



Charger Child Care, Inc.

Parent Handbook

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Contact Information

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Mission Statement

Charger Child Care is committed to providing support to families and children in the community. We provide engaging educational experiences for infants through school age children that meet their individual emotional, physical, social and intellectual needs.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to provide learning experiences in a loving environment to the future generations.

Our Educational Approach

We provide a variety of options for learning, not only based on the age of the child, but also his or her learning style, maturity and developmental stage.

To achieve this we:

- Maintain a warm, nurturing environment in which each child is recognized and supported by loving, caring staff.
- Provide a challenging and individualized curriculum that encourages the child's creativity and love of learning.

- Prepare a variety of experiences, including field trips, computers, foreign language and special programs.
- Provide an open door policy in order to include our families in the educational process.
- Establish a safe and supportive learning environment, which accepts and respects diversity.
- Promote character building, problem solving skills, manners and social competency.
- Foster each child's feelings of self esteem and self worth.

The goals of Charger Child Care's preschool and child care program begin with the desire to provide a safe, educationally and socially enriching environment in which children learn to be self-confident away from home. Our programs seek to stimulate the child's curiosity, and encourage well-rounded growth for all children based on their individual levels of development. Children learn to relate well to their peers, and to trust and respond to a variety of adults. They are helped to understand and respect their own and other children's cultural traditions.

Program activities are designed to meet the needs of diverse ages and developmental levels. Our curriculum is developed from observation of the children's interests, and we build on those encounters beyond the classroom. All children are encouraged to participate in activities to develop their whole body coordination, hand-eye coordination, expressive language and listening skills. Art experiences involve a variety of materials. Music is presented with games, instruments and a growing repertoire of songs.

Efforts are directed towards nurturing creativity and self-esteem through such activities as block building, clay modeling, sand and water play, dramatic play, cooking, experimentation, and arts and crafts. Moreover, through these "hands on" activities, children are introduced to concepts in math, reading and language.

The organization of the classrooms as well as time for the children to choose their activities allows freedom to explore areas of interest and help to develop the children's own independence. The children have many opportunities to spend time in small groups and they are encouraged to solve problems in their own relationships and interactions; of course, the staff is always there to assist the children find solutions if needed.

Enrollment and Withdrawal

Charger Child Care offers enrollment to children 6 weeks to 12 years of age, we do not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion or physical or mental disability. Your child's personal information is kept confidential.

During the enrollment process, each family is presented with an enrollment packet which includes the following:

- Parent handbook
- Enrollment application/contract agreement
- Medical form (must be returned within 30 days or care may be denied)
- Immunization record (shots are required to attend Charger Child Care)
- TB test results
- Lead Screen results
- Parent consent form

- DCFS License Summary booklet
- Child's original birth certificate (parents must provide this)
- Emergency release form

Withdrawal from our program requires a two week written notice. If not submitted, you will be billed for two weeks of child care.

Registration

A non-refundable registration fee is collected when a start date is agreed upon by the director and the parent/guardian. If the child does not attend on that date, the registration fee expires and you forfeit your child's spot in the classroom. If you would like to re-register your child, you will have to pay the fee again.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition payments are **due one week in advance**. Checks may be made payable to Charger Child Care, Inc and placed in the black deposit boxes near the entry doors.

Payments received during the week of care are considered late, and a late fee of \$25 will be charged to your account.

Child care will be denied if tuition is more than two weeks overdue, unless you have made prior arrangements with the director.

You are responsible for all charges incurred from returned checks. A fee will be added to the account for this inconvenience. If this happens more than two times, cash or a Bank check is required for the tuition payment.

Occasionally your child will have special projects or visitors that incur additional expenses. We will share the expenses evenly with all that will be attending,

Charger Child Care's tuition and fees are evaluated each year. A tuition increase covers staff raises and other rising costs. A letter will be sent home a month in advance to notify you of up coming changes.

A discount is offered for full time families with two or more children enrolled at Charger Child Care.

The director and you will agree upon a set schedule, you are charged the weekly tuition for those scheduled days whether your child is in attendance or not. If you would like to add a day please get prior director approval and your account will be billed accordingly.

Rates

Registration: \$50 one time fee

Returned check: \$30 fee per incidence

Fee for late tuition payment: \$25

Discount for full time families with multiple children in the program: 5% off total weekly tuition per family.

Daily Rates (part time families)

Infant	\$45
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Toddler	\$40
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Preschool	\$37
School Age, before school	\$10
School Age, after school	\$10
School Age, after school on an early out day	\$20
School Age, no school days or drop in care	\$30
School Age, Summer care	\$30

Weekly Rates (full time families)

Infant	\$173
Toddler	\$163
Preschool	\$153
School Age, before and after school	\$80
School Age, Summer	\$135

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) children ages are described as follows:

Infants	6 weeks to 14 months
Toddlers	15 months to 23 months
Preschool	2 years to 5 years (until they attend Kindergarten)
School Age	5 years to 12 years

Hours of Operation

Charger Child Care is a full year program.
We are open 6:30 am. ~ 6:00 pm. Monday ~ Friday

Please call the center if your child will be coming in after 9:00 am or will not be attending for the day.

Families that pick-up their child after 6:00 pm. will be charged a late fee of \$20.00 for every ten minutes they are late. This is payable directly to the closing staff member within 24 hours. You will be asked to sign a form stating the time you entered the building.

If a child is not picked up by closing . . .

- The closing staff member will call the parent or guardian's work, cell and home phone numbers.
- If we are unable to reach the parent or guardian we will begin calling people from the emergency pick up list.

- If no one can be reached the director will be notified.
- One hour after closing the director will call the Department of Children and Family Services at 794-3500 to report an abandoned child.

Entering the Building

If you are dropping off or picking up a preschool child please use the door on the lower level. If you are dropping off or picking up an infant, toddler or school age child please enter through the upper level doors.

If you have children on both levels, please use the outside stairs under the awning.

Scheduled Closings

Below is a list of scheduled closings. **These are normally charged days.**

- New Years Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day *
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve Day *
- Christmas Day
- New Years Eve Day*

*In the event that one of these holidays falls on a weekend, we will observe the holiday on the Friday preceding or

Monday following the actual holiday, at the Director's discretion.

Unscheduled Closings

We will post unscheduled closings (e.g. due to inclement weather) on the Charger Child Care Facebook page first, then on KWQC TV6, WQAD TV 8 and WHBF TV 4. These unscheduled closing are normally charged days.

Family Vacations

Every child enrolled full-time may take up to two weeks vacation per calendar year at half tuition. The vacation time must be taken one full week at a time, and your child must not be in attendance during the week. You must notify the Director in writing at least one week in advance. It is not the responsibility of the Director or staff to remind clients of this benefit.

Illness

The Health Department prohibits the admittance of any child into a child care center that exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- a fever (100°f or higher)
- diarrhea; 2 or more watery stools or decreased form of stool.
- vomiting
- discharge from eyes or ears
- an unexplained rash, or lice
- Also a child will not be allowed admittance if they have or are showing signs of any communicable

disease such as chicken pox, Strep., measles, mumps, pink eye, influenza, etc.

Your child may return to the center when the incubation and/or contagious period has passed and your child has been **symptom free for 24 hours (without the aid of fever/symptom reducing medication).**

If your child requires medication during the day you will need to fill out a medication form and hand it and the medication to a staff member. Refrigerated medication is kept in the staff refrigerator downstairs or in the refrigerator in the child's classroom upstairs.

We go outside daily, weather permitting (not lower than 25 degrees with windchill, or not higher than 90 degrees with heat index). If you feel your child is not well enough to participate in this daily experience they may need to remain at home.

During the cold-winter months please **LABEL** your child's snow-pants, coat, mittens, scarf, hat and boots. We prefer mittens over gloves.

During warm-summer months please bring a towel, swim suit, sunscreen and small water bottle and **LABEL** everything.

First Aide Plan for Minor Injury

If the skin is broken, the wound is washed with soap and water and a bandage is applied if needed. Ice may be applied if needed. An Accident Report is filled out, which the parent/guardian must sign.

If a child falls, a staff member evaluates the child for injuries and treats the child as taught in the First Aid class.

An Accident Report is filled out, which the parent/guardian must sign.

Emergency Plan for Serious Injury

The staff observes the accident scene. The child is then checked for vital signs and injuries. CPR or rescue breathing is administered if needed while someone else calls 911. Emergency care for the child is given until the emergency crew arrives. The parent is then notified.

Emergency Plan for Field Trips

Each child has emergency care information on file. This information includes phone numbers, allergies, special medical needs, etc. The file is taken along every time the child leaves the center for walks, field trips, etc.

When a child needs emergency care while away from the center the staff takes the following steps:

- Assess the scene.
- Assess child for proper first aid treatment.
- Applies first aid or other emergency care as needed.
- If needed staff member calls 911 and then the director.
- The director calls the parent or guardian.
- When the emergency crew arrives and reports on the situation, the Director reports back to the parents.

Insurance

Charger Child Care, Inc. has an insurance policy that meets DCFS guidelines.

Curriculum

We have a **theme-based eclectic curriculum**. Our lessons cover many subjects and topics throughout our 52 weeks. The subjects that we cover in our weekly lesson plans are math, science, sensory, language, arts, large motor, manipulative, and dramatic play.

Our teachers and directors decide in December which themes will be used for the up coming year based on teaching experience, children's interests, and holidays as we embrace the cultures of our client base.

Developmental screening is available to Charger Child Care families through CR Hanna, Orion's local elementary school. They use the BRIGANCE Early Childhood Screens. Screenings are in late February and early August of each year. A note from CR Hanna will be sent home to clients for screening dates.

Charger Child Care provides developmental evaluations of your child's classroom experience twice a year. Conferences are held in November for everyone. Conferences in May are held at the discretion of the parent or teacher.

Family Events

During our events your family is invited to share in the fun. This means siblings and Grandparents too! In the Spring we host an Easter Egg hunt. Watching the children hunt for the candy filled eggs will put a smile on your face. We go on many field trips throughout the year (Spring through

October) that we could not take without the help of our parents/grandparents. There will be sign up sheets for each trip. To show our community spirit, we participate in the local parades. In the fall we host a family picnic at a local park, where everyone brings a dish to share and you have time to interact with our other families and do a craft with your child and family. In November we invite you and your family to our reading night, where everyone comes dressed in Pjs and snuggle with your child while you listen to our guest reader. December is a time to think about others. We sponsor a family that is in need of some extra help. The goal is to make their season a little easier.

Our fundraisers are a family event as well. We start the year off with Valentines Day with hand-dipped chocolate covered strawberries. But, our most popular is our hand picked, freshly caramel dipped and coated caramel apples that we sell in the fall. There are ten varieties to choose from. They are an easy sell, family and friends request that we do these each year. In November we get ready for our wreath sell. The beautiful, fresh, 20" wreath with pine cones and a big red bow sell quickly too.

100% of the funds made from our fundraisers go towards a educational tools or a safety concern for the children enrolled. We keep the monies in a sperate account to be sure that it only gets spent on items for the children. And of course all of the events and fundraisers are voluntary. We would never require a family to participate in an event or function, but of course our hope is that you are able to join in all the fun.

Transitions

Inviting new friends to play

When a parent calls to inquire about our program and school, we invite them to tour our facility. During that time the Director walks them around to each classroom and describes the day's events, the preschool and childcare

portions of the day, lunches, and many other things. The tour comes to an end in the office where additional parent questions are answered. If the parent decides to enroll the child at that time then a registration fee is paid and the Director explains each document of the child's file with the client. At this time two visit dates (optional but suggested) and a start date are agreed upon. This helps the child and parents with a smooth transition into our program and school.

Moving up to a new classroom

Before a child moves to a new classroom, the teachers, Director and parents determine if the child will be successful joining the new group of friends. If that is the case then the teachers in both classrooms discuss days that the child will visit. Visits start out slow, an hour here and there, then a morning and then a full day. When the child shows signs that they are comfortable in the new classroom then we make the move official by letting the parents know the date the child will advance to their new classroom.

Visitors at our school

The visitors that come to our school come with a purpose. They read stories to the children, perform a community service (helping lay mulch on our playground, weeding our gardens, mowing our yard, mending our building, computers, etc.). Others are hired to perform an educational task for the children or staff; and of course, we have new faces when we give tours to new families. The visitors are always accompanied by a staff member and never left alone with any child.

Kindergarten transition

The transition into Kindergarten can be a rough experience, but with our guidance and the help of our local

elementary school it becomes fun and exciting. We prepare our Pre-K students with all of the key subjects and social skills that they will use in public school. We notify the parents of the pre-registration, Kindergarten Round Up and regular registration dates. There may be times that the parent has second thoughts about whether or not to send their child to Kindergarten. We provide accurate and helpful tools to help them make the right decision.

In May Charger Child Care holds a Pre-K graduation ceremony for those that will be entering Kindergarten. We invite our families and extended families to this event to celebrate.

Communications

DCFS requires each child to be signed in and out each day with the time and your initials.

Important: Please notify us if someone different is picking up your child. That person must show a photo I.D. before your child is released from our care.

A **weekly lesson plan** is posted on each classroom's Parent Bulletin Board. The plan is also sent home so you and your child know what to look forward to during the week. We encourage you to contribute to our themes.

Infants and Toddlers have daily sheets, filled out by their caregiver, which are sent home with the parent/guardian at the end of each day. These sheets document the day's events, including eating, napping and diaper changes.

Electronics is such a big part of today's families that we sometimes forget to let kids be kids. We believe that electronics should not be in a child care setting. There are so many things to do and explore that we shouldn't spend

our time in front of a screen unless it is to create a project. With that being said, we do not allow children to bring any electronics to come to school.

Please visit Charger Child Care Facebook site and our website, www.ChargerChildCare.com, for announcements, lunch menu, daily schedule, an electronic version of the Parent Handbook, and lots of photos of our projects and events.

We encourage you to talk to your child's teacher and staff. If you need to contact our staff during the day please call us at 309-526-5777 or you may email your child's teacher. (teachers first name @chargerchildcare.com, e.g. missdarci@chargerchildcare.com)

Some mornings can be rough and we do our best to make everyone happy, but there are days when the parent leaves and the child may be sad. We encourage you to call us to get an update on your child.

Security

Our doors will remain unlocked from 6:30am – 9:00am and 3:00pm – 6:00pm for drop off and pick up. The doors are locked during the day from 9:00am – 3:00pm.

Guidance/Discipline

The health and safety of every child at Charger Child Care is our primary concern at all times. We encourage the children to be kind and considerate to everyone. We will not let them hurt themselves, others or the environment around them.

If a child breaks these rules our teachers will clearly define limits and consistently maintain them. They will help the

child use words or actions necessary to connect with his/her peers. We then redirect the child toward other areas of their interest. We use positive methods and words to change undesirable behavior that will not lead to loss of self-respect. No child will be shamed or labeled. We may have to remove the child from the group to help the child regain control. This will not exceed one minute per year of age.

If a child repeatedly violates these rules the following actions may be necessary. The child and director will talk about the problem and try to reach the best solution. You will receive notice or a personal phone call from the teacher or director and a conference will be set. The purpose of the conference is to find the best solution for everyone. If unacceptable behavior continues the child may be sent home and another meeting set up to decide if Charger Child Care is the best placement for the child. Bringing any life threatening weapons to Charger Child Care is cause for immediate dismissal.

Biting Policy

A child biting another child is one of the most common and most difficult behaviors in childcare. It can occur without warning, is difficult to defend against, and provokes strong emotional responses in the biter, the victim, the parents, and the caregivers involved.

For many toddlers, the biting stage is often a passing problem. Toddlers try it out as a way to get what they want from another toddler. They are in the process of learning what is socially acceptable and what is not. They discover that biting is a sure-fire way to cause the other child to drop what they are holding so the biter can pick it up. However, they experience the disapproval of the adults nearby and eventually learn other ways of gaining possession of objects or expressing difficult feelings.

For other children, biting is a persistent and chronic problem. They may bite for a variety of reasons: teething, frustration, boredom, inadequate language skills, stress or change in the environment, feeling threatened, or to feel a sense of power.

No matter what the cause, biting in a group situation causes strong feelings with all involved. It does help, however, to be aware of the potential problem before it happens, and to form a plan of action if it does occur.

We have developed the following plan of action to be used if and when biting occurs in any of our rooms.

Before biting occurs:

1. Discuss the issue of biting with all parents at the time of enrollment.
2. Distribute written policy to all families and include the written policy in the enrollment packet.

When a child is bitten

For the biter:

- The biter is immediately removed with no emotion, using words such as “biting is not okay – it hurts.” Avoid any immediate response that reinforces the biting or calls attention to the biter. The caring attention is focused on the victim.
- The biter is not allowed to return to play and is talked to on a level that the child can understand. “I can see that you want that truck, but I can’t let you hurt him. We don’t put our teeth on people.” Or “That hurts Johnny when you bite him, he is sad.”
- For those who are teething or mouth may hurt give the child a clean, soft, moist cloth to chew or bite on for one minute.
- Write an accident report and notify the parents of the bite.

For the victim

- Separate the victim from the biter.
- Comfort the child.
- Administer first aid.
- Write an accident report and notify parents of the victim (in writing).

If biting continues:

- Room staff meet with the director on a routine basis for advise, support and strategy planning.
- Observe and chart every occurrence, including attempted bites, and indicate location, time, participants, behaviors, staff present, and circumstances, try to identify patterns of instances when biting occurs.
- Let parents know that there is a problem and the procedures that will be followed to deal with it.
- Ask the parents if there have been changes at home and/or are they experiencing biting at home.
- “Shadow” children who indicate a tendency to bite:
 - Head off biting situations before they occur.
 - Teach non-biting responses to situations and reinforce appropriate behavior. “No” or “Don’t hurt me!”
 - Adapt the program to better fit the individual child’s needs.
- Work together as partners with the parents biting children and frequent victims to keep all informed and develop a joint strategy for change.
- Hold a conference with the parents of the biting child to develop a written plan of action. Schedule follow-up meetings or telephone conversations as needed.
- Consider early transition of a child “stuck” in a biting behavior pattern for a change of environment, if developmentally appropriate.
- Prepare the parents of the biting child for the possibility that the child may have to be removed

from the Center and help them to make contingency plans.

- If it is deemed in the best interest of the child, center, and other children, termination of the child from Center enrollment for the duration of the biting stage may occur. Written warning will be given to the parents before this action will be taken.

Personal Belongings

Our infant/toddler friends have cubbies and coat hooks in the hallway to hang their belongs.

Our preschool friends have cubbies and coat hooks in their rooms. Please keep in mind our space is small and empty your child's cubbie each night.

School age children have coat hooks in the classroom to hang their jackets and backpacks.

Each child is **required** to be appropriately dressed for all weather conditions throughout the year. **We go outside everyday, weather permitting (not lower than 25 degrees with windchill, or not higher than 90 degrees with heat index).**

- Please write your child's name on ALL of their personal belongings (e.g. coats, extra clothing, blankets and toys, etc.).
- Toys are allowed during the classroom's scheduled Show and Share day, otherwise please keep toys at home.
- If your child sleeps with a small soft toy then we prefer that they keep it on their cot or crib. We understand that they may need it at home for bedtime, if so, the toy be kept in their cubbie.

Items to bring to school: **Please label everything**

Infants and Toddlers:

- Bottles with rings, nipples and caps
- Formula or breast milk
- Baby food, purchased or homemade (frozen cubes in labeled bags)
- Package of diapers
- Pack of wipes
- Ointments or powders
- Pacifiers
- Small blanket for crib
- 2 or 3 extra sets of clothes

Ages 2-5:

- Nap Time blanket
- Small pillow
- Standard size pillow case
- Extra set of clothes
- Water bottle (summer and early fall)
- Sun Screen (summer and early fall)

School Age:

- Water bottle (summer and early fall)
- Sun Screen (summer and early fall)

Infant and Toddler Care Diapering

You will need to provide diapers, wipes, ointments and powders for your child. It is helpful to bring a large supply to store here and the caregiver will let you know when your child is running low. Diapers are checked/changed every 2 hours unless it is needed earlier.

If your child runs out of diapers. . .

The first day we borrow from a friend. When you bring in more diapers we will re-supply the friend.

The second day we will use diapers from Charger Child Care and you will be charged a diaper fee until you bring in more diapers.

Potty Training

- Children that are in the potty training stage will need to have at least three full sets of clothes at the center and an extra pair of shoes.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for diapers/Pull-Ups and wipes, although we prefer underwear/panties.
- Soiled panties and underwear are bagged and sent home.
- The child will be encouraged to sit on the potty approximately every 30 minutes throughout the day.
- We understand that potty training can be a stressful time in the child's life as well as their family's. We ask for your support and patience in this endeavor. We have found that once we begin this process there is no turning back to diapers. We are here for you and your child.

Food

We are PROUD to say that our meals are cooked from scratch right here! Our chef serves breakfast, lunch and two snacks. No outside foods are allowed unless you have an infant or a child with a special dietary needs.

Breakfast is for children who have not eaten at home and it is served from 6:45 to 7:30 am (please let a teacher know if they breakfast).

Morning snack is at 9:00 am, and afternoon snack is at 3:00 pm. Lunch is served at 11:30 am For the preschool friends. Our Infants and Toddlers are served lunch at 11:00am.

Look for our monthly lunch/snack menu posted on the Parent Bulletin Boards near the classrooms and on our website. Children are encouraged to use table manners and silverware while eating with our teachers. Our lunches are served family style.

As part of our licensing regulations **no food is allowed to be brought into the building, unless it is for a party and for the entire class.** The party food has to be in a factory or store sealed container. Also, please do not send candy or gum with your child. We prefer nutritious snacks, instead of the traditional cupcakes.

Infant bottles, baby food and pacifiers must be supplied by you. Charger Child Care will provide baby cereal, teething biscuits and snacks if approved by the parent/guardian.

Toddlers are allowed to have bottles, but will be encouraged to drink from a sippy cup (provided by Charger Child Care) and they will be seated while drinking. Once a child is eating table food you no longer have to bring infant food. Charger Child Care provides nutritious meals each

day, menus are posted on our website and classroom bulletin boards. Pacifiers are allowed at nap time for our Toddler friends.

Excursions

On occasion we will take the children on walking trips around the neighborhood. In the summer our preschool friends walk to the park and the library. The teachers take their cell phones, first aid kits and the classroom emergency sheets with them.

Field Trips

All field trips are under the supervision of staff members and parent volunteers. All health and safety precautions are taken, which includes bringing a First Aid kits, classroom emergency sheets, and cell phones.

Permission slips are sent home for the parents to sign and return. Please include the appropriate monies (if needed) with the slip.

We also ask for parent volunteers and drivers for the trip. When we leave for the field trip, we will post details of the trip on the front door.

Each child brings their own car seat and then it is placed into a parent volunteers vehicle and we caravan to our field trip destination. **For the safety of the children, please don't post field trip details online (Facebook) until after we return.**

Visitors

We have an open door policy. Please feel free to stop in and visit us anytime. All visitors at Charger Child Care are under staff supervision the entire time they are at our center. From time to time we invite special visitors to entertain and educate us. If there is a fee for a Visitor, it divided between the attendees.

Facebook

Facebook is a tool to learn information about our school and functions and also, it's a fun way to get to know other Charger Child Care families. We encourage our families to become friends on this social network. To ensure your child's safety please do not post upcoming events with dates, times and places. Please wait until the event is over to post details.

Please be considerate of other family's privacy, and do not use their children's names when posting.

NOTES: