

# **Valley Daycare LLC**

# **Parent Handbook**

**2024 EDITION**

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## Welcome Letter

What a new and exciting journey we are on together! We are thrilled to have you join our community, and we warmly greet the new students and their families. At Valley Daycare, we believe in fostering a nurturing and enriching environment where every child can thrive. Our dedicated team is committed to providing a safe and joyful space for your little ones to play, learn, and grow. Therefore, our Curriculum at Valley Daycare is based on our understanding of current developmentally appropriate practices.

Our daily rhythm involves experiences that actively engage children, apply rich teacher-supported play, include choices, and integrate different techniques, approaches, and adaptive strategies to help individual children reach their full potential. We use three basic concepts to determine our curriculum and classroom environment. Our understanding of child development and learning allows our teachers to know what children of a particular age group will typically be like, what they usually will and won't be capable of, and how they will learn best. This knowledge helps us decide about the classroom environment, materials, activities, teaching strategies, and interactions to best suit their capabilities. We also know that each child is unique, and we are eager to discover and support their talents, interests, and developmental milestones. At enrollment, you are provided with a survey about your student. These surveys help us understand your child's learning style, needs, and unique characteristics. Once they are in our classrooms, we know them better through observations and interactions. From there, we can adapt to and be responsive to the individual uniqueness of each child within the group - their life experiences, strengths, interests, and approaches to learning. Finally, we need to understand the specific social and cultural environment you and your child live in. You will also find questions directed at this topic in your enrollment survey. Understanding your families' values, expectations, and behaviors at home and within your community allows us to ensure that our classroom learning experiences are meaningful, relevant, and respectful to the participating children and their families.

Collectively, we work towards creating a classroom learning environment that aligns with your children's best interests and needs, ensuring their success. We value and welcome your questions and concerns. Communication is vital to a successful partnership, and we encourage an open dialogue between our staff and your family. We are here if you have questions or suggestions or want to share your child's special day at daycare. We look forward to building lasting connections with each of you and creating beautiful memories together. If you ever need assistance or have inquiries, please don't hesitate to reach out. Once again, welcome to the Valley Daycare family! We are honored to be a part of your child's early years.

## **Introduction**

We are delighted you chose our Center to meet your child's needs. You and your family are encouraged to visit our Center before the first day of enrollment to allow our teachers and your child to meet and become better acquainted. It will make separating on the first day a bit easier. The Parent Handbook has been written to describe our program, philosophy, policies, and all the practical details that make each day as happy and successful as possible. Please carefully read this handbook and keep it for future reference. The Valley Daycare staff would gladly address any of your questions or concerns. Once again, welcome!

## **Who We Are**

Valley Daycare opened its doors in 2020 as a newly constructed facility. The goal is to be a place that educates young children and is open to families and community members for events and services. Valley Daycare wants to be the hub of the community and a shining jewel on the crown of Bethel.

We could not do this without our families and community members who want to contribute their time, ideas, and efforts to help improve Valley Daycare for our children and abroad. Let us know if you have a skill, hobby, or profession to share with our children or community!

## **Mission Statement**

Valley Daycare's mission is to provide a healthy, happy, warm, and loving family environment to children six weeks to 5 years old. With our smaller size, we can give quality, individualized care to each child.

Every child's progress, growth, and development is essential to us. The environment at the Center promotes learning while having fun during the process. Through hands-on experiences, group activities, and individual play, our children develop the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical skills necessary for life and growth.

Parent comments and suggestions are encouraged as we adapt our program.

## **Goals**

The following are the primary goals for the children who are in our care:

Emotional:

- to become independent and learn to be in control of their emotions
- to be able to express and deal with the emotions they have
- to learn how others express and deal with emotions
- to develop empathy for others

Social:

- to be able to interact effectively with others, regardless of perceived differences
- to be able to respect others and the property of others
- to be able to function well in a group setting
- to be able to understand why they should cooperate with others
- to be able to develop meaningful friendships

Physical:

- to develop large and small motor skills
- to learn the importance of good nutrition and good hygiene
- to develop lifelong, healthy habits

Intellectual:

- to develop a lifetime love of learning
- to learn observation and discussion skills
- to build a love for reading
- to build upon natural curiosity
- to develop the foundation needed to advance in the primary grades.

Valley Daycare welcomes those of diverse faiths, ethnic origins, and races. While diversity may include different faiths, gender roles, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity, it is not limited to just these areas. We believe diversity also includes various physical, cognitive, and social abilities. We strive to create a developmentally appropriate classroom environment that reflects each child's unique skills and encompasses their home culture and experiences. We would be overjoyed to have families share their traditions, heritage, values, and experiences with us.

Please discuss volunteering in a classroom with your child's teacher.

One of the most important things we can do to teach our children about diversity is role modeling. That all people are treated with kindness and respect. While it is impossible to list everything we do to encourage diversity, listed below are some of the ways we incorporate diversity into our curriculum at Valley Daycare:

- We encourage families to share their home traditions with us.
- We encourage families and community members to visit with us throughout the year, not just on special occasions, to share traditions and customs with our classrooms.
- Our teachers incorporate props, materials, and discussions into the different learning environments that reflect diversity.
- We adhere strictly to our Bullying, Ethics, and Nondiscriminatory Policies. These can be found on our website. Please read and review these policies.

## Types of Care

Valley Daycare offers two sessions: a fall school year and a summer session. The daycare will be closed the last week of August for term transition.

Enrollment in these sessions is described as follows:

**Full Time:** Ensures a classroom spot for all five weekdays, runs for the school term, the summer term, or both.

**Part-Time:** Ensures a classroom spot for 2 or 3 scheduled weekdays. Subject to Prioritized Enrollment Policy, runs for the school term, the summer term, or both.

### - Priority Enrollment

Children will initially be enrolled in our daycare part-time if full-time spots are unavailable or if the family chooses part-time care. When a full-time spot becomes available, priority will be given to existing part-time students before offering the spot to new families. The family will be given a **\*\*one-week period\*\*** to decide whether to upgrade their child's enrollment to full-time. If the family decides to take the full-time spot, their child's schedule will be updated accordingly. The full-time enrollment will commence from the agreed-upon date. If the family chooses not to take the full-time spot, they will forfeit their part-time spot to accommodate the full-time student.

The part-time student will be unenrolled from the daycare on the date the new full-time student begins. All decisions and changes will be communicated in writing to ensure clarity and transparency.

**Call-In:** Special available day rate if open spots are available. Subject to Prioritized Enrollment Policy.

## **Programs**

Valley Daycare strives to meet the needs of our families. We are happy to offer the following standard and special programs:

### **Standard Programs**

**Continuity of Care Infant Classroom:** 6 Weeks to 3 Years Old Continuity of Care. Continuity-of-care classrooms allow children to stay with the same caregiver longer than the average Center. This helps them build stronger bonds with the grown-ups and peers around them, promoting confidence and a stronger feeling of security and decreasing stress.

**Continuity of Care Toddler Classroom:** 18 to 36 Months Toddler

The first three years are significant in a growing child's life. They are on the move! Exploring and learning from their surroundings and the people they share their time with. Everything in our spaces is designed for little explorers to learn and discover. We know Toddlers need safe spaces for quiet, active play and a safe emotional climate.

**Preschool Classroom:** 3 to 5 years old Preschool

Children learn their best through play and experience. We offer a hands-on learning environment that prepares your child for their educational careers and gives them real-life readiness. Our curriculum focuses on giving kids the tools they need to succeed in former school and beyond. Skills such as critical thinking, communication, phonic and numeric awareness, and the curiosity to ask "why?" paired with the confidence to find the answer.

Children break from technology and stimulation to explore the outdoors on our 15-acre property with hiking trails, gardening opportunities, fruit orchards, and a range of livestock. Not to mention the engaging play yard equipped with slides, a rock wall, and a lookout tower.

### **Specialty Programs:**

Valley Daycare reserves the right to pause or remove any special programs temporarily or permanently.

### **Holiday Package Infant - Preschool:**

Valley Daycare is happy to provide a unique package to parents needing to cover those normally closed minor holidays. Holiday packages include Yom Kippur, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Rosh Hashana, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, and Independence Day. Does not include Summer, Fall, Winter, Spring breaks, or Conference Days.

**Date Nights 5:30 pm – 9:30 pm:** Enjoy a night out while your kids play, dance, and snack away at Valley Daycare. **IMPORTANT INFORMATION:** Space is limited. Reserve your spot today! Children **not** currently enrolled in a program at Valley Day will need to complete the registration process. Date nights may sporadically occur on Fridays throughout the year.

**Saturday Care 9 am to 4 pm:** 6 weeks old to Kindergarten

Registration required. Space is limited. Saturday Care may be sporadically open on Saturdays throughout the year.

**Enrollment and Tuition**

Children between 6 weeks and five years old are eligible for enrollment at Valley Daycare. Children may attend the Center between 7:00 am and 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

Current tuition rates are on our website, <https://www.valleydaycare.org/tuition>, and are subject to change with adequate notice.

Documents to be completed and returned before enrollment are:

- Child Enrollment Form
- Photo Release Form
- Immunization Records
- Health Care Plan
- Emergency Contact List
- Tuition Contract

An initial, non-refundable registration fee of \$75 is due once the Director has assigned a start date.

An annual registration fee of \$75 will be charged at the beginning of the enrolled term. (Summer – July 1st, Fall and Year-round- September 1st)

Upon registration, two weeks of tuition will be collected. This includes the first week's tuition and the final week's hold. A minimum of two weeks' notice should be given for the child's departure.

Tuition for full-time childcare is based on one of the two following options:

- Monthly Payment-due the 1st day of each month. A \$15 late fee will be applied after the 10th day.
- Weekly payment due by 6 pm on Monday. A late fee of \$15 will be applied after 6 pm on Monday. In addition, a \$5 per day fee will accrue for each subsequent day the payment is late, up to a maximum of 5 days. At that time, you will be issued a care termination letter. Your final week's hold will be applied to cover the occurred debit, and you will be responsible for any difference.

To hold a spot during a break in continuous care (longer than six weeks), payment of half the normal tuition rate will be due. A payment arrangement for weekly, monthly, or total upfront payments can be made.

Tuition is expected for days your child may be absent due to illness, family emergencies, doctor visits, hospitalizations, vacations, or other reasons. Please note that tuition rates do not change in the event of a week, including a holiday. After extensive research, we found our policy consistent with other schools and child daycare centers. Because our overhead costs remain the same throughout the year, we rely on the specified tuition to be paid each week 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.

## Payment Options

- 
- Cash
- Check - \$2.00 check processing fee.
- BrightWheel
- Debit or credit cards **2.95%**
- ACH bank withdrawal **0.6%** (minimum of \$0.25 and maximum of \$2.00)

Childcare Subsidy. (Subsidy rates are determined on a case-by-case basis. Balance after Subsidy payments are the responsibility of the caregiver.)

**Subsidy policy:** Valley Daycare accepts subsidy childcare payments from third-party agencies with a signed subsidy agreement form, ensuring that any remaining balances will be settled upon program completion.

## Fees

A \$15 fee is charged for late tuition payments. Special payment arrangements may be made in advance with the Director: **\$5 per day** for each subsequent day up to a maximum of 5 days.

A \$10 Curriculum Service Fee is billed monthly to cover curriculum software costs.

A service fee of \$25 will be charged for any returned checks.

A two-week notice is required for any schedule change. The first schedule or payment change is free. Additional changes will require a \$25 Schedule Change Fee.

A late pickup fee of **\$1 per minute** will be charged for each minute a child remains at the daycare center beyond the designated closing time.

## What to Pack:

- Crib Sheet
- Blanket
- Small pillow/nap plush (if desired)
- Refillable water bottle
- Two extra outfits
- Diapers/pull-ups
- Wipes
- Lunch (Please do not pack a lunch that needs to be heated, as we enjoy picnicking as often as possible)
- Preferred diaper creams/powders/ointments

### Seasonal

- Bathing Suit (towels not needed)
- Water shoes
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray
- Snowsuit
- Inside shoes



## Student Dress Code

Because of the wide range of activities, it is recommended that children be dressed in washable, comfortable clothing. The Center will provide plastic aprons for Art Activities. However, due to the amount of time children will be outside and the nature of some activities, we advise parents not to dress their children in expensive or sentimental clothing. If a child needs to be in a particular outfit at the end of the day, you may send that outfit and a note to the teacher. We will accommodate your schedule.

Children must be in closed-toed shoes at all times. Please, no sandals, flip-flops, or house slippers. In the winter and spring, please bring a second pair of 'classroom shoes' so children do not have to wear their wet boots during the day. This is to keep the children comfortable and our classrooms clean.

Please dress your child in weather-appropriate attire. We encourage layers so that the child's attire can be adjusted as temperatures change during the day. We will spend time outdoors during all four seasons. Please ensure your child is equipped with hats, gloves, bathing suits, and water shoes when necessary. Please label all clothing with your child's name or initials.

Water activities, sand play, and occasional bathroom accidents necessitate an extra set of clothing at the Center at all times. All extra clothing should be marked with the child's name and placed in a labeled plastic bag. Clothing should include underwear, socks, pants, and shirt. If wet or dirty clothes are sent home, please return a clean extra set the following day.

Outfits, especially for children who are potty training or not fully independent in the restroom, should not have excessive buttons, ties, or snaps.

Children are welcome to wear hair accessories to daycare. However, please note that if a child removes their accessory, our staff will not redo complex hairstyles. Additionally, hair accessories that pose a choking hazard or are consistently removed by the child will not be allowed.

## Treasures and Possessions

Each child will need a blanket and crib sheet to use at naptime. Your child's name must be written on the blanket. The blankets are taken home each Friday to be washed and returned the following Monday. A small pillow or small stuffed toy is permissible and should also have the child's name visible.

Toys from home often create problems at school. We encourage you to keep personal belongings and toys at home unless preapproved by the classroom lead teacher.

If a transition item is deemed necessary and has been approved by your child's classroom lead teacher, we ask that it adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Please ensure that only **one** item is brought from home.
2. The item should not have any sharp edges or protruding parts that could pose a safety hazard to your child or others.
3. It should be made of appropriate material and safe for use within a childcare setting. Hard objects made from wood or metal can harm our students or others.
4. The item should be small enough to fit comfortably in your child's backpack or designated storage space and large enough that it does not pose a choking hazard.
5. The item should be labeled with your child's name
6. Ensure the concept of the toy is appropriate. **NO** technology, imitation weapons, or money.

In the case of transition items, we encourage the family to choose one object to use daily to form a comfortable routine.

Please understand that home items are not allowed during outside times due to the increased chance of being misplaced or damaged.

Valley Daycare is not responsible for lost or damaged home items brought to school.

**IMPORTANT:** There are five things we feel strongly must remain at home: toy weapons of any kind, gum, money, electronics, and candy.

### **SAVE MONEY**

### **REDUCE THE LOST AND FOUND**

### **LABEL YOUR CHILD'S BELONGINGS**

[www.oliverslabels.com/valleydaycare](http://www.oliverslabels.com/valleydaycare)

*20% of your purchase goes to our fundraising efforts*

### **Withdrawal & Dismissal Policy**

A minimum of two weeks' notice is required before withdrawing a child from our Center. Account must be paid in full before withdrawing—including your child's tuition for the one week.

The Director at Valley Daycare reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child at their 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.
- The child has special needs that we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns.
- Physical and verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child.
- Expired or non-immunization and physical.

### **Communication**

Proper communication between our parents and the teachers and staff of Valley Daycare is essential. Teachers will be sending home information regularly. Reports, notes, and other newsletters will be sent home through our Brightwheel system or in your child's lunchbox. When sending letters to teachers, we ask that you use Brightwheel or place the note inside the lunch box. This practice ensures essential messages are not lost or buried in a child's backpack. You are welcome to call to arrange a meeting with your child's teacher--even just to become better acquainted! Concerns about our program or your child's care may be expressed to the center director.

Remember to communicate in writing any changes in your child's schedule. We must be informed, in writing, regarding any changes in the person picking up your child. You may add or delete names of authorized adults allowed to pick up your child on your child enrollment form and directly on Brightwheel.

Our main office must be informed of any of the following changes:

- address and phone numbers or email address
- changes in medication
- health/immunizations up-dates

- other pertinent information related to your child

Messages received on Brightwheel after business hours will be answered the following day. Messages received during business hours will be answered as the opportunity arises. Nonurgent messages may wait till the rest period to be answered. Understand that the staff focuses on the children in our care during the day. There may be a delay in response so that staff can supervise the children appropriately.

Valley Day Care makes every attempt to keep parents updated on happenings here at the Center and in the community. Using our Brightwheel Platform allows parents real-time access to their child's day. It is also the parent's responsibility to keep up to date by being aware and checking for updates. As partners, we can provide your child with a fun and safe learning environment.

### **Littering**

Please be respectful while on Valley Daycare property and Creamery Rd. No littering. When loading and unloading children, be mindful of materials that may fall out of your vehicle.

### **Smoking**

There is no smoking on the Valley Daycare property. This includes the use of Medicinal Marijuana, as stated in the NYS Medicinal Marijuana Agreement. "Under federal and state law, it is not permitted to use or possess marijuana within 1000 feet of a daycare or school. It is against the law to drive a vehicle while using marijuana, and doing so will result in a DUI for driving under the influence."

### **Speed Limit**

The speed limit inside Valley Daycare property is 5 MPH. Please respect the posted speed limit and take extra precautions when picking up and dropping off. Your children ride bikes, walk, and play on this property. Help ensure their safety.

### **Concealed Carry**

Valley Daycare is a *No Fire Arms* property. Lawful concealed carry is not permitted inside the Valley Daycare building. While we acknowledge some careers require firearms, if you are unable to leave the firearm in the vehicle safely, please notify staff before pick up. Your child will be brought to your vehicle.

### **Car Seats**

Children must be strapped into their car seats correctly whenever they are in a vehicle on Valley Daycare's property. Car seats can be left on the front porch. Please inform a staff member that you are leaving behind a car seat. We will do our best to monitor the car seat, but we are not responsible for lost or stolen possessions.

\*While outside the center building, you are on camera. \*

## **Drop-off and Pickup Policies**

The teachers will gladly assist you and your child at your drop-off time. Teachers, however, will only assume direct responsibility for your child once you are ready to leave the building. You are welcome to stay briefly and assist your child through this transition. Notify the classroom teacher when you are prepared to go, and the teacher will assist.

Only the individuals listed on the Child Enrollment Application or a written permission note from the parent will be allowed to leave with a child. The staff is expected to request a picture I.D. from any unfamiliar person (including grandparents). If there is any concern, the staff of Valley Daycare reserves the right to deny a person's request to pick up a child.

When leaving the building, children must remain with their parent/guardian. Children will only be released from the building with an adult within arms' reach.

Your child's teacher may be available at pickup time for short questions. For more extended discussions or particular concerns, please schedule an appointment.

Parents are expected to assume full responsibility for their children once they enter the classroom. For your child's safety, please do not allow your child to touch the exit door handles or open the doors and play yard gates. We work very hard at teaching the children not to touch the exits for safety reasons. Undermining our rules could prove dangerous.

Your child has waited all day to see you and is excited when you walk in the door. At pickup, please put away your cell phone and give your full attention to your child.

It is our policy not to release a child to any person who is or seems to be intoxicated or impaired. Children picked up past closing (6:00 pm) will be charged **\$1 per minute**. An invoice will be sent via Brightwheel.

## **Custody Orders**

Until a court action has established custody, one parent may not limit the other from picking up a child in our care. The Center must be notified immediately of any changes in custody orders. Certified custody orders must be given to the center director. Rest assured that custody orders will be held on a strictly need-to-know basis.

## **Holidays**

Valley Daycare will be closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Easter Monday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Day, and Christmas Day. If any of the above holidays fall on a weekend, the closest Friday or Monday will be selected. Regular tuition is expected as our teachers are paid for these days. We close at 4 pm on New Year's Eve Day.

Some, but not all, of these holidays can be added to your child's schedule through the Holiday Package.

Any other closing days can be found posted on our website calendar.

## **In-service Day**

The staff needs to stay current on policies and protocols, attend training, and further develop their education in Early Childhood. The Center may close for staff development days. Parents

will be notified of these days a minimum of 1 month prior. Tuition is expected, as these days help us better care for our children.

### **Unexpected Closings**

On a rare occasion, our Center may be forced to close due to a situation beyond our control (e.g., weather, electrical outage, no water service, COVID, or other health-related closures); every attempt will be made to inform parents of an emergency closing. Closures are non-refundable.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

Staff members are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect.

### **Diapers & Toilet Training**

Parents supply all diapers and wipes at Valley Daycare.

Our teachers are experienced in training young children to use the bathroom. The parent and teacher must communicate about the child's needs and work together to make this developmental milestone positive and successful.

Age and Readiness:

- Potty training typically begins around 2-3 years of age.
- Readiness signs include staying dry for more extended periods, showing interest in the bathroom, and the ability to communicate the need to use the potty.

Parental Involvement:

- Parents are encouraged to communicate their child's readiness and any specific methods they use at home.
- A collaborative approach between parents and staff is essential for consistency and success.
- Parents should provide enough spare clothes, training pants, and any specific items (like a preferred potty seat) the child uses at home.

\* We recommend that your child be dressed in "user-friendly" clothing when in training. 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, outer clothing, and pull-ups.

Staff Responsibilities:

- Staff will support the child's potty training by taking them to the bathroom regularly (e.g., every hour).
- Positive reinforcement and encouragement will be used.
- Staff will respect the child's pace and avoid adverse reactions to accidents.
- Hygiene practices will be followed, including handwashing after each bathroom visit and proper sanitization of bathroom facilities.

Bathroom Schedule:

- Children will be encouraged to use the potty at critical times during the day, such as before and after meals, before naptime, and before going outside to play.

Accidents:

- Accidents are a normal part of potty training. Staff will handle them calmly and without fuss.

- Soiled clothes will be placed in a sealed bag and sent home with the child. If you do not want to return soiled clothing, please inform staff, and they will be disposed of.

- Parents will be informed of accidents so they can monitor progress and make any necessary adjustments.

\*Excessive accidents in underwear will result in the use of pull-ups during 'frequent accident' moments, outdoors, nap time, ext.

Parent Supplied Supplies:

- A sufficient supply of training pants or underwear. To keep classroom spaces hygienic and safe for all children in care, children must wear training underwear or pull-ups during potty training at the daycare.

- Extra clothes (at least three complete changes).

- Any specific toileting supplies the child uses. If you are training your child to use a child's potty and wish us to do the same, you must supply us with a potty. Otherwise, toddlers will use an attachable child-sized toilet seat.

\* Pull-ups with Velcro sides are preferred.

Health and Safety:

- Staff will ensure children wash their hands thoroughly after each bathroom visit.

- Any signs of discomfort or potential health issues related to potty training will be communicated to parents immediately.

-To maintain health and safety for all children in care, if a child is experiencing excessive accidents while wearing underwear, caregivers will communicate with parents, and the potty-training approach may need to be adjusted.

Communication:

- Regular updates will be provided to parents on their child's progress.

- Any concerns or adjustments needed will be discussed promptly.

- Parents are encouraged to share any successful strategies used at home with the daycare staff.

Consistency between home and daycare practices is critical to successful potty training. Parents and staff will work together to maintain similar routines and approaches. This policy ensures all children a smooth and positive potty training experience, promoting their independence and confidence.

\*Laxatives: If a child is on a laxative routine, the child must be in a pull-up or diaper during childcare hours, as children are less likely to recognize body cues while on a laxative or suppository.

## **Bodies and Boundaries**

There is a natural curiosity among children about their bodies. When speaking to children about body parts, we use the anatomically correct terms. We also teach children that every person has boundaries and that our bodies are private and should be respected. Parents will be notified if situations occur in the classroom that directly affect their child(ren).

## **Bottles, Blankets and Pacifiers**

You may send extra empty bottles (infant room) with your child's name printed. Premade bottles are not accepted. The formula should be sent separately. We will not add 'rice' to an infant's bottle at any time. You may supply breast milk; please label, date, and time the bottle. Staff will

try to keep track of these items but will not be held responsible if lost. When a pacifier or security items are used, please label the item clearly and supply multiples when possible. When you are ready to wean your child, please communicate with your child's teacher to establish a consistent strategy between home and our Center.

### **Breastfeeding**

Valley Daycare encourages breastfeeding. Breastfeeding mothers may use our private, comfortable, and accessible breastfeeding area in the main office. Breastfeeding may also take place anywhere on the property where the mother is comfortable, indoors or outdoors. All center staff are trained in the proper storage and handling of breast milk, as well as ways to support breastfeeding mothers. The Center follows human milk storage guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to avoid waste and prevent food-borne illness. Breastfeeding mothers may store their expressed breast milk in the center refrigerator. Mothers should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with name and date.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

Parents are welcome to send a treat to share with their child's classmates on birthdays or special occasions. Some classrooms have strict allergy guidelines. Inform your child's teacher beforehand about what kind of treat you will bring. This is for the safety of all of the children. Ask your child's teacher for suggestions. If a birthday is to be celebrated away from school and the entire class is not invited, please mail the invitations. If the entire class is invited, you may pass the invites on to the teacher, who will distribute them to parents.

### **Photographs and Publicity**

Photographs of the children in our programs are taken to keep families up to date on daily excitement. They may be posted to Brightwheel and social media or appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures, publicity materials, and educational training.

### **Meals, Snacks and Food Allergies**

The Center will provide two snacks with water each day. Parents will provide formula or breast milk for children up to 12 months. Valley Daycare will provide whole milk for children between 12 and 18 months. If there are dietary needs or allergies, the parent must notify both the center director and the classroom teacher. Parents will need to supply any special foods required. Staff, the Director, and parents will work together to make an allergy plan for the child.

Parents need to send a lunch with their child each day. Lunches sent from home should be self-serving or easy to serve and clearly labeled. A microwave will not be available. Lunch boxes that have a frozen pack inside are recommended. The children prepare snacks as much as possible and are served family-style at each snack time. When weather permits, lunches are taken outside to picnic tables or blankets.

Parents may bring breakfast for their children, provided the arrival time is before 8:30 am. Food must be simple and self-serving (e.g., yogurt, breakfast bar, dry cereal, fruit).

## **Infant restraint seats**

Our Tier 3 Continuity of Care policy ensures infants grow and develop appropriately and healthily. For this reason, Valley Daycare does not use infant restraining seats, such as bouncy chairs, walkers, or bumpys. Infants will only be placed in a restraining seat during mealtimes, which will not exceed 30 minutes. If a young child is placed in a highchair for an activity, this time will not exceed 15 minutes. When an infant is brought into care sleeping in a car seat, the infant will be immediately removed from the car seat and placed in a safe area on their back.

## **Healthy Choices**

While the occasional donut, chocolate milk, and fruit snacks make for a good treat, they do not necessarily make a healthy meal. We ask that parents reserve these items for special occasions. Bringing these items daily for their child does not encourage healthy eating patterns. We are happy to provide parents with a list of healthy, fun alternatives upon request. If a child's lunch does not meet the nutrition standards outlined by CACFP, Valley Daycare will supply an alternate lunch. This will come at a fee to the parent. If an alternative lunch must be provided, or the child did not bring a lunch that day and Valley Daycare must provide a lunch, the parent will be charged \$3.00. This payment will be expected by closure the next day.

## **Immunizations and Physicals**

All children attending childcare programs in New York are legally required to be fully vaccinated. Valley Day Care requires all children enrolled in the program to be immunized. Families must contact their local health department to obtain a signed certified Nonmedical Waiver Form for delayed vaccines. A Health Appraisal form is required before enrollment. This form requests a record of your child's immunizations and the date of the last physical examination.

\*Important: It is your responsibility as parent or guardian to maintain up-to-date immunizations and physicals for your child (ren). Updates must be reported to the center director in writing. As New York Department of Health requires, a health appraisal record of your child's physical exam must be submitted. A medical examiner must sign and date this form. Physical regulations are as follows:

- Children younger than 2 ½ years must have a physical within three months preceding enrollment and repeated yearly.
- Children 2 ½ years to Kindergarten-- a physical must be within the previous year (before enrollment) and repeated every two years.
- Kindergarten children and older--parents must sign the Physical Health/Immunizations Parental Acknowledgement for School-Age Programs letter, plus submit a copy of the child's immunization record to the office. A new letter must be signed yearly.

## **Sickness**

You are the best judge of your child's health, and we trust you will not bring a sick child to the Center. However, if while in our care, your child becomes ill, displays an unknown rash, or acts



out of character, your child's teacher will consult the Director, and you may be called to take your child home. You (or an alternate emergency person) are expected to come immediately when called. This is to protect the health of your child and their classmates. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. The following criteria will be considered in determining if your child must go home:

- Unknown rash.
- Fever of 100. ° or higher. For a mild fever, muscle aches, toothache, or headache, Tylenol (supplied from home) may be administered. \*See Medicine below.
- Highly contagious conditions include head lice, chicken pox, strep throat, pinworms, mumps, impetigo, and conjunctivitis (pink eye).
- Diarrhea or vomiting (more than two loose, watery stools). Consideration will be taken if your child is allergic to certain food/drink products or on medication.
- Persistent cough for an extended period (cough suppressants and allergy medications are not recommended unless prescribed by a doctor)

If your child is too ill to play outside with their class or participate in regular classroom activities, they are too ill to attend the Center.

Your child may return to the Center after:

- Obtaining written verification from a doctor.
- Fever-free for 24 hours without Tylenol or other fever-reducing medications.
- In the case of chicken pox, when all the lesions are scabbed over.
- In the case of head lice, follow treatment with appropriate shampoo (such as Kwell or RID) so that all nits (eggs) are gone.
- In the case of a contagious illness, your child should take an antibiotic for 24 hours before returning.
- In the case of persistent cough, 24 hours without cough suppressants or allergy medication.
- In the case of COVID-19, a 5-day minimum quarantine with an additional five days of mandatory masking is required. If your child can not wear a mask or keep one on, we ask you to quarantine for ten days.

\*If questions arise about the appropriateness of a child's return to the Center, the decision will be that of the Center Director or Assistant Director.

## **Medicine**

Non-prescriptive and prescription medication will only be administered after a parent signs and dates a form entitled Medication Permission. The parent must provide all medications. Prescription medication must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name. A parent or guardian must administer the first dosage under their supervision, never the center staff. We will not administer cold medications to any child.

Staff can only administer medication (prescription or over-the-counter) with the proper dosage for that child listed on the container. If the container reads, "Consult/see Doctor," then a note from the doctor with the child's weight and the recommended dosage must be provided.

**A Non-Prescription Release form for other applications, such as diaper wipes, sunblock, soap, or other topical creams., will be signed upon enrollment.**

**Valley Daycare is a non-specific EpiPen-approved daycare.**

## **Injuries and Accidents**

Every consideration will be taken to ensure your child's safety while in our care. Should an injury occur, a Minor Incident Report would be completed by the closest adult and signed by the Center Director, Assistant Director, or appropriate person. A copy of this report will be sent home. A parent or guardian will be notified regarding any injury that occurs while your child is in our care.

In a major medical emergency or accident, the center teacher or Director will call 911 first. The child will be transported to the hospital, as noted on the Child Information Record (or the closest hospital). The parent/guardian will be called immediately.

## **Wellness Policy**

Your child's overall well-being and health are one of Valley Daycare's deepest concerns. Our Center's goals are to encourage your child to eat healthy and stay physically active.

### **Healthy Environment**

- Children will wash their hands before and after every meal and snack
- Food will never be withheld or forced as punishment
- Food will not be used as a reward or bribe
- Healthy foods and habits will be promoted through posters and planned activities
- Parties and celebrations will be focused on activities rather than food
- Children will be encouraged, but never forced, to try new foods
- Children will be encouraged to serve themselves and decide how much they want to eat
- Meals and snacks will be served at the table. Children will not be allowed to walk around with food/while eating

### **Healthy Drinks**

- Drinking water will be available for children to access independently
- Water drinking will be encouraged throughout the day, particularly before, during or after physical activities
- Juice will never be served to infants under 12 months of age
- Juice will be rarely offered, and when offered, it will be only 100% real fruit or vegetable juice
- Infants under 12 months of age will only be served breast milk or formula unless a doctor's order is on file
  - Soda and Sugary drinks like Kool-Aid will never be served
- Milk will be unflavored, 1% or Skim milk will be served for children over the age 12 months.

### **Meals and Snacks**

- A variety of fresh fruits and vegetables will be served for morning and afternoon snack
- When a grain is served, it will most often be whole grain or whole wheat
- Menus will be prepared with children's allergies or dietary restrictions in mind so that all children can participate in the same meal
- Parents are responsible for providing their children with a balanced packed lunch. We strongly discourage the packing of candies, chocolates, and liquids with high sugar counts

### **Physical Activity**

- All children, including infants, will have amply open, safe space for moving and being active
- A rotating variety of safe indoor equipment (climbing mats, softballs, etc.) will be available
- Children will have access to large outdoor play equipment

- Children will have a wide variety of portable outdoor play materials available to them at all outdoor times
- Children will participate in walks/hikes around the property when possible
- Curriculum will include planned and scheduled physical movement times both inside and outside
- A balance of quiet and active activities will be offered daily
- Children will have the opportunity to play actively at least 60 minutes per day
- Weather permitting, children will play outdoors daily. Active play will be planned indoors during inclement weather
- Both structured and unstructured activities will be planned daily
- Physical activity will be neither denied nor required as a form of punishment Safe Physical Activity
- Children are encouraged to wear clothing they can move freely in and get dirty
- Children are redirected to safe physical activities and involved in discussions about safety as needed
- Daily lesson plans include fun and engaging physical activities
- Children are encouraged to be physically active during teacher-directed activities each day

### **Education**

- Children will be offered teacher-directed nutrition and physical activity education at least once a week. Education will be provided through informal discussions and books, games, and activities that promote good nutrition.
- Parents will be provided with physical education and nutrition information upon enrollment. These resources will always be available to them.
- Teachers will receive training in physical education and nutrition yearly. Education may be obtained through reading articles, workshops, webinars, and the like.

### **Daily Routines**

Every classroom has their daily routine posted on the parent information board. Infants do not have a rigid activity schedule, as their care is based on their needs.

Valley Day Care strives to offer a quality program for our families. We maintain licensing information for parents to review during regular business hours. The notes contain all licensing inspections, special investigation reports, and corrective action plans. These reports, from the prior two years are also available on the childcare licensing website at

[https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/ccfs\\_template.asp](https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/ccfs_template.asp).

### **Naps and Rest Periods**

Rest periods happen daily. Rest periods take place in a child's home classroom. Each child over 18 months is provided with an individual mat. Children under 18 months will sleep in their own crib or pack and play. Staff are present in the classroom throughout nap time. Although classroom schedules vary by age, they generally occur between 12:00-3:00. Children are not forced to nap during this period. However, they are asked to rest for at least 30 minutes. If a child does not fall asleep in the first 30 minutes of the rest period, they are given a quiet activity. Children will wake naturally in most cases. Lights will go on, and the daily schedule will continue by 3:00 pm. Children will not be kept awake.

## **Field Trips**

Valley Daycare does daily walking field trips to the adjacent property, The Woods at Valley Daycare. The Woods at Valley Daycare is a non-state regulated playground. Valley Daycare does not make field trips that require buses or transportation.

## **Animal disclosure**

Our facility has livestock on the premises. Animals are penned and separated from child areas through locking gates. Children may interact with animals during the day. Animals on the premises could include ducks, chickens, guinea hens, quail, pheasants, horses, donkeys, fish, rabbits, cats, and dogs. Vaccination records are available upon request. Classrooms may also have 'class pets'.

Children will be supervised at all times when interacting with the animals. Children must wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after contact with the animals or their living areas. All animals will receive regular veterinary check-ups and vaccinations to ensure they are healthy and disease-free. Any sick animals will be removed from the premises immediately. Children will be taught how to feed and care for the animals properly under the strict supervision of staff. This helps to prevent accidental harm to both the children and the animals. Children will be instructed on how to interact with the animals gently and respectfully. Rough handling or any behavior that could stress or harm the animals will not be tolerated. We aim to educate children about the responsibilities of animal care, including the importance of respecting and being gentle with animals. This is part of our effort to foster empathy and understanding towards living creatures.

If an animal bite or scratch occurs, staff will follow our established first aid procedures and notify parents immediately.

Parents must inform us of any allergies their children may have to animals. We will take necessary precautions to accommodate these needs.

If parents and their children choose to interact with the animals without staff supervision, they accept all liability for possible instances. Children are not to ever climb on animal enclosures.

## **Safety Procedures**

Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom, noting the specific exits for that room in case of an emergency that requires staff and children to leave the Center.

In the event of a fire or fire drill, classes are to leave out of their primary exit. Primary Exits are doors that open immediately to the outdoors. The primary meeting spot is the back corner of the employee parking area.

If, for whatever reason, the primary exit is unreachable, the secondary exit, which is the door that leads into the entryway, will be used to vacate the building.

If the primary meeting location cannot be reached, the secondary meeting location is at the far end of the right side of the driveway.

In the event we must vacate the premises altogether, evacuation locations are in the following order:

1. 804 Creamery Rd., Mongaup Valley, NY – Directly across the street from the Center.
2. 45 Gale Rd., Mongaup Valley, NY – Left out of the Center driveway, Left at the stop sign.

Fire Drills are held every month. Shelter-in-place drills are held twice a year. Parents are prohibited from picking up their children during a shelter-in-place emergency or drill. Shelter-in-place protocols will be used in the case of severe weather or dangerous persons on the premises.

The Center maintains food supplies for shelter-in-place emergencies. Each classroom is equipped with MREs and 5 to 10 gallons of bottled water, depending on class size.

Shelter-in-place drills are held twice a year. Fire drills are held monthly.

In the case of an emergency, an alert will be sent to parents via Brightwheel.

## **Valley Day Care Discipline and Guidance Policy**

At Valley Day Care, the term guidance is used for several reasons. It is a positive term and implies working with the children to develop internal control of their behavior. We aim to encourage children to become creative, independent, responsible, and socially mature. This involves learning to make responsible choices and accepting the consequences of such decisions. Guidance takes several forms within our Center:

- Environment—A place designed for children. Each room is age-appropriate in furniture size, large and small manipulates, and supplies required for hands-on experiences.
- Logical Rules —Such as keeping our hands to ourselves and caring for the learning environment. These are discussed with the children, and why such rules are needed are discussed.
- Curriculum—Is developmentally appropriate, based on the children's interest and level of readiness.
- Positive Behavior—We reinforce the behaviors we wish to see repeated.
- Redirection— Engaging the child in alternate play.
- Positive Reminder—Telling the children what we want them to do rather than using "no" or "don't."
- Renewal Time—Occasionally, as a last resort, a child needs to be removed from the situation for a brief break. This allows the child time to calm down and consider an alternate behavior.
- Difficult Behavior —We will make every effort to work with the parent or guardian to ensure a cooperative approach for children having difficulties with behavior. We are here to serve and protect all our children! A parent may be called when the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that the Center's staff cannot modify. The parent may be asked to take the child home immediately. The following steps may be taken regarding children who display chronic disruptive behavior, upsetting the emotional or physical well-being of another child or an adult.

**Initial Consultation:** The Director may request that the parent or guardian meet for a conference. The problem will be defined on paper. Intervention strategies will be discussed. The best solution to solving the problem will be agreed upon by the center director, teacher, and parent or guardian.

**Second Consultation:** If the initial plan for helping the child fails, the parent will again be asked to meet with the director and teaching staff involved. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem and establish a new or revised approach to solving the problem. Parents may be asked to consult outside professionals or bring in behavioral specialists to help identify the issues or provide new strategies for Valley Day Care to continue care. Our goal is to work as a team to serve each child better.

**Disenrolled:** When the previous attempts have been followed, and no progress has been made toward solving the problem, the child may be disenrolled from the Center at the discretion of the center director.

**Note:** Corporal punishment will not be allowed. This is defined as negative physical touching, exclusion from large motor or outdoor activities, or exclusion from any learning activity. No unusual punishment, such as humiliation, ridicule, threat, or coercion, will be allowed.

## **Bullying Policy**

Valley Daycare will not, in any instance, tolerate bullying behavior. Valley Daycare defines bullying as repeated inappropriate or unwanted negative behavior; verbal, psychological, or physical - conducted by staff, volunteers, activity providers, parents, or children that violates Valley Daycares Ethics Code, which clearly states that all individuals will be treated with respect and dignity.

Examples:

- **Verbal Bullying:** Slandering, ridiculing, or maligning a person or their family; persistent name calling that is hurtful, insulting, or humiliating; using a person as the butt of jokes; abusive and offensive remarks. Shouting or raising a voice at an individual in public or in private. The spreading of malicious rumors and gossip regarding individuals.
- **Physical bullying:** Pushing, shoving, kicking, punching, poking, tripping. It may also take the form of severe physical assault or threat of physical assault.
- **Gesture bullying or Intimidation:** Nonverbal and verbal threatening gestures; glances that can convey threatening messages. Using verbal or obscene gestures. Aggressive body language, voice tone, or facial expressions.
- **Exclusion:** Socially or physically excluding, isolating, ignoring, or disregarding a child because of socioeconomic status, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, ability, ethnic heritage, or religious conviction. In a peer situation, this may manifest in the following way: "Do this, or I won't be your friend anymore" (implied or stated). Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts at socializing are repeatedly rejected or undermined by a group.
- **Cyberbullying:** once-off or repeated offensive or hurtful public messages, images, or statements on social network sites or other public forums where a message, image, or statement can be viewed and repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behavior.
- **Damage to property:** Intentional destruction or damage of another person's property, including but not limited to clothing, vehicle, mobile phone or device, toy, learning materials, or any personal belonging or property owned by Valley Daycare. Destruction includes the item being defaced, broken, stolen, or hidden.

We encourage parents, guardians, and employees to report important issues, suspicious activities, bullying, or other serious student-related issues. Anonymity is optional.

## **Visitors and Volunteers**

All visitors and volunteers must sign in and out of the Center. Visitors and Volunteers do not count into classroom ratios and cannot be left alone with children at any time. OCFS must clear reoccurring volunteers. This process involves a medical release, fingerprinting, and background check. There is a \$25 fee associated with the background check process. In most cases, this fee will be charged to the visitor/volunteer.

## **Complaints**

We take complaints and concerns seriously. Conversations of this sort should be sent via email to [valleydaycare809@outlook.com](mailto:valleydaycare809@outlook.com).

## **Changes in Policies**

The fees, procedures, and policies in this handbook are subject to change at the center director or owner's discretion.

Thank you for selecting Valley Day Care as your childcare provider.

Based on Policy Handbook Updated Version 2024.4