



Child Care and Learning Center  
Before and after school care

# ***Parent Handbook***

***Revised December 2023***

## ***Welcome to Sowing Seeds Child Care Center***

Hello and welcome to Sowing Seeds Child Care Center LLC. My name is Allie Houseman and I am the owner of Sowing Seeds. I am honored that you are even considering our center for your child. Just as my four children are my most precious treasures on this earth, I know your child is of infinite value to you. I believe with my whole heart that each and every child deserves loving, compassionate, patient, responsive care. Therefore, it is my goal to achieve your trust and become like an extension of your family, and provide an environment where your child feels completely at home.

The staff here is a group of dedicated individuals who believe in helping the children in their care develop socially, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Employees are very carefully selected, interviewed and trained to be the best providers possible. They are compassionate, observant, and naturally nurturing. All staff has had a criminal and central registry clearance and there is always more than one onsite staff member who is trained in CPR and First Aid.

Sowing Seeds has designed our program around a few important concepts. We want to specifically focus on **Faith, Family, and Farm**. Sowing Seeds Child Care Center is a Christian-based child care program in which we will have regular Bible story time, fun children's songs, prayer time before meals, and the study of Christlike character including truthfulness, kindness, love, generosity and sharing, and respect. Secondly, we want to embrace the family relationship. We seek to teach your child about his or her emotions, self-regulation of those emotions for harmonious family living, respecting and appreciating mom and dad, and love for siblings. If your child has sibling(s) in the center, we will attempt to have special sibling time on occasion so that your children can have positive interaction during the day. Thirdly, we would like to embrace the value and beauty of nature, in particular, appreciation of the farm. On a side note, the center is named in part after Allie's grandparents, Albert and Tina Dykstra, who were flower and fruit farmers for years in Kent City. We can learn so much through the study and exploration of farming and nature in general.

We believe communication between the parent and teacher is of extreme importance and we strive to be good communicators to offer you information regarding how your child's day went. We use a live feed platform called Brightwheel to record your child's diapers, bottles, food intake, naps, and accomplishments. We encourage you to share openly any concerns or questions that may arise.

No matter what age your child is, if there are any special issues you want to address such as- allergies, length of naps or eating habits we want you to feel free to discuss them with us. We want you to feel comfortable when dropping your child off with us and we will help you in any way possible to meet that goal. We will work to our best ability to meet the needs of all children.

Sincerely,

Allie Houseman and Sowing Seeds Management

### **Program philosophy**

Sowing Seeds Child Care Center LLC believes each child is a unique and special individual that deserves affectionate attention and care. We believe all children were created with their own personality, gifts, and qualities that should be nurtured and developed. We believe that children do need to learn respect for adults and authority while at the same time fostering their independent thinking. We strive to teach social-emotional intelligence (an understanding of one's own feelings and an appreciation and respect of others feelings).

We will provide a safe and caring environment, which allows children to discover, explore and grow in developmentally appropriate ways. We believe the foundation of learning *academically* is to be loved and cared for *emotionally*. Sowing Seeds uses very strict hiring principles to assure excellent quality, compassionate, knowledgeable teachers are operating according to our philosophy.

### ***Our Mission:***

The purpose of Sowing Seeds Child Care Center is to provide a safe, loving, and healthy environment for all children in our care and to provide daily opportunities for emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual\*, and physical growth to develop each child to his or her fullest God-given potential.

\*Sowing Seeds Child Care Center is a Christian faith-based day care center. We do not discriminate any parent or child upon enrollment, and will provide the same exceptional quality care to each and every child in our facility. This statement is made to disclose the fact that when referring to spiritual development, it will be in the Christian faith.

### **Licensing Notebook**

The center's licensing notebook will be available to parents during regular business hours. The licensing notebook contains all licensing inspections and special investigation reports and related corrective action plans since opening (2017).

Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from at least the past two years are available on the child care licensing website at

**[www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare).**

## **Admission Procedure**

The director will arrange an interview with the parent(s)/guardian prior to admissions to review our program and procedures. The following **MUST** be on file before the child may attend per state licensing rules.

\*These Records are updated reviewed and updated annually.

1. Child Care Contract (Tuition Agreement)
2. Information Card (Emergency Contacts)
3. Immunization Record- Must be turned in upon first attendance.
4. Health Appraisal Form- Must be in within 30 days of enrollment and will need to be updated EVERY YEAR.

## **Tuition and Payment Arrangement**

- A one-time enrollment fee of \$100.00 per child is required upon enrollment. **THIS FEE IS NONREFUNDABLE.** This assures Sowing Seeds Administration that you are serious about your child's enrollment and allows us to purchase new supplies to use specifically for your child. Care for your child would be expected to begin within a reasonable amount of time from the date of enrollment payment. It will be the discretion of the administration to decide if your spot can be held for an exceedingly long amount of time. An exception may be made for a family expecting a baby at a particular due date or for post maternity leave. It is unrealistic otherwise to expect Sowing Seeds Child Care to reserve a spot for an unspecified amount of time.

## ***Additional Tuition and Fee Information:***

- Tuition rates are available at the front desk upon request and will be discussed prior to enrolling a child.
- Tuition is due by Friday at close for the following weeks' scheduled child care. If your child does not attend on Fridays, then your payment for the following week will be due on the last scheduled day of the previous week. Tuition is automatically deducted through Brightwheel, our billing and communication platform.
- We require advance notice if there is to be a schedule change. Your tuition will be paid ahead one week and staffing will be scheduled accordingly. There is no guarantee that we can accommodate your schedule change, but we will do our best according to our staffing/ratios.
- A \$20 fee will be assessed for late payment unless previous arrangements were approved.
- A \$35 fee will be assessed for NSF checks, and child care will not be provided the following week until tuition and the fee is paid in full.
- Tuition is due regardless of illness or holiday observation as defined by the handbook. The tuition collected on closed holidays is used to cover staff wages, rent, taxes and utilities (building expenses whether we are open or not)

- A \$10 discount will be given off the oldest child's tuition rate for families with two children enrolled. This excludes children who attend another program or school outside of our care (ex: Sparta, White ECC, Kindergarten, GSRP, etc)
- Payment is securely drafted [BEFORE the scheduled care] automatically through Brightwheel on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly schedule according to your preference. If you are a monthly payer, your draft for the next month will be pulled on the last day of the previous month. If that day falls on a bank holiday or a weekend, please be prepared for an early draft.
- IN THE EVENT OF A NATURAL DISASTER (including but not limited to power outage, winter storms, tornado or building damages, water supply issues, pandemic or local epidemic, governmental shutdowns, etc) tuition will still be charged. The situation that is out of the owner's control will be closely evaluated, and any tuition exceptions, deductions, etc will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- Parents are expected to call in case of unexpected delays such as severe weather. Otherwise, there will be a \$1/minute late charge assessed to your tuition. Please keep this in mind when making a choice upon enrollment for full day rate vs extended hours day rate.

### **Scheduling**

- Sowing Seeds Child Care Center LLC schedules staff according to the parents' pre-planned schedules. We are committed to providing care for the contracted days and will do our best to accommodate your unplanned schedule changes as we can, but it is not guaranteed.
- Please make sure that your child is signed in and out whenever he/she is coming into or exiting the building.
- For safety reasons and the required sign-in/sign-out, please be sure to escort your child to and from the building. We ask that the parents do not allow the children to walk to the car by his/herself, or play outside the fenced area. We also would like parents to be sure that the teacher is aware that the child has been dropped off. Attention may be on the other children, or diaper changing, etc so please make sure the teacher has verbally connected with you upon drop-off.
- Sowing Seeds Child Care Center requests that the child's parent/guardian or authorized person over the age of 18 (with a valid driver's license) pickup and drop off the child in the building.

### **Vacation Policy**

- Full time students (5 days/week) will be granted ONE week of vacation for your child per year. Tuition will be waived for one week of your child(ren) being in attendance. One week means 5 consecutive days of care.
- The director requires two weeks' notice prior to vacations. If a parent fails to give two weeks' notice, they will be charged their weekly child care tuition.

- Vacations can be used to cover extended time off due to illness or hardship as well if approved by the director. Feel free to ask management if you would like to apply your vacation time to unforeseen circumstances.
- You must be **ENROLLED 90 days** before using your vacation week. Your fiscal year rolls over on your enrollment date. For example, if "Susie" is enrolled on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021, you can use your first vacation week starting September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and then your next one week will renew on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
- Your unpaid vacation week **does not** carry over into the next fiscal year.
- Children who **ONLY** attend in the summertime **DO NOT** get vacation. If the school age children attend year round for before or after school as well as occasional school breaks, they **WILL** be allotted vacation time.
- Vacation time is treated as a **WHOLE** family benefit, meaning we do not split vacation weeks up for different siblings. If 2 children are enrolled, then you have 1 week of **FAMILY** vacation. This may make a difference when deciding to use or not use it in the case of illness if one child is off, but the other still attends.
- If there is one younger sibling, for example a full time infant, and you have a school age sibling who **ONLY** attends in the summer, the vacation credit will be applied to the infant only.

### **Sick Policy**

\*Every attempt is made to keep the children healthy and safe. Sowing Seeds Child Care Center LLC asks that the parents strictly adhere to the sick policy; this will help in our efforts.

*Guidelines for excluding sick children:*

1. Fever-any temperature over 101 degrees (un-medicated) in a 24 hour period.
2. Vomiting has occurred during a 24 period.
3. Diarrhea during a 24-hour period.
4. Excessive cough, nasal discharge, or eye discharge.
5. Any unidentified rash.
6. Any communicable disease.
7. Any illness that prevents the child from outdoor activities or group participation.

Child may return when:

Temperature is less than 101 degrees for 24 hours **WITHOUT** Tylenol/Motrin. It has been 24 hours since last episode of vomiting or diarrhea and the child is eating and drinking normally. A written note from the child's physician will be required for the child to return after a communicable disease.

\*\*\*Sowing Seeds Child Care Center holds the right to override a physician's written release when the health of other children could be jeopardized.

\*\*\*If your child becomes ill while in our care, you will be called to come pick your child up. If you cannot be reached then your child's second contact or emergency contact will be attempted to be notified. It is expected that you come to pick your

child up within a reasonable amount of time-asap) to provide your child comfortable care at home and to protect the other children in the center from unnecessary exposure.

### **Tuition for sick children**

- Your tuition pays for the *RESERVATION* of care, not necessarily *USED* care, meaning sick days are a normal occurrence for every child throughout their youngest years. Your tuition pays for the commitment that we will schedule, plan for, and provide excellent care, not the actual attendance of your child. Therefore, parents will be charged even in the event of sickness or for random days taken off.
- If your child is absent from Sowing Seeds Child Care Center LLC three consecutive scheduled days with no phone call, no show, your child will lose his/her position, and you will need to re-enroll your child, based on current availability and the director's discretion.

**Emergency Medical Care Procedures** In case of an emergency the following steps will be taken:

1. Call 911. Second Caregiver assist the child using our Emergency trainings and plans.
2. Attempt to contact parent or guardian.
3. Attempt to contact persons listed as emergency contacts if parents can't be reached.

\*Parents will receive written notification of any minor accidents or incidents that occur with your child at Sowing Seeds Childcare LLC. Please check Brightwheel regularly for notifications of any incidents.

\*Fire procedures are posted in all areas and drills are held 1x each quarter during the year. Tornado procedures are posted in all areas; 2 tornado drills will be held between the months of April through October.

### **Medication**

\* All medications will be administered to the child with a written medical permission form (on file at the center) from the parent or guardian, and in the medication's original container with original pharmaceutical label if prescription.

\* Sowing Seeds Child Care Center will not administer the first dosage of any prescribed medication due to a potential allergic reaction.

### **Bumps and Bruises**

If your child incurs a minor injury, such as a skinned knee or slight cut (situations that are not an emergency) you will receive an accident report describing how it happened and the action taken by a qualified staff person. In the event of an emergency requiring more than first aid attention, you will be contacted according to the instructions on your enrollment form. We ask that you authorize the center

to take whatever emergency measures deemed necessary for the medical care and protection of your child. Should an accident occur, a written report will be provided.

### **Hours of Operation**

\*The center will be open Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

\* Sowing Seeds Child Care Center will make every attempt to remain open despite adverse weather conditions. If you have any questions, please try calling the center before attempting to bring your child. We will post closings on Channel TV 13 and our Facebook Page and email. Be sure to check them if you are questioning the weather.

### **Holidays**

\* The following holidays the center will be closed:

1. New Year's Day
2. Memorial Day
3. Independence Day
4. Labor Day
5. Thanksgiving Day
6. Friday after Thanksgiving
7. Christmas Eve Day\*
8. Christmas Day\*
9. New Year's Eve

\*In the event that Christmas Eve and Christmas Day falls on a Saturday and/or Sunday, the holiday closure will still be observed on the Friday before or the Monday after. For example, if Christmas Eve is on Friday and Christmas Day is on Saturday, then the center will take the extra day on Monday. We will let you know in advance (with reminders and notices hung up) the days that we will be closed. This rule will not apply to July 4<sup>th</sup>. If the 4<sup>th</sup> falls on a Saturday or Sunday we will remain open Monday-Friday

\*As a courtesy to our staff and scheduling efforts, PLEASE let us know AT LEAST TWO WEEKS if your child will not be attending. We schedule based on ratios and attendance. Thank you

### **Daily Routine**

The following is our approximate daily routine. Each classroom is a bit different due to age. This routine is subject to change based on the needs of the children and the size and growth of the center. At all times, and under all circumstances your child will be fed meals and snacks according to the nutritional guidelines provided by licensing and will be allowed a rest time. (Infants sleep and eat on demand.) Before



and after school children will be fed breakfast prior to bus pickup for school and will be given an afternoon snack upon arrival to the center. Daily activities and time for creative play, outdoor play (weather accommodating), learning, reading, and socializing are part of everyday, but may vary in time depending on the children's interest, participation and cooperation. Our utmost priority is to maintain a routine that is healthy and nurturing of the mind and body.

#### Daily Schedule

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 6:00 – 7:45   | Arrival/Learning Centers                        |
| 7:45 – 8:00   | Clean-up/Bathroom/Wash Hands                    |
| 8:00 – 8:45   | Breakfast                                       |
| 8:45 – 9:15   | Circle Time – Teaching/Story/Music and Movement |
| 9:15 – 9:30   | Small Group                                     |
| 9:30 – 10:45  | Planning/Free Choice/Clean-up                   |
| 10:45 – 11:15 | Recess – Outdoors                               |
| 11:15 – 11:30 | Bathroom/Wash Hands                             |
| 11:30 – 12:15 | Lunch   |
| 12:15 – 12:45 | Quiet Time/Nap Prep                             |
| 12:45 – 2:30  | Nap Time/Wake Up                                |
| 2:30 – 3:00   | Hearty Snack                                    |
| 3:00 – 4:15   | Recess – Outdoors                               |
| 4:15 – 6:15   | Free Choice Playtime and learning centers       |
| *5:00-5:15    | Light Snack                                     |
| 5:15 – 6:00   | Close Rooms/Departure                           |

### **Discipline Policy**

Active and happy classrooms are a key to a good childcare center. Sowing Seeds Child Care Center caregivers plan and implement stimulating learning programs, which keep your child challenged and constructively active. In such environments, the need to discipline children is minimal, but it does arise. When children must be disciplined at the childcare center, the caregivers choose the most appropriate of the following methods. **Discipline and your child's behavior STARTS at HOME.** PLEASE take the time and effort that is required to parent effectively, so that your child will succeed in the classroom and really- in life in general. A child must learn self-control, respect for authority, and a general awareness of care and love for others in order to reach his or her fullest potential.

1. *Redirection of the Child's Behavior.* The caregiver talks with the child, explains the problem, clarifies the "rule" or expectation, and redirects the child to appropriate behavior actions. The tone of the caregiver's voice is firm but supportive.

2. *"Time Away"* - This is a time for the child to get his body under control and self-regulate those strong emotions. To remove the child from a situation in order to discontinue the negative behavior, the caregiver responds immediately with a brief explanation such as, "You hit Tyler and I think you might need time away from him."

Let's think about how Tyler feels right now and how you feel right now." Direct the child to a calm-down spot and then talk about how we could better handle the emotions that caused the behavior. We would follow up in this example with a time for apology and a time for forgiveness. This allows for reconciliation of the situation in both children's hearts.

3. *Removal of Privilege.* In order to use a consequence as a learning experience for a child, the caregiver will remove a privilege that is logically in response to an inappropriate or behavior not allowed. For example, if the child continues to climb on top of a riding toy and the child has been reminded of the safety rules, then the caregiver may take away the privileges of playing on the riding toy for a period of time.

4. *Parent's Assistance-* We are a team, but as the parent, you are ultimately responsible for the loving discipline of your child. The staff will do our very best to help your child regain control while in our care, but it may become necessary to call a parent to return to the center in situations where children are seriously out-of-control. In these times, a parent will be asked to come to the Child care center to help the child gain back their control. It is in the best interest of all children to have healthy and loving boundaries and expected controlled behavior at home, and behavior at the center is an extension of your training in the home.

\*Sowing Seeds Child Care Center believes that the parent and staff must work closely together to solve problems that arise. Caregivers make every effort to communicate with parents about behavior problems and the discipline action taken. The communication may happen in the form of a phone call, end-of-day conversation when parent picks up their child, or a scheduled conference.

\*We want parents to know what we will not do in regard to discipline. Caregivers will not humiliate or demean a child in any form verbally or physically. Corporal punishment such as hitting or spanking is absolutely forbidden. It is our belief the children do not like being out-of-control. They need adults to firmly and consistently exert boundaries in a loving, calm, and patient way.

### **Privacy Policy**

If your child is bitten or physically harmed by another child, it is our policy to keep the names of both children involved private. This is done to prevent animosity among parents and children. A file is kept to keep track of repetitive problem behavior, such as biting, and this will be handled privately between staff and parents. The safety and well-being of your child will at all times remain our number one priority.

### **Clothing**

\*We recommend that all items that belong to your child be clearly marked with his/her name. This includes tags on coats, boots, clothes, and blankets.

\*Please dress your child in comfortable, washable, play clothes. He/she will experience painting, water, and indoor/outdoor play throughout his/her day.

\*We ask that you provide an extra set of weather appropriate clothing for your child at all times.

## **Toilet Training**

\*Staff will happily work with parents in the potty training process. Please supply us with 2 to 3 extra sets of clothes. You can expect soiled clothing regularly during the beginning phases of training. We will send the dirty clothing home in a sealed plastic bag. If clothing is all soiled, a child will be placed in a pull up and the last set of pants will be used. We believe toilet training is a time in a toddlers life that requires extra patience and care and consideration. We will never talk in a demeaning or unkind way to your child regarding accidents. Staff and parents should work together and communicate closely regarding success and setbacks to determine readiness and approaches to training. You as the parent are our leader in this area of your child's life and we will do the best we can to work together towards independent bathroom use.

## **Diapering**

\*Parents are expected to supply diapers for their child(ren). Parents will be notified when children are in need of diapers. The center will supply diapers in case a parent does forget, but please make every effort to replace asap.

\*Wipes (Member's Mark Sam's Club brand) for cleaning during diaper changes will be provided at the center's expense. If you prefer your child uses a different brand or if your child experiences a skin reaction to this type of wipe, then you are expected to provide your child with wipes at your expense.

\* Please have at least one extra set of clothing, weather appropriate at the center at all times for those instances when diapers leak or baby has a blow-out. ☺ For infants, two or more changes of clothing may be appropriate.

## **Daily Records**

For infants and toddlers, parents will receive Brightwheel notifications that include at least the following information: Food intake; time, type of food, and amount eaten. Sleeping patterns; when and how long child slept. Diaper changes, including bowel movements, consistency, and frequency. Developmental milestones and changes in the child's usual behaviors. The young preschool class and preschool class will also have Brightwheel communications that include food and naps.

## **Toys**

Toys brought from home can easily get misplaced or even broken. We prefer that your child enjoy them at home or bring them only on special sharing days. Please leave all toys at home.

Sowing Seeds Child Care Center will not be responsible for personal items that become lost or broken.

### **Rest Time**

\*A rest period is scheduled each day, and your child will be encouraged to rest quietly during this time. Each child should have a blanket labeled with his/her name. \*All children are required to "rest" regardless of age, or take part in a quiet activity such as reading or coloring.

### **Outdoor Play**

\*Outdoor play is part of our daily program for all children. During inclement weather, too hot or too cold days, our program provides indoor activities for the children. We try to get the children outside often as possible so please be sure that your child has appropriate clothing for all seasons.

\*Children will not be required to play outside if the temperature or wind-chill is below 20 degrees or above 85 degrees in the summer.

\*Outdoor play is so important for children's development and curiosity; therefore, Sowing Seeds Child Care Center will encourage your child's exploration of our outdoor area. We have sand, and water/mud kitchens, etc. You can expect your child to engage and have a blast learning about his/her outdoor environment. We anticipate planting seeds, and studying fruits and vegetables, and we anticipate messy hands and fingernails. This is a sign your child is having a fun and healthy learning, creative experience with nature. Please be understanding of dirty clothes and do not send your child in special fancy clothing or shoes.

### **Field Trips**

Sowing Seeds occasionally takes the children on walking "field trips" to Tasty Treat for ice cream or up to Ridgeview for playground time. Any planned trip that involves leaving the center's property is considered a field trip. Permission slips will be sent home before each field trip. Each slip must be signed and returned prior to the scheduled trip. Ridgeview playground is a regular weekly destination and therefore we would have you sign permission upon enrollment.

### **Nutrition**

Sowing Seeds Child Care Center is going to provide food for children including breakfast, lunch, and up to 2 snacks depending on the length of your child's day.

**\*\*\*\*Infants (birth until 1 year old)-** Parents of infant children will be required to provide baby food for their child including all bottles (formula or breastmilk) up to one year old. \*Bottles must be fresh each day and must be labeled clearly with child's first and last name and date and placed in fridge at beginning of day. By code, formula must be **PREPARED by the parent**, ready to feed. We cannot mix packets or powder. At 1 year of age and per your physician's recommendation, the center will provide whole Vitamin D milk in sippy cups. Parents are required to provide cereal/oatmeal ready to eat (we can heat up if requested) and jars or containers of baby food (example: carrots and peas, and applesauce) until the baby has completely transitioned to safely eating table food cut in small pieces.

\*The daily meal program includes breakfast, lunch, early afternoon snack, and a late afternoon snack, which follow nutritional guidelines set forth by licensing. Your child must arrive at the center before the scheduled meal times in order to have the meal provided.

8:00 - 8:45 a.m. - Breakfast

11:00 - 11:30 a.m. - Lunch

2:00 - 2:30 p.m. - Snack

5:00 - 5:30 p.m. - Light Snack

\* Infants (not on table food) will be fed on demand or a parent's hand-written schedule will be followed.

### **Withdrawal/Disenrollment**

\*Failure to provide the required paperwork stated in admission procedures, including the yearly health appraisal paperwork updates.

\*Parents withdrawing their child from Sowing Seeds Child Care Center LLC must give the director two-week written notice. In a case where the director was not notified, the parent will still be responsible for full payment.

\* Child Care fees that are two weeks delinquent will result in disenrollment unless arrangements are made with the director or owner.

\* Children can be disenrolled and excluded at any time that Sowing Seeds management feels the child is causing a safety concern or disruption for the rest of the class. This could include behaviors such as hitting, pushing, biting, or a general lack of listening and following teachers' directions (like staying safely in line when walking to Ridgeview for example).

### **Equal Opportunity Provided**

Children are admitted to the Sowing Seeds Child Care Center LLC without regard to race, religion, sex, national origin, parent marital status, or political beliefs.

### **Divorces/Separated Parents or Foster Care Situations**

\* If the divorce or separation includes specific custodial restrictions (ie supervised visitation or legal rights terminated), you must notify us and supply supporting court documents. Sowing Seeds cannot deny a parent unless these documents are located in the child's file.

\* Under no circumstances will Sowing Seeds management and teachers become the "middleman" for communication between parents. It is your responsibility to communicate as parents about schedule and changes and vacation, etc. To be clear, in regards to vacation, the contract holder and payee is the one to choose the two "weeks" of vacation. How you divide these weeks per parent is up to your

discretion. Again, Sowing Seeds will not be expected to communicate between parents and make any decisions if there are disagreements amongst each other.

\* If at any point in time, Sowing Seeds management becomes uncomfortable in regards to the separated or divorced parents behavior and communication or lack thereof, we reserve the right to disenroll your child(ren).

### **Center Requirements**

\*We take the safety of your child very seriously. All proper background checks and information about each employee/director/staff is thoroughly checked prior to an offer of employment. NO PERSON with criminal background is allowed to work in our center.

\*Sowing Seeds Child Care Center LLC is licensed by the Michigan Bureau of Regulatory Services. Standards are consistently maintained to exceed the requirements of this agency.

\*All staff members and volunteers of Sowing Seeds Child Care Center LLC will have on file a criminal background check acquired through the State of MI.

\*All staff and volunteers will have on file a background check from the MDHHS (Michigan Department of Health and Human Services) stating that they are free of neglect and child abuse.

### **SCREENING POLICY FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

#### Screening Policy

- 1) All staff shall submit a written application for employment and include addresses and phone numbers of professional references.
- 2) All staff will be interviewed by the administration or director. After the interview, administration or director shall contact two references to ask questions about work history and contact with children.
- 3) All staff will sign a form stating that they:
  - a) Understand that child abuse and neglect is against the law.
  - b) Have been informed of the center's policies on child abuse and neglect.
  - c) Are aware that caregivers are mandated by law to report child abuse and neglect.
- 4) All staff will be required to have a criminal background check through the MI State Police.
- 5) All volunteers will sign a statement certifying that they have never been convicted of child abuse, neglect or a felony involving harm or threatened harm.

- 6) All staff and volunteers shall provide the center with documentation from the Family Independence Agency that he or she has not been placed on the central registry for substantial abuse or neglect, as defined in Act No. 238, Public Acts of 1975, as amended, being 722.621 to 722.636 of the Michigan Compiled Laws. If the volunteer is a parent this sub rule will be waived and they will be supervised at all times by staff.

\*If an applicant/staff member is in violation of any of these listed items, they will not be hired/not allowed at the center/ or immediately be terminated and be reported to DHS.

### **Cultural Plan**

Sowing Seeds Child Care Center LLC is committed to respecting each child's culture and diverse needs. All children deserve an early childhood education that is responsive to their families, communities, and racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Culture influences every aspect of a child's development. Culture is the framework in which children develop and is reflected in childrearing beliefs and practices. Family is the root of our program in which we involve the whole family in all aspects of our program and what we do for your children. We strive to learn accurate information about the cultures and diversity of our families. Our families are treated with respect and sensitivity from the first meeting. We recognize that all children are cognitively, grammatically & emotionally connected to the language & culture of their home. Our program actively involves parents and families in the early learning program. Each child and family will be supported in their cultural values and norms of the home. Our focus will be on incorporating the diverse cultures of our families, community, and the city they live in. The staff at Sowing Seeds Child Care Center will refrain from making assumptions of others. All staff will have training opportunities annually to further their knowledge of enhancing their daily communications and curriculum planning. If there is any way we can better accommodate your child and your family culturally, please communicate these needs with us, as we desire to understand each and every child's cultural needs.

### **Special Needs Plan**

For children with special needs, an inclusive child care program provides belonging, acceptance and developmentally appropriate practices. They learn typical developing skills from their classmates, when and how to use these skills, and they have an opportunity to develop friendships with typically developing peers. They are provided opportunities to develop positive attitudes toward themselves and others who are different from themselves. The goals for a child with a disability or other special need are met in a typical early childhood setting to the greatest extent possible. The child has access to and participates in the curriculum and activities. Support services are available to the provider/staff to help best meet the individual needs of the child.

Parents of children with special needs may request a daily written record that includes the following information: Food intake; time, type of food, and amount eaten. Sleeping patterns; when and how long child slept. Elimination patterns, including bowel movements, consistency, and frequency. Developmental milestones and changes in the child's usual behaviors.

Sowing Seeds Child Care Center LLC is committed to the principle of inclusion. The Staff receive ongoing training on inclusion/special needs. The Confidentiality of children and families is respected by all who work with the child. All Staff and families collaborate to meet the individual needs of the child. Communication with families is ongoing and is responsive to the needs of families. Our facilities physical environment is free of barriers so that the child is free to move around as needed. A variety of teaching strategies are used to meet the individual needs of children. Staff facilitate or enhance interactions between children with and without disabilities.

Sowing Seeds Child Care Center makes every effort to be in close communication with the parents of the children in our care in order to provide the best care that we can. We understand that there are circumstances that will arise that will require further problem-solving and communication than what can be defined in this handbook. The handbook is reviewed and updated on a yearly basis or more if necessary. Parents will receive updates in the form of written handouts.

It is your responsibility to ask clarifying questions if there is something in the handbook that you do not understand.