



Policies and Parent Handbook

Updated 12/27/23

First Steps Parent Quick Guide

First Steps Child Care Center exists to provide attentive, high quality care for every child. We work to develop loving, respectful, and positive relationships with children from infancy through school age by partnering with families to support a child's Christian growth and development.

Our Services

We provide year-round child care, before school care, and after school care for up to 116 children ages 6 weeks through 13 years. We currently follow the state licensing guidelines but are not state licensed.

Our Hours

We are open Monday through Friday 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. except on select holidays. We are closed when the Oconomowoc Area School District is closed for SNOW or ICE emergencies that cause dangerous road conditions. We will not close for COLD weather closings unless road conditions are deemed dangerous.

Available Schedules

Child care (6 weeks through 2 years): 3 days per week minimum. Child care (2 years old-PreK): 2 days per week minimum. Before and after school care (5K-8): Offered Monday through Friday per requested schedule.

Items You Provide if Needed

Please be sure your child's items are all labeled with their name. Parents provide the following items:

Nursery-2 Year Old Room

- Infant formula or breast milk
- Bottles and lids
- Water bottle
- Food for breakfast (optional)
- Diapers
- Baby wipes
- Blanket sleepers (both summer and winter)
- Lotions (diaper cream, sunscreen, etc.) signed authorization is required
- Two full changes of clothing including underwear, socks, pants, and shirts that are appropriate for the season
- Clothing suitable for outside play for each season including, hats, mittens, and boots

Young 3s-PreK Room

- Food for breakfast (optional)
- Diapers and baby wipes (if not potty trained)
- Child-sized blanket
- Lotions (diaper cream, sunscreen, etc.) *signed authorization is required*
- One full change of clothing including underwear, socks, pants, and shirts that are appropriate for the season
- Clothing suitable for outside play for each season including, hats, mittens, and boots
- Water bottle

Nut-free

We are a peanut-free and tree nut-free facility.

Registration

Our non-refundable registration fee is \$75 per child or \$100 per family. Additionally, each family will be charged an annual re-registration fee of \$50 per child or \$75 per family in March.

**We begin billing for child care on the date listed on your registration form unless we do not have capacity in your child's classroom. We will contact you as far in advance to confirm, deny, or discuss admission for your requested start date.*

Waiting List

In the event we reach capacity in any age bracket or classroom we will maintain a waiting list on a first come first served basis. Parents wishing to add their child to our waiting list will be required to complete a registration and pay our non-refundable registration fee.

Admission Prioritization

Enrollment will be on a first-come, first-served basis. However, in the case where a classroom's capacity is limited, we will prioritize enrollment as follows:

1. Children with siblings currently enrolled at First Steps
2. Members of St. Matthew's

In the case of infant care, current First Steps families with enrolled siblings and St. Matthew's members may apply for enrollment up to 9 months before care will begin. First Steps will accept applications from all other families 6 months in advance. For example, on March 15 we begin accepting applications for infant care that will begin on September 15. Due to the high demand for child care, we will begin billing for care on the date you provide us on your registration form. While we will do our best to accommodate siblings of children enrolled at First Steps and St. Matthew's members, First Steps cannot guarantee enrollment due to required teacher ratios and classroom capacity.

Leave of Absence Retainer Requirement

Parents who choose to take a leave of absence and wish to reserve their child's spot to resume their regular schedule are required to pay for a minimum of two days per week during the leave of absence.

This policy applies to major life changes, such as but not limited to, maternity leave, summer break, and any other time beyond your standard vacation days. All leave of absences need to be pre-approved by the Director.

We will do our best to accommodate your preferred schedule if your child will be attending two days per week during the leave of absence, but your flexibility is appreciated as available days may be limited.

Registration Forms

Our registration packet includes a complete list of everything needed to register your child, including our policy handbook. The following items in the packet must be completed and returned to First Steps by the first day of attendance:

- Form DCF-62, "Child Care Enrollment"

- Form DCF-44, "Health History and Emergency Care Plan"
- Form DCF-104, "Alternate Arrival/Release Agreement" (if applicable)
- Form DCF-56, "Child Care Transportation Permission" (if applicable)
- Form DCF-61, "Child Care Intake for Child Under 2 Years" (if applicable)
- First week's child care fee and registration fee

The following items are due within 30 days after your child starts attending:

- Form DPH-4192, "Day Care Immunization Record"
- Form DCF-60, "Child Health Report" or record signed by a doctor

Pass Code

You will be given an entry code and a log-in code for the electronic attendance system on your child's first day at First Steps. These will be used to access our facility and sign your child in and out.

Arrival and Departure

When you drop off or pick up your child at First Steps you must:

- Sign your child in and out using our electronic attendance system located at the front desk.
- Arrive within your scheduled time as stated on your registration form. If an earlier or later time is needed, contact the Director."
- Accompany your child to their assigned classroom or play area.
- Pick up your child promptly according to your designated pick-up time.

Absent Child

Please call or email us if your child will not be attending on a scheduled day.

Vacations Days

All parents will be given vacation days to use at their discretion. The number of vacation days varies based on your child's schedule:

- 5 days per week receives 10 vacation days per year
- 4 days per week receives 8 vacation days per year
- 3 days per week receives 6 vacation days per year
- 2 days per week receives 4 vacation days per year
- 1 day per week receives 2 vacation days per year

Vacation days may be used as sick days (as long as you call the day of your child's illness), vacation days (2-week notice required), or used for a holiday (2-week notice required). All holidays that fall on your child's registered day will be charged to you unless a vacation day is used.

Vacation request forms are to be filled out and returned within 2 weeks of planned day(s) off.

Mandatory Closing of a Room or Rooms Due to Pandemic

In the event of a pandemic, we will follow the direction of the Waukesha County health department.

Table of Contents

<u>Glossary</u>	9
<u>Philosophy and Mission Statement</u>	10
<u>Admission</u>	11
<u>Open Door Policy</u>	11
<u>Hours of Operation</u>	11
<u>Weather Emergency Closings</u>	11
<u>Weapons Policy</u>	11
<u>Parent Information Area</u>	11
<u>Smoking</u>	11
<u>Changes to the Parent Handbook and Policies</u>	11
<u>Facility Entry and Pass Code Procedures</u>	12
<u>Arrival and Departure</u>	12
<u>Authorized or Impaired Pick-Ups</u>	12
<u>Both Parents' Right to Pick Up</u>	12
<u>Absent Child</u>	12
<u>Available Schedules</u>	12
<u>Classroom Transitions</u>	12
<u>Confidentiality</u>	13
<u>Child Abuse and Neglect</u>	13
<u>Administration Structure</u>	13
<u>Enrollment Procedures</u>	13
<u>Items Provided by Parents</u>	13
<u>Parent Visits</u>	14
<u>Pets</u>	14
<u>Children's Records</u>	14
<u>Non-Discrimination Policy</u>	14
<u>Americans with Disabilities Act</u>	14
<u>Children's Photos</u>	15
<u>Discharge of Enrolled Children</u>	16
<u>Two Weeks Notice</u>	16
<u>Behavior Communication and Guidelines</u>	16

<u>Enrollment Termination</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>Appeal Process</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>Fee Payments and Refunds</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Lunch</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Field Trip Fee</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Late Payment Fee</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Decline Fee</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Late Pick Up Fee</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Multiple Child Discount</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Registration</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Admission Prioritization</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Waiting List</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Refunds</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Vacations and Absences</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Summer Camp Vacations and Absences (5K-6)</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Leave of Absence Retainer Requirement</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>Child Education</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Religious Training</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Daily Schedules</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Substitute Days</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Curriculum</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Cultural Diversity</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Toilet Training</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>Indoor Space</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>Outdoor Play Time</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>Goals for Infants (6 weeks to 12 months)</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>Goals for Toddlers (12 months to 24 months)</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>Goals for Young 3s and PreK</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>Goals for School-Age Children</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>Classroom Schedules</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>Communication</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>Transitions</u>	<u>24</u>

Field Trips	24
Water Activities	24
<i>Child Guidance</i>	25
Crying Child	25
Discipline	25
Time-Outs or Redirection	25
Biting Policy	25
<i>Contingency Plans</i>	27
Attendance	27
Fire and Tornado Safety	27
Severe Weather	27
Mandatory Closing of a Room or Rooms Due to Pandemic	27
Emergency Evacuations	27
Loss of Utility Services	27
Weather Emergency Closings	27
Threats	28
Missing Child	28
Child Emergency Precautions	28
Emergency Numbers	28
<i>Health Care Policy</i>	29
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)	29
Child Health Requirements	29
Disease Prevention	29
Child Illness or Injury	30
Medications	30
Non-Medical Over-the-Counter Products	31
Cleaning Policy	31
Infant and Toddler Diapering	31
<i>Nutrition</i>	32
<i>Transportation</i>	34
Driver Requirements	34
Vehicle Requirements	34

<u>No Child Left Unattended in Vehicles</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>Child Safety Restraints</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>Child Tracking Policy</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>Emergency Information</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>Transporting Children with Disabilities</u>	<u>35</u>
<u>Parent Acknowledgement</u>	<u>36</u>

Glossary

Director – The individual responsible for operating First Steps and ensuring we comply with state regulations. On a day-to-day basis, the Director may delegate some responsibilities to an Assistant Director or Lead Teacher as needed. In this document, Director refers to the person who holds the Director’s responsibilities at any given time.

Parents – One or both natural or adoptive parents of a child, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent or guardian in the absence of the child’s parent/guardian.

Staff Members – Includes all First Steps employees and called workers.

Mission Statement, Philosophy, and Curriculum

Mission Statement

First Steps Child Care Center exists to provide attentive, high quality care for every child. We work to develop loving, respectful, and positive relationships with children from infancy through school age by partnering with families to support a child's Christian growth and development.

Philosophy

First Steps Child Care Center (First Steps) offers children a nurturing environment where they can grow physically, cognitively, emotionally, and spiritually. Our focus is to open their eyes and hearts to what God has created for them. Through faith in the Gospel, the children at First Steps are motivated to express their love for Jesus in their everyday activities.

Curriculum

First Steps uses the Highscope curriculum. This curriculum is based on the child's interests, skills and abilities. It is used to guide our large motor activities, sensory play, art, music, dramatic play, story time, science, and math. We use Cross Connections and ChristLight curriculum to guide our Bible lessons.

Admission

Per state regulation 251.04(2)(i)1

Open Door Policy

Communication is very important for success at First Steps. We encourage staff members, guests, parents, or volunteers to share their concerns, suggestions, questions, or ideas. Communication is crucial in our efforts to maximize every child's development.

Hours of Operation

First Steps will be open Monday through Friday 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

We will be closed the following days:

Charged Closed Days	No-Charge Closed Days
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Year's Day• Memorial Day• Fourth of July• Labor Day• Thanksgiving Day• Christmas Eve• Christmas Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good Friday• Friday after Thanksgiving• Non-holiday dates between Christmas and New Years

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, we will be closed the Friday before the holiday and if the holiday falls on a Sunday we will be closed the Monday after the holiday. Please note that we will be closed in observance of Christmas Eve through New Year's Day.

Weather Emergency Closings

See Contingency Plans – Emergency Weather Closings

Weapons Policy

First Steps prohibits the possession of weapons on its property, including our vehicles. Parents, children, or staff members violating this policy will be referred to appropriate law enforcement agencies. Any person desiring to bring any object that could reasonably be considered a weapon to First Steps must seek and receive approval from the Director at least one business day in advance.

Parent Information Area

We will post the following items for parents to review at the front desk at our parent information area: a complete copy of the parent handbook and a copy of the licensing regulations.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on First Steps property, including First Steps vehicles. This includes any form of tobacco product or any device intended to consume nicotine or vapor.

Changes to the Parent Handbook and Policies

We may change any policy included in the parent handbook at our discretion. We will notify you of any upcoming changes via email or written notice at least two weeks in advance.

Facility Entry and Pass Code Procedures

You will be given an entry code on your child's first day at First Steps. This code will be used to both access our facility and sign your child in and out of our care.

Arrival and Departure

When you drop off or pick up your child at First Steps you must:

- Sign your child in and out using our electronic attendance system located at the Parent Sign-in station. If our electronic system is not functioning properly, we will provide a hard copy sheet for these purposes. Full printed names and signatures are required in such instances. Attendance records are kept for the duration of children's enrollment.
- Accompany your child to their assigned classroom or play area, supervise them in the hallways, and hold their hand or carry young children in our parking lot.
- Pick up your child promptly according to your designated pick-up time.
- Accompany your child from the classrooms/play area and supervise them in the hallways and hold their hand or carry young children in our parking lot.

Authorized or Impaired Pick-Ups

Your child will only be allowed to leave with an authorized pick up person. You must provide verbal or written permission to our staff members to authorize an alternative pick up person. Any non-parent picking up your child will be required to show proper identification. If an unauthorized person arrives at First Steps to pick up your child, we will notify you immediately. Your child will not be released except to an authorized individual.

We will not release your child to the care of any individual who appears to be impaired. We will notify you or your designated emergency contact person immediately. If we believe a situation endangers the safety of children or staff members, we will contact the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Both Parents' Right to Pick Up

Under Wisconsin state law both parents have the right to pick up their child unless a court document restricts that right. If you wish to exclude your child's other parent from the authorized pick up list, you must provide First Steps with copies of the required court documents. Until we receive such documents First Steps may release your child to either parent.

Absent Child

If your child's arrival is delayed by more than 30 minutes after your scheduled arrival time, the Director will call you to determine if you will need child care that day.

Available Schedules

We offer full and part-time child care. First Steps has a 3-day minimum for children under 2 years old. Children 2-5 years old have a 2-day minimum per week.

Classroom Transitions

Attendance is taken daily in each classroom and your child will be signed in and out if they change classrooms during the day. Our staff members will take the attendance sheet with each child's name and birthdate with them whenever they are taking children to a new classroom or taking them outside.

As children change rooms at the beginning or the end of the day our staff members will share important information with each other regarding your child's daily activity and any special needs.

Confidentiality

First Steps will not share any information about a child or a child's family with anyone who is not authorized to receive such information. This includes personal and medical information.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Our staff members are trained to understand and comply with all child abuse and neglect laws, including training in the signs of potential child abuse or neglect. Child care workers are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. We are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

Administration Structure

- Director
- Lead Teachers
- Assistant Teachers

Enrollment Procedures

All parents interested in enrolling their child will meet with the Director to tour First Steps, discuss specific needs for their child, and review our policies and procedures.

Our registration packet includes a complete list of everything needed to register your child along with access to our policy handbook. There is a registration form and non-refundable fee that will hold your child's spot.

All of the following items which are included in your registration packet must be completed and returned to First Steps by the first day of attendance:

- Form DCF-62, "Child Care Enrollment"
- Form DCF-44, "Health History and Emergency Care Plan"
- Form DCF-104, "Alternate Arrival/Release Agreement" (if applicable)
- Form DCF-56, "Child Care Transportation Permission" (if applicable)
- Form DCF-61, "Child Care Intake for Child Under 2 Years" (if applicable)
- First week's child care fee and registration fee

The following items are due within 30 days after your child starts attending:

- Form DPH-4192, "Day Care Immunization Record"
- Form DCF-60, "Child Health Report" or record signed by a doctor

Items Provided by Parents

Please be sure your child's items are all labeled with their name. Parents provide the following items:

Nursery-2 Year Old Room

- Infant formula or breast milk
- Bottles and lids
- Water bottle
- Food for breakfast (optional)
- Diapers
- Baby wipes

- Blanket sleepers (both summer and winter)
- Lotions (diaper cream, sunscreen, etc.) signed authorization is required
- Two full changes of clothing including underwear, socks, pants, and shirts that are appropriate for the season
- Clothing suitable for outside play for each season including, hats, mittens, and boots

Young 3s-PreK Room

- Food for breakfast (optional)
- Diapers and baby wipes (if not potty trained)
- Child-sized blanket
- Lotions (diaper cream, sunscreen, etc.) *signed authorization is required*
- One full change of clothing including underwear, socks, pants, and shirts that are appropriate for the season
- Clothing suitable for outside play for each season including, hats, mittens, and boots
- Water bottle

Parent Visits

Parents are welcome to visit First Steps at any time during the hours of operation unless parental access is prohibited by court order. Parents must provide the Director with a copy of any court order to be included in your child's file.

When you visit, please understand that separating from a parent may cause temporary stress for your child depending on their age.

If you request a conference with your child's teacher, it will be scheduled after our regular business hours.

Pets

First Steps does not permit animals in our facility except for service animals.

Children's Records

The Director will inform you when updates are needed to your child's paperwork. You will be given 30 days advance notice when updated forms are required.

You may request that the Director review your child's records with you in person at a mutually convenient time.

Our staff will maintain medical logbooks in each classroom to document any dispensed medications or injuries that may occur.

Non-Discrimination Policy

As the Bible teaches, "God does not show favoritism" (Acts 10:34). Therefore, First Steps does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national and ethnic origin, or socioeconomic background in administration of its policies and programs.

Americans with Disabilities Act

First Steps prohibits discrimination against children, parents, or staff members based on disability and will make accommodations for a child with disabilities as specified under Americans with Disabilities Act.

Children's Photos

First Steps will not use any photo of your child without your prior approval.

Discharge of Enrolled Children

Per state regulation 251.04 (2)(h)3

Two Weeks Notice

Parents who wish to end their child's enrollment at First Steps must provide a 2-week notice to the Director in writing. In the event of a mutual decision between parents and the Director to end a child's enrollment we will waive the 2-week notice requirement.

Behavior Communication & Guidelines

First Steps staff members will have daily communication with you as you drop off and pick up your child.

If your child is having a difficult time in the classroom the teacher and/or Director will discuss the specific circumstances with you and follow the First Steps behavior protocol as needed. Individual circumstances and parental cooperation will be taken into consideration. Please see First Steps behavior protocol.

Behavior Protocol

First Steps will notify parents verbally regarding any incidents that involve their child. If a child continues to engage in age inappropriate behavior such as hitting, pushing, biting, inappropriate language, etc. regularly. After an initial incident, First Steps will issue parents a verbal and written warning. If a child continues to engage in age inappropriate behavior following the first verbal and written warning, First Steps will issue parents a second verbal and written warning. First Steps will provide parents with documentation of age inappropriate behavior after the second verbal and written warning is given. Daily documentation will be communicated with parents either through email or Brightwheel app.

After documenting and discussing the situation with both the child's teacher and parents the Director may seek guidance from St. Matthew's pastors or outside sources to assist the child and family. If a workable solution cannot be found after discussions between the parents, the Director, the child's teacher(s), and the St. Matthew's Child Care Committee, First Steps may deem it necessary to terminate the child's enrollment. Individual circumstances, parental cooperation, and involvement to find a workable solution will be taken into consideration throughout the process.

To maintain the safety of your child and our staff members, we will follow our rules, policies and protocol when a child engages in age inappropriate behavior. We will document all incidents and our response to them. Documentation can be provided when requested but will be communicated either daily by the child's teacher and weekly by the teacher and or Director after a second verbal and written notice is given.

Enrollment Termination

If the cause for enrollment termination is due to behavioral issues, parents will be given up to 60 calendar days from the date of the second written warning to arrange for an alternative child care provider.

A child may be discharged from First Steps for the following reasons:

- Parents' failure to pay fees on time
- Parents' failure to complete and return required forms
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Child's behavior

- Inability of our program to meet the needs of the child. The Director and staff members will consult with the parent concerning how any problems might be solved before ending the care arrangement.
- Other reasons as determined by the Director for the safety, integrity, or overall well-being of the children under our care, our staff members, or our program.

A child will never be discharged because of their race or sex.

Appeal Process

If a child's enrollment is terminated by First Steps, parents have 30 calendar days to appeal such action. The appeal must be in writing and provided to the Director.

Fee Payments and Refunds

Per state regulation 251.04(2)(h)1

Fees are to be paid in advance and are due on the Friday for the following week of child care.

Parents may pay in advance using electronic funds transfer, check, or credit card on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis. We do not accept cash.

Our fees are based on the age and potty-training level of your child. Our age brackets are as follows:

- 6 weeks to 2 years old
- 2 years old and/or not potty trained
- 3, 4, or 5 years old and potty trained
- 5K and up

We charge a daily rate or half-day rate per child, not on an hourly basis. Half-day schedules run from 6:30 a.m. through 12:30 p.m. and from 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Lunch

A daily hot lunch is included in your 6:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. child care fee.

Field Trip Fee

Any field trip costs are in addition to normal child care fees and will be passed along to parents.

Late Payment Fee

Fees that are not paid in advance on the Friday preceding the following week's service will result in a \$20 late payment fee.

Decline Fee

There will be a \$20 fee charged to a family's account for any declined payment.

Late Pick Up Fee

A fee of \$1 per minute will be charged for any child not picked up by our 5:30 p.m. closing time.

Multiple Child Discount

We offer a 10% discount for parents who have two or more children attending First Steps on a full-time basis five days a week. This discount will be applied toward your oldest child's rate.

Registration

We offer child care services year-round. Registrations are accepted on a first come first served basis.

Our non-refundable registration fee is \$75 per child or \$100 per family. Additionally, each family will be charged an annual re-registration fee of \$50 per child or \$75 per family every twelve months.

Admission Prioritization

Enrollment will be on a first-come, first-served basis. However, in the case where a classroom's capacity is limited, we will prioritize enrollment as follows:

1. Children with siblings currently enrolled at First Steps
2. Members of St. Matthew's

In the case of infant care, current First Steps families with enrolled siblings and St. Matthew's members may apply for enrollment up to 9 months before care will begin. First Steps will accept applications from all other families 6 months in advance. For example, on March 15 we begin accepting applications for infant care that will begin on September 15. Due to the high demand

for child care, we will begin billing for care on the date you provide us on your registration form. While we will do our best to accommodate siblings of children enrolled at First Steps and St. Matthew's members, First Steps cannot guarantee enrollment due to required teacher ratios and classroom capacity.

Waiting List

In the event we reach capacity in any age bracket or classroom we will maintain a waiting list on a first come first served basis. The waitlist may be capped at the discretion of the Child Care Committee. Parents wishing to add their child to our waiting list will be required to complete a registration and pay our non-refundable registration fee.

Refunds

Refunds for child care fees are only provided under special situations such as First Steps' inability to meet your child's needs (due to facility maintenance, staffing, or weather emergencies), a parent's job loss, or significant family health concerns.

Vacations and Absences

All parents will be given vacation days to use at their discretion. The number of vacation days varies based on your child's schedule:

- 5 days per week receives 10 vacation days per year
- 4 days per week receives 8 vacation days per year
- 3 days per week receives 6 vacation days per year
- 2 days per week receives 4 vacation days per year
- 1 day per week receives 2 vacation days per year

Vacation days may be used as sick days (as long as you call the day of your child's illness), vacation days (2-week notice required), or used for a holiday (2-week notice required). All holidays that fall on your child's registered day will be charged to you unless a vacation day is used.

Summer Camp Vacations and Absences (5K-6)

All parents will be given vacation days to use at their discretion. The number of vacation days varies based on your child's schedule:

- 5 days per week receives 5 vacation days per Summer Camp session
- 4 days per week receives 4 vacation days per Summer Camp session
- 3 days per week receives 3 vacation days per Summer Camp session
- 2 days per week receives 2 vacation days per Summer Camp session
- 1 day per week receives 1 vacation days per Summer Camp session

Vacation days may be used as sick days (as long as you call the day of your child's illness), vacation days (2-week notice required), or used for a holiday (2-week notice required). All holidays (actual or observed) that fall on your child's registered day will be charged to you unless a vacation day is used.

Leave of Absence Retainer Requirement

Parents who choose to take a leave of absence beyond their vacation days and wish to reserve their child's spot to resume their regular schedule are required to pay for a minimum of two days per week during the leave of absence.

We will do our best to accommodate your preferred schedule if your child will be attending two days per week during the leave of absence, but your flexibility is appreciated as available days may be limited.

This policy applies to maternity leave, summer break, extended winter breaks, and any other time longer than your standard vacation days.

Child Education

Per state regulation 251.04(2)(1)3

Religious Training

First Steps is a ministry of St. Matthew's. Our primary purpose is to provide child care that is built on the premise that all learning and wisdom is to be founded on the infallible Word of God. Accordingly, all subject matter taught at First Steps conforms to the Word of God. This pertains to the origin of life, the sciences, the history of the world, and God's plan of salvation for a world

that is sinful and, therefore, would be lost forever without the knowledge of and faith in Jesus as our Savior from sin and eternal death.

Daily Schedules

Between 6:30 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. arriving children will be assigned to one of our opening rooms.

One opening room will be located in the Nursery/Infant pod, another in the Young 3s/PreK pod, as well as the Flex Room.

At 7:30 a.m. all children will be taken to their regularly assigned room.

As ratios drop children may be reassigned to a different room depending on our child's attendance. Under normal circumstances children will be reassigned into the room of the youngest remaining child in the Nursery/Infant pod and the Young 3s/PreK pod.

Substitute Days

We follow state regulations as a guideline for our child-to-staff member ratios. Parents must notify the Director of any changes to regularly scheduled days of attendance as soon as possible so we have the required number of staff present. Substitute days will be subject to availability.

First Steps is unable to allow make-up days for absences due to illness. Our fees are set to cover expenses when operating at full capacity. Therefore, there is no refund for absent days. You may use your vacation days for illness or unexpected absences.

Curriculum

Children who attend First Steps will enjoy a variety of age-appropriate hands-on activities through HighScope curriculum. We offer activities that include fine motor skills, large motor skills, creative expression, social interaction, intellectual and cognitive growth, and outdoor play. Most important, however, is that each day will include "Jesus Time" to learn about Jesus and what He has done for us.

Lesson plans will be created weekly by the lead teacher in each classroom. They will be completed by Friday morning of the week prior to the planned week. All lesson plans will be reviewed and approved by the Assistant Director.

Cultural Diversity

Children who attend First Steps will be introduced to different cultures consistent with the doctrinal beliefs of St. Matthew's.

Toilet Training

Upon our agreement with a parent's request, children over the age of 18 months may be encouraged to start toilet training. First Steps' staff will do their best to accommodate your plan for potty training within reason and to not cause disruption to the needs of other children and the classroom routine. Accidents are expected and children will never be disciplined for a toileting accident. Please dress your child in clothes that are easy for them to pull up and down during toilet training.

Depending on the number of toileting accidents your child has within a day, First Steps may require that they wear diapers or pull-ups.

Children are considered toilet trained when they meet all of the following criteria:

1. Consistently tells their teacher when they have to use the bathroom.
2. Is able to pull clothes up and down with little assistance.
3. Follows three-step instructions (go to the bathroom, wipe, and wash hands) without assistance.
4. Has no more than one accident during any two-week period.

Your daily rate will be changed after your child is three years old and meets the criteria above.

Indoor Space

Each classroom will be set up to allow children to have quiet time and personal space as appropriate as well as providing a variety of learning centers including art, dramatic play, manipulative, science, math, sensory, books, and puzzles.

Outdoor Play Time

All children will be scheduled for outside playtime (weather-permitting) for a minimum of 20 minutes each morning and 20 minutes each afternoon.

Goals for Infants (6 weeks to 12 months)

In order to individualize our program for each infant, a parent or the child's teacher will update each infant's intake form every three months.

Infants will be allowed to sleep and eat as needed. You may provide us with your infant's schedule and our staff members will make every effort to follow it.

Non-walking children will not be left in one position for long periods of time. We will move them to different areas of the room, give them tummy time, and interact with them using books, music, and developmentally appropriate toys.

Lesson plans will be posted weekly in each classroom.

Goals for Toddlers (12 months to 24 months)

Children will be introduced to a variety of activities such as music, finger plays, small group activities, sensory, art, and play.

We will provide opportunities for parallel and small group play to encourage sharing, using kind words, and expressing feelings appropriately.

The teacher will set limits for children to help them learn appropriate behavior.

Daily schedules will be flexible, but each day will include time for structured activities, free choice activity, and outside play. We will coordinate with you in an effort to meet your child's scheduling needs to the best of our capabilities.

Lesson plans will be posted weekly in each classroom.

Goals for Young 3s and PreK

Children will be offered a variety of activities that include, but are certainly not limited to, letter recognition and early reading, music, art, pretend play, blocks, and large motor activities.

Children will be actively involved in problem solving as well as expressing and understanding their feelings and the feelings of others.

Children will follow a schedule that allows them to participate in large group and small group activities, free play, sensory play, dramatic play, art, and large motor activities.

Lesson plans are posted weekly in each classroom.

Goals for School-Age Children

Children will be offered a variety of developmentally appropriate activities that include, but are certainly not limited to, arts and crafts, self-directed play, dramatic play, quiet reading time, fine and large motor activities both inside and outside, and help with their homework as time allows.

Children will be actively involved in problem solving as well as expressing and understanding their feelings and the feelings of others. These activities will be designed to build up their self-esteem and the self-esteem of their peers.

The children will be offered individual guidance based upon careful observation of each child's needs.

Classroom Schedules

Our classroom schedules are divided by age groups.

Schedules for infants and toddlers (under the age of two) will be based off of the "Child Care Intake for Child Under 2 Years" form completed by parents at enrollment. Our teachers and/or parents update these forms every three months.

Schedules for Young 3s, PreK and school-age children will follow an age-appropriate classroom structure.

All classroom schedules are posted in each classroom and are available at the front desk upon request.

Communication

We believe it is important to have face-to-face communication with you on a daily basis to keep you informed of your child's successes and challenges. We utilize the BrightWheel app to update families throughout the day regarding their child and the activities going on in their classroom. Parents are always welcome to set up a meeting with staff to discuss their child's well-being and progress.

Transitions

As we transition children between activities and classrooms during the day, we will help them by singing fun age-appropriate songs and teaching them the alphabet in sign language.

Field Trips

Our staff members will confirm that each child's parent has submitted a signed permission slip for walking field trips on the "Child Care Enrollment" form DCF-62. If you have not authorized your child to participate in walking field trips, we will provide alternative activities for your child.

Non-walking field trips will require us to rent a school bus for transportation. Parents will be given a field trip permission slip to sign and the form must be returned before your child will be permitted to go on the field trip. If a permission slip is not returned, we will contact you to obtain verbal permission. If you approve we will have the permission slip ready for your signature when you pick up your child. If you do not approve we will provide alternative activities for your child.

Field trips will only be taken by children ages 3 and up.

Water Activities

There is no swimming or wading pool at First Steps. We will offer children the opportunity to use water sensory tables under proper supervision.

Child Guidance

Per state regulation 251.04(2)(i)5

Crying Child

First Steps staff members will respond promptly to a crying child. If the child is an infant our staff members will check their diaper, review the last time they were fed, and monitor them for any health concerns.

If the child is not an infant, staff members will monitor them for any health concerns and redirect them with an activity or move them to a different area. If after one hour of comforting by different staff members the child is inconsolable, we will contact a parent to coordinate the next steps to take.

Discipline

Discipline is designed to help a child develop self-control, self-esteem, and respect for the rights of others. Children will be disciplined through positive guidance, redirection, and the setting of well-defined limits. We will teach your child how to apologize and receive forgiveness in situations where they have wronged someone. Jesus' love and forgiveness are also announced whenever a child corrects their own behavior. We continue to train children to be Jesus' children by exhibiting kindness, love, courtesy, cooperation, and respect for others. No child will be shamed, restrained, or disciplined in a physical manner even at a parent's request. We will use every situation as a learning moment to help guide the child's future behavior.

If a child's recurring behavior becomes a problem the Director and the child's teacher will work together with the parents to develop a plan to assist the child in learning age-appropriate behavior. We will document any incidents to help identify the triggers for inappropriate behavior.

Redirection

First Steps prefers to use redirection rather than time-outs when children act inappropriately. Redirection allows the child to step away from the situation that is causing a problem. Any child that needs redirection will be clearly told why they are being moved to a different area.

We will assist the child by using words or phrases that will help them identify what they are feeling. Examples include, "It looks like you are upset -- tell me what happened," "I can tell you are angry," "Count to ten," and "Take a deep breath."

When a staff member decides that the best option for the child to regain composure is to be removed from the stimulation or environment of a situation, a safe place will be provided for them to self-regulate. It will only last up to the child's age in minutes and a teacher will work with the child to co-regulate as needed or desired.

Biting Policy

Biting is one of the most common and difficult behaviors to manage in a group child care setting. It is difficult for the victim, the biter, and our staff members.

When a child is bitten, we will follow the specific steps listed below for the biter and the victim:

For the biter:

- The biter will be immediately removed without emotion using words such as "Stop. That is not okay."
- The biter will not be allowed to return to play until a staff member has the opportunity to talk with them at a level the child can understand. For example, "I can see you want that ball, but I can't let you hurt him to get it. You will need to wait for your turn."
- After talking the biter will be redirected to another area to play.

- Staff members will document the incident in the medical log book and fill out our incident report for the parents to sign.

For the victim:

- We will immediately separate the victim from the biter.
- A staff member will comfort the victim.
- We will administer first aid as needed.
- Staff members will document the incident in the medical log book and fill out an incident report for the parents to sign.

If biting becomes severe, First Steps will take the following actions:

- Talk to the parents and identify any triggers that may be causing the biting.
- Require our staff members to document behavior before and after the biting occurs.
- If a child's biting behavior continues after these steps the Director may seek additional professional resources for observing, evaluating, and correcting this behavior.

Contingency Plans

Per state regulations 251.04(2)(i)6 and 251.06(3)

Attendance

Attendance records will be kept in each classroom. Children's daily arrival and departure times will be recorded using our electronic attendance system. During the morning arrival and late afternoon pick-up, our teachers will be updated immediately as children are added to or removed from their care.

Fire and Tornado Safety

Fire evacuation plans will be practiced each month. A fire/tornado evacuation plan will be posted near the door of each classroom. Tornado drills will be practiced each month from April through October. The Director will document the dates of the monthly fire drills, weekly smoke detector tests, and monthly tornado drills in compliance with state regulations.

Severe Weather

In the event of a severe weather warning, our staff members will move children to their assigned interior bathroom, nap room, or flex room for safety. There will be a supply kit with a weather radio, flashlight, and a first aid kit in each designated safety area and at the front desk. The Director and teachers will bring attendance forms and emergency contact information with them.

Mandatory Closing of a Room or Rooms Due to Pandemic

In the event of a pandemic, we will follow the direction of the Waukesha County health department.

Emergency Evacuations

All available staff members will evacuate children through the nearest exit and assist anyone needing additional help during the evacuation. Teachers will bring along attendance forms for their classroom and the Director and teachers/staff will bring along emergency contact numbers for all children.

Our staff members will take children to their designated safe area and conduct a head count to verify all children under their care are present. The Director and/or lead teachers will contact emergency responders as needed and notify parents.

If it is unsafe to return to our facility, children will be cared for at their designated safe space until they are picked up by their parents.

Loss of Utility Services

If we lose the use of heat, water, or electricity prior to opening the Director will notify parents by 6:30 a.m. that we will be closed until the use of all services is restored.

If we lose the use of heat, water, or electricity during normal business hours, the Director will notify the parents and ask them to pick up their child if services are not restored within one hour.

Weather Emergency Closings

We are closed if the Oconomowoc Area School District closes due to snowy or icy conditions. We may remain open if the Oconomowoc Area School District closes due to any other weather-related factor (cold, flooding, etc.). We will notify you as soon as possible if we will be closed during our regular business hours.

Threats

In the event First Steps receives a threat to our facilities or any occupants, we will contact appropriate law enforcement agencies immediately and the Director will notify parents as soon

as possible. Depending on the nature of the threat, the Director may decide to evacuate the facility and/or close for the day.

Missing Child

In the event of a missing child, we will thoroughly search our entire facility in an effort to locate the missing child. If the missing child is not found during our search the Director will notify the child's parents and the appropriate law enforcement agency immediately.

Child Emergency Precautions

First Steps will always have at least two staff members on site as a safety precaution.

One additional staff member will be on call as an emergency contact. Their contact information will be posted at the front desk. This additional staff member must be within 5 minutes of First Steps' facility.

We will always have a vehicle available to provide transportation to urgent care or an emergency room as needed.

Emergency Numbers

Emergency numbers for fire, police, state Department of Family Services, and the poison control center will be posted at the front desk where all staff members have access to them.

Health Care Policy

Per state regulation 251.04(2)(i)2

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

All First Steps staff members will be educated and trained in preventing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). We will take the following SIDS-prevention precautions for any child under the age of 12 months:

- All infants will be placed on their backs to sleep unless we receive signed authorization from the child's physician and a legal release signed by the parents.
- No bumper pads or soft toys will be allowed in a child's crib.
- All sheets will be well-fitted and not loose.
- If a child falls asleep in a swing or a car seat they will be moved to their crib.

Child Health Requirements

To reduce or prevent the spread of contagious diseases, First Steps requires that children with the following medical conditions or diseases remain at home:

- Fever of 100.4° or higher
- Vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Diarrhea
 - If a child under 3 has more than two diarrheic incidents within a 24-hour period
 - If a child is 3 or older has more than one diarrheic incident within a 24-hour period
- Chicken pox
- Pertussis/whooping cough (until the child has been on antibiotics for 5 days)
- Mumps
- Hepatitis A
- Measles
- Head Lice
- Scabies (until all treatments are completed)
- Strep throat (until 24 hours after treatment has been started)
- Pink eye (until 24 hours after treatment has been started)
- An unidentified rash
- Constant, thick, colored nasal discharge

Children may return to First Steps if they are symptom-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication or have clearance from a health care provider. In accordance with the instructions of health care providers, if a child is required to take an antibiotic the child should not return to First Steps until the child has been on the antibiotic for at least 24 hours.

Disease Prevention

We will follow procedures on personal cleanliness and communicable diseases found in state regulations and the guidelines for the exclusion of children followed by the Waukesha County Department of Public Health.

Each classroom has a sink for hand washing with posted signs outlining the proper steps for hand washing. Children and staff members will be trained in the proper steps of hand washing.

Our staff members will inform you whenever your child is exposed to a communicable disease. Certain diseases must be reported to the public health department.

Child Illness or Injury

Our staff members will take emergency contact information and a first aid kit with them whenever they take children on a field trip or away from our facility. Any injuries that occur on a field trip or off site will be recorded in the classroom medical logbook.

If a child becomes ill or seriously injured at First Steps or on a field trip, the Director will contact the child's parents immediately.

We will isolate sick children within sight and sound and make them as comfortable as possible. Parents should pick up ill children as soon as possible. If we are unable to notify a parent within one hour, we will notify the child's emergency contact.

Superficial injuries will be washed with soap and water, covered up with a bandage, and treated with ice if needed. Parents will be notified about any minor injuries at pick-up.

Our staff members will wear protective gloves when treating injuries or cleaning up spills that involve blood or bodily fluid. We will also wash our hands with soap and water after removing protective gloves and dispose of the protective gloves in plastic bags immediately. Any staff member who comes into contact with blood or body fluids will wash the affected area immediately with soap and water.

If a child comes into contact with blood or body fluids our staff members will thoroughly wash the child's affected area immediately with soap and water. If there is a spill involving bodily fluids our staff will thoroughly clean and disinfect the affected area.

All First Steps staff members will be trained in child CPR and have access to first aid supplies outside of each classroom and at the front desk.

If you decide to seek medical treatment for your child upon departing from First Steps, you must inform the Director immediately.

Medications

First Steps staff members are able to dispense specific medications providing there is proper documentation and authorization to do so:

- All medication must be in its original packaging or container.
- All medication brought to First Steps will be kept securely in your child's classroom in a covered labeled container.
- For medication to be dispensed, a signed Authorization to Administer Medication Form from a parent must accompany all medications including the dosage amount, time to dispense, and any other special instructions for each medication. This form will be available at the front desk.
- We will review any medications dispensed with parents at drop-off.
- When you pick up your child, we will inform you of any of your requested medications that we have dispensed to your child.

We will keep a written record (including type of medication given, dosage, time, date, and the name of the person administering the medication) in our medical log book each time our staff members dispenses medication. The Director will review all log books at least every six months.

Non-Medical Over-the-Counter Products

We will only apply non-medical products that you provide such as sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper creams, and all other non-medical products to your child if we have your signed authorization to do so.

Cleaning Policy

Our staff members will be responsible for keeping their classrooms and working areas clean and sanitized. Classroom toys will be washed and sanitized daily in the Infant and Toddler rooms. Any toy that is mouthed will be put in the wash and sanitize bin when the child is finished playing with it. All toys in the Young 3s, PreK, and School Age rooms will be washed and sanitized weekly.

Infant and Toddler Diapering

Our staff members will follow the diapering procedure that is posted by all classroom changing stations. We will wear gloves when changing a dirty diaper that contains a bowel movement. All diapers will be placed in a hands-free garbage can. All diapers that contain a bowel movement will be bagged before being placed in the garbage can. Any soiled clothing will be bagged and sent home. Any soiled bedding will be promptly changed and washed.

Nutrition

Per state regulation 251.04(2)(i)4

First Steps kitchen staff members will be trained on kitchen safety and will take the state-required four-hour nutrition and food safety training courses annually.

We provide your child with a morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack while they are at First Steps. We plan to offer a meal or snack roughly every three hours. Children who arrive before 7:30 a.m. may bring their breakfast with them if desired.

We will encourage children to be self-sufficient and feed themselves independently. Snack and lunch times will be designed to be an enjoyable time. Our staff members will engage the children to encourage positive eating habits and have conversations with them.

Eating surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized before and after snacks and lunch.

First Steps will follow the United State Department of Agriculture's (USDA) food requirements. Menus will be posted outside of the kitchen and in each classroom. We will update the posted menus with any menu changes as soon as possible.

Children with food allergies may substitute items on the menu, but they must still meet the USDA's food requirements. We will also allow parents to provide a substitute lunch (or portion of lunch) if their child has food allergies or is on a specific diet (ex: vegetarian, etc.). We will post a child's food allergies in the classroom so all staff members are aware of them.

School-aged children will be offered a snack after school.

Children 12 months and under will be given formula or breast milk. Parents are responsible for preparing bottles at home and bringing them to First Steps ready to serve.

Parents will supply infant cereal and jar foods when children are ready to start solid foods. All bottles and baby food jars must be labeled your child's name and the date it is brought to First Steps. We will always bottle-feed children by hand unless the child is independent with feedings. We will dispose of unused formula and breast milk one hour after serving. We will rinse all bottles and send them home for thorough washing.

First Steps will store all food off of the floor and, once opened, will store it in an airtight container. We will maintain proper temperature for refrigerators (40 degrees or colder) and freezers (0 degrees or colder).

We will not use food containers or cans unless they are free of dents, meet the USDA requirements, and are within the provider's recommended use date.

Our staff members will wash and sanitize all dishes in accordance with licensing regulations as posted in the kitchen. We will use a commercial dishwasher to clean dishes and air dry them using racks, baskets, or drain boards. We will use equipment and utensils that are easily cleanable, in good repair, non-toxic, and free of cracks and chips. Food preparation areas will be durable and the work surfaces will be smooth and easily cleanable. Our kitchen staff members will follow all licensing regulations regarding hand washing and handling of food and equipment.

Parents may provide birthday and holiday treats, but they must be nut-free. Parents of a child with any food allergies are encouraged to provide alternative treats for their child that meet their specific needs.

First Steps is a nut-free facility.

Transportation

Per state regulation 251.04(2)(i)9

Driver Requirements

To drive a First Steps vehicle one must meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Have a valid Wisconsin operator's license for the type of vehicle driven
- Have at least one year of experience as a licensed driver
- Be a paid First Steps staff member

- Agree not to talk on a phone, text, or manipulate other electronic devices while driving
- Agree to drive lawfully

The Director will obtain a copy of the driving record of each First Steps driver at least annually and review it for any traffic accidents or traffic violations. If a staff member's driving record indicates they could pose a danger to First Steps children, they will no longer be permitted to drive for First Steps. The staff member's annual driving record will be placed in their personnel file. Staff members will be required to inform the Director of any changes in their driving records.

Vehicle Requirements

First Steps staff members will not use their personally-owned vehicle for transporting First Steps children except in the case of a medical emergency.

Under normal circumstances we will use one of the following options to transport your child:

- A vehicle owned by First Steps
- A vehicle provided by a transportation contractor such as Oconomowoc Transport

No Child Left Unattended in Vehicles

Our staff members will not leave a child unattended in a vehicle. Once we arrive at our destination, we will physically inspect the vehicle to ensure all children have exited. If we are using bus transportation, our staff members will walk all the way to the back of the bus to verify that all children have exited.

Child Safety Restraints

All children under the age of 8 or weighing less than 80 pounds will be required to use a car seat or booster seat.

Child Tracking Policy

Our staff members will keep track of the children under their care by using attendance sheets and face counts. Each staff member will ensure that all children under their care enter and exit transportation vehicles.

Emergency Information

Our staff members will carry the following information in the First Steps vehicle they are driving:

- Each child's parental contact information and emergency contact information
- The name, address, and telephone number of each child's physician
- Written consent from each child's parent authorizing emergency medical treatment
- A complete list of children being transported in their vehicle
- A legible map of the route to and from our destination

Transporting Children with Disabilities

One adult, in addition to the driver, must accompany a child with a disability that limits their ability to react in case of an emergency.

Parent Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand First Steps' policies.

Parent printed name

Parent signature

Date _____