given 2 snacks a day (A.M. and P.M.) Parents are responsible to provide a **healthy snack** once a month for a capacity of 48 children, which will be distributed evenly. (Suggestions will be provided).

Parents are asked to provide a **healthy cold lunch** daily. Infant lunches will be kept in the center's refrigerator, while Preschool lunches will require a cold pack to be placed in their lunch pack. Please provide precut /safe portions to prevent choking. Parents need to send lunch with their child each day. Lunches sent from home should be self-serving or easy to serve and clearly labeled. Please refrain from sending candy, sweet treats, and drinks or chips to the center with your child for any reason.

Illness

In order to help ensure a healthy environment for all of the children and staff, we ask parents to please keep your child at home when ill. When a child is absent due to illness, please notify the center as early as possible. In the event a child contracts a communicable disease, please contact the center immediately so that we may alert other parents. A doctor's note will be required before child can return back to the center. This is strictly enforced!

Daily Visual Health Checks will be administered by the staff upon drop off and **Daily Online Health Screen** will be submitted by the parent upon checking in their child. If there is cause for concern that your child is unwell, your child will not be permitted to attend child care that day. Our daily health screening process is mandatory and exceptions will not be made if your child is ill.

Upon arrival & throughout the day all staff will observe:

- Mood and behavior (crying, withdrawal, unusual fatigue)
- Physical health (temperature, cough, breathing issues, rash)
- Appearance (paleness, eye redness, injuries)
- Responses from the child (pain, nausea, or discomfort they describe)

In the event that your child displays any signs of the above after drop off you will be called to pick up your child in a timely manner (within 20 minutes). *If sent home due to illness the child must remain home the following day to recover.* **In some instances of illness a doctor's note will be required in order to return to class.

Some of the common conditions for which a child will be sent home are as follows:

1. Temperature - A child will be sent home if he/she has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher. The child must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) before returning to the center. His or her activity level and appetite should be back to normal as well. In cases of highly contagious illness associated with fever (such as the flu), the return to center timeframe may be extended to ensure the health and wellness of the childcare center community.
2. Common Cold- A child will be sent home if they are displaying signs of the cold virus. Child must be free of excessive coughing, in order to reduce the spread of germs. Child must be free of yellow and/or green nasal discharge, "Boogies", in order to reduce the spread of germs. Signs of congestion, nasal or respiratory, is a sign of illness, thus child must be free of congestion.
3. Diarrhea - A child who has more than two instances of diarrhea (watery stools) will be sent home. Diarrhea is usually caused by viral infections however bacteria and parasites (Giardia) may be the cause. If your child has an allergy or condition that regularly causes diarrhea, please alert the staff to this during orientation. The child must be diarrhea-free for at least 24 hours before returning to the center. In cases of highly contagious stomach and intestinal illness (such as Norovirus), the return to center timeframe may be extended to ensure the health and wellness of the childcare center community.
4. Vomiting - A child who is vomiting will be sent home and should remain home until vomiting has stopped. Most vomiting is caused by infection. Stomach viruses are highly contagious and can spread through the center very rapidly. The child must not have vomited for at least 24 hours before returning to the center. In cases of highly contagious stomach and intestinal illness (such as Norovirus), the return to center timeframe may be extended to ensure the health and wellness of the childcare center community.
5. Impetigo - This skin infection is characterized by crusted sores, which may appear anywhere but usually first in the facial area. When prescribed by a physician, children with this condition must have taken the prescribed antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to the Center and all lesions should be dry before returning to the Center.
6. Conjunctivitis - This is a contagious infection of the eye characterized by redness and tearing, a yellow discharge from eyes, or eyelashes stuck together. When prescribed by a physician, children with this condition must have taken the prescribed antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to the Center, and all

discharge must be gone.

7. Strep Throat - Is characterized by swollen neck glands and a temperature combined with a sore throat. When prescribed by a physician, children with this condition must have taken the prescribed antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to the Center.

8. Scarlet Fever - Is a strep throat with a rash, which is red and has a sandpaper feeling. Your physician should be consulted as to when your child should return to the center.

9. Chicken Pox - Children can attend the Center after exposure or during the incubation period (11-20 days after contact.) Your physician is the best person to consult if there is any doubt concerning your child's contagiousness during this illness. Please notify the Center if you suspect that your child has been exposed to chickenpox so that we may notify the other parents.

10. Ear Infections (Otitis Media) - Ear infections are extremely common. When prescribed by a physician, children with this condition must have taken the prescribed antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to the Center.

11. Respiratory Infections - Are very common and usually are caused by viruses. It is advised that your child remain at home and if fever is associated with the infection, must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) before returning to the center.

12. Head Lice - Is characterized by very itchy scalp and nits (white eggs) that resemble dandruff but can't be easily removed from the hair. Children may return to the Center after they have had one head lice treatment.

13. Scabies - Is a very itchy rash between the fingers, on wrists, under arms, at the belt line and in infants on the head, neck, palms and soles. The rash is caused by a mite. The child may return to the center after one treatment.

14. Hand-foot-mouth disease - Is caused by a viral infection. It is characterized by small ulcers in the mouth, blisters on hands and feet and sometimes near the genitalia and on the buttocks. The child is contagious until the fever is gone (typically 3-4 days) and must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) before returning to the center.

15. Rash: A child should be free of any skin rash, including a severe "Diaper rash", with open sores involving discomfort, pain, puss and bleeding. In the case, the child is in severe discomfort they will be sent home, and will not be permitted to return until the sores have dissipated.

Medication Policy

The child's physician must complete a medical exam before any child is admitted to HFCC and annually thereafter. All immunizations must be up to date, as required by California Code of Regulations Title 17 Section 6000. Please submit your physician's documentation of immunization updates as they occur. HFCC will not be responsible for administering medication.

NO MEDICATION OF ANY KIND SHOULD EVER BE PUT IN A CHILD'S BOTTLE, CUP OR LEFT IN A CHILD'S BAG OR CUBBY.

Medical and Dental Emergency

All staff are required to have current Red Cross certified First Aid and CPR.

When a child is hurt while in attendance at HFCC an Accident Report is generated. Parents are immediately notified and a copy with signature will be saved on file and sent home with the child. If a child is seriously hurt all efforts will be made to contact parents and emergency services if needed. All accidents are recorded in a written report that is kept in the child's file. All serious injuries that require medical attention are reported to our licensing agency. If a parent contacts their physician regarding an incident that happened at the center, please inform the Center Director at your child's site so that a report can be made to the proper agencies. When the child is cleared to return to care, please bring a copy of any documentation or clearance from the doctor. These are needed for the child's return to the center.

Arrivals and Departures

Parents are expected to accompany their child into the center. The teachers are glad to assist you and your child at your drop-off time. Teachers, however, will not assume direct responsibility for your child until you are ready to walk out of the building. It is important for the teacher to keep a watchful eye on all the children in his or her care. It is normal for some children to experience separation anxiety.

A few Goodbye Strategies for families:

- Create a goodbye ritual to separate with love. For example: you might say, "Momma loves you, here are two quick kisses and I'll give you two more when I pick you up after work".
- Leave without making a big deal, trusting that the educators know how to support your child's big emotions.
- Never leave without saying goodbye. Sneaking away only heightens a child's worry that they cannot trust you or trust in your return. (NAEYC) Instead of goodbye, you might say, "I'll see you later", or "I'll see you after nap".

When picking up your child, notify a teacher, the child must be checked out before exiting the center. The Communication Board in each classroom should provide you with the general activities of your child's day. Only those people authorized in writing by the parent or guardian may pick up a child from the center. The center must be notified in advance if someone other than a parent will be picking up the child, and this person will be asked to present identification. Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone without prior written permission.

Behavior Management Policy

Our policy concerning behavior management is based on the individual need of the child, the ability of each child to understand what he/she is doing and the consequences of their actions. A child is never made to feel that the outcome of an act will result in physical or verbal abuse. Children are not told to "sit out" and "time out" is not used. Positive reinforcement is always encouraged, and children are told what they are doing well. It is the responsibility of the teacher in charge to ascertain what has taken place as clearly as possible. If an altercation between children has occurred, each child is spoken to with reason and with respect. Each child is then given the responsibility of approaching the other child in a friendly manner, with adult supervision, in order for the children to participate in the resolution of the misunderstanding. This is done in direct relation to the verbal ability of the child but can be accomplished even when the child is not yet talking. When inappropriate behavior occurs with the adult being the recipient, the child will be approached either with a reasonable verbal response or with the technique of redirection. Removal from an activity for a short period of time is used only if it has been ascertained that other responses have failed or if a child is at risk. If a positive base is established in an atmosphere of respect and understanding, inappropriate or negative behavior then becomes the exception. Staff members assist one another in creating a positive, relaxed atmosphere.

THE FOLLOWING ARE PROHIBITED:

- Corporal punishment, including spanking;
- Verbal or physical abuse, humiliation, neglect, or abusive treatment;
- Speaking to a child in a manner or tone that is disrespectful, sarcastic, demeaning or threatening;
- Withholding food, drink or sleep;
- Force feeding children; Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or forcing the child to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting.

GROUND FOR DISMISSAL:

When destructive or hurtful behavior by the child to themselves, staff or other children continue after 3 conferences with center director.

Biting

Unfortunately, biting is not uncommon for toddlers. Some children and many toddlers communicate through this behavior. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to staff. We have a biting policy in place that has been developed with both of these ideas in mind. As a childcare provider, we understand that biting, unfortunately, does occur. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, state regulations require that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with either parent. The child may be terminated from the program if Biting behavior is an issue.

Photographs

No outside agency will be allowed to photograph the children without parental consent. The staff reserves the right to photograph the children for informative purposes without specific parental consent. Often parents will take pictures or videotaping of the children during a special event, (i.e. birthdays, graduation, etc.). Please inform the Center Site Director if you do not want your child to be photographed in these instances.

Emergency Contingency Plans Evacuation Procedures

- 1) Staff will remove the children for whom they are responsible from the building. Floor plans indicating the evacuation route are posted by the doorway in each room. Sign in/out sheets will be taken. Infants are placed in cribs with the sturdy, large evacuation casters and wheeled out of the building.
- 2) Children will be transported to the evacuation site: Lindamood-Bell Learning Building located at 672 Clarion Ct (the building is located adjacent to HFCC parking lot)
- 3) Center Site Director/Person in Charge checks all rooms including bathrooms for stragglers or sleeping children, taking sign in/out sheets that may be left behind and the office red Emergency Binder for phone numbers.
- 4) At the evacuation site, attendance of children and staff is taken.
- 5) A final decision to evacuate the area and/or to re-enter the building will be the responsibility of the San Luis Obispo Fire Dept.

- 6) Parents will be contacted if circumstances warrant.
- 7) Evacuation drills are conducted monthly, so staff are well equipped to deal with emergencies and children are aware of the procedure.

Natural Disasters – Hurricane, Tornado, Flood, Blizzard, Earthquake

- 1) If a natural disaster is forecasted in advance, the Center will close, open late, or close early based on the recommendations of the Governor, i.e. a State of Emergency.
- 2) If, during the day, the potential of a natural disaster was predicted with limited notice, the Center Site Director/person in charge would contact security regarding the best place to keep the children and staff safe. Parents will be notified of immediate pickups times.

Licensing

The Child Development Center is licensed by the CDSS, California Department of Social Services and receives periodic inspections by the community care licensing program. Parents may request to view a copy of the minimum standards and the most recent licensing inspection report at any time.

Policy is subject to change at any time.

CENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

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