



*Aunt Jenn's  
Early Learning  
Center, Inc.*

925 Orlando St.  
Kingston, NY

**845-383-1060**

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# Parent Handbook

# **WELCOME TO AUNT JENN'S EARLY LEARNING AND DAYCARE CENTER**

We hope you find this handbook informative and helpful. It contains important information about Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center and our policies. We do ask that you read it carefully and sign the acknowledgement on the last page. Please return the acknowledgement after signing and please feel free at any time to ask questions if you have any.

## **PROGRAM INFORMATION**

Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center serves children 2 years and 9 months to 5 years of age. We are licensed by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services and registered to have a maximum of 18 children at any one time. The children are usually divided into small groups throughout the day according to the activity.

## **GOALS**

- To provide a safe and secure learning environment for every child that fosters individuality, cooperation, and respect for others
- To supply children with learning experiences in an age appropriate interesting fashion as well as adapting to different learning modalities
- To have children explore by asking questions and experimenting with different materials presented
- To enhance cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development in a fun and exciting way
- To present children with the opportunity to experience music, art, literature, and nature in a way they normally would not be exposed to

## **PHILOSOPHY**

We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and friendly learning environment. We strive to provide a warm inviting atmosphere where

everyone feels welcome and comfortable. Here at Aunt Jenn's we celebrate each child as a unique individual inviting him/her to freely explore the environment developing their own special qualities and talents. We believe children learn through imitation, peer interaction and play. Cooperative play is achieved when a child feels comfortable with another and they build a trusting relationship. Providing an inviting environment where children can learn through play and one that thrives on a close home-school connection also requires parent involvement. Please feel free to contact a teacher to discuss any special talents or hobbies you would like to share with the group. No talent or skill is too minuscule. We like to cook and bake, sing and dance, and we are willing to explore new territory.

With cooperation, comfort and peer support we believe we can create the best possible learning environment suitable for any child. We hope together we can achieve this goal.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

Parents are welcome to visit at any time. Visits can be unannounced or parents can schedule a time to watch their child play and interact with his/her peers. If you have a hobby or special talent you would like to share with your child's class please talk to a teacher so we can arrange a time that works well. We not only welcome parents, but grandparents, aunts, uncles, older siblings, and other relatives to come and read a book, explore the art center, or dress-up in the dramatic play area. Please see a teacher if you are interested in joining in on the fun.

## **STAFF**

One or two teachers, working collaboratively, staff each classroom. All teachers are qualified under the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. All Staff is required by law to have a medical exam upon hiring and every other year that follows. Tuberculosis test must also be completed every 2 years. Staff must be fingerprinted and cleared by the NYS Criminal History Review Unit and the State Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment. All staff members are mandated child abuse reporters and are instructed to report any incident, suspicion or signs of abuse to the NYS Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment at 1-800-635-1522.

Staff must also participate in Early Childhood Education workshops throughout employment as mandated by OCFS. Each staff member is chosen carefully. They demonstrate qualities of warmth, openness and flexibility and have a sincere interest in children and their development.

## **ENROLLMENT POLICY**

Enrollment is based on a first come first served basis and is open to children in the surrounding communities. Please keep in mind that your child is not enrolled until all paperwork is submitted and the registration fee is paid. Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center accepts children without discrimination in regards to sex, race, religion, creed, or national origin. We will make every effort to accommodate children with disabilities, with or without an aide. Please see the Director for further information.

## **SCHEDULING**

Upon enrolling we ask that each family submit a signed contract. If you have to make any changes please submit a change request form and we will make every effort to accommodate the requested change. We also require that every child attends at least 2 days per week.

## **PAYMENT POLICY**

A payment contract is drawn up each year and open enrollment, unless a schedule change is requested. We request that there is 2 weeks notice for contract termination. If we are not given the notice you will be charged for the days not attended anyway. If you must change your initial contract you may do so up to two weeks. After the two weeks there will be a \$10.00 contract change fee. Tuition is due the first Friday of every month. If payment is more than 10 days late there will be a \$25.00 late fee. If payment has not been made after the 10 days and no other payment arrangements have been made we reserve the right to terminate the contract. Tuition is due regardless of absences, vacations, etc. so please plan accordingly. If you have any financial concerns please speak to the Director as soon as possible.

## **REGISTRATION FEE**

A one-time, non-refundable \$50.00 registration fee per family is due at the time of signing the payment contract and enrollment.

## **LATE FEE**

Our normal hours of operation are Monday thru Friday 8:00 am until 5:30 pm. Please respect your scheduled pick-up time as per contract. Late pick-ups will result in a \$5.00 charge for every 5 minutes. Please notify the Center as soon as possible if there will be a late pick up. Please refer to the school calendar for days the Center will be closed as well as holidays.

## **CALENDAR**

Please keep the school calendar in a handy place at home and refer to it for closings due to vacations and/or holidays.

## **ARRIVAL AND PICK UP**

Parents must park their cars in the back parking lot designated for the Center. For everyone's safety please **DO NOT EVER** pull off of the street (Orlando St) and into the grass to discharge your child. This can be a very busy street at times (especially during evening pick up times) and keeping your child safe is our main priority. After exiting the car please make sure you have control of your child by holding their hand or making sure they are close to you. Drop off and pick up times can be very busy and confusing and small children are hard to be seen when you are behind the wheel of an automobile. Please stay with your child upon entering the building and signing in. Once your child has been signed in please place their items in their assigned cubby and proceed to the classroom and PLEASE make sure you see a teacher. At one time or another we are all in a hurry, but we must know your child has been signed in and we see them enter the classroom. Please also note that children are not permitted to enter the playground or school unattended.

If someone other than a parent is picking up a child you **MUST** notify a teacher. Upon pick up the indicated person **MUST** present photo ID. We will not release any child to an unauthorized or unidentified person.

Arrival and departure times are a wonderful opportunity to speak with your child's teachers. Please be aware that the teachers are not able to give you their full attention at this time. These times can be very confusing and we must give our undivided attention to the children. If you have a question or a brief concern you may quickly address. Any discussion that requires a lengthy amount of time will need an appointment. Regular communication between parents and teachers will help your child succeed. Please let us know if there has been any change in your child's routine, ie. sleeping patterns, eating habits, discipline problems, etc. These changes can make a difference in how your child's day goes.

## **LUNCH**

Children are required to bring a lunch in an insulated bag everyday (if staying for lunch). We do not have the ability to keep their lunch cold nor can we re-heat food items, so please use insulated containers to keep foods hot or cold. We ask that parents make smart food choices when preparing their child's lunch. No sugary drinks, or soda, no candy/cake, or lollipops. We will let your child serve themselves their own lunch, so please do not ask us to have them eat their food in a specific order, ie. waiting until everything is finished before having a treat, or having to eat this before that. We do not force a child to eat so please remember to pack things your child likes. Some ideas of things to pack are any combination of pasta, fruits, vegetables, sandwich, yogurt, soup, and a drink. Please label all containers if possible. Once lunch is finished your child will pack up any remaining food that can be saved so you can see the quantity of food consumed. We approach lunch just like any other learning activity and we are working toward independency. Please try to include your child in the preparing process.

## **SNACK**

Healthy snacks will be provided twice (depending on how long your child is here for) a day. There will be a morning snack around 10:00 am. and an afternoon snack around 3:00 pm. A snack menu is posted weekly in the kitchen area of the classroom. You may view the menu at any time. It is located in the kitchen area in the classroom. If your child does not like an item that is being offered that day you may bring an item from home.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

We celebrate each child's birthday during the morning snack time. You are welcome to participate in the celebration by attending or contributing to the event. Please discuss your plans with your child's teacher or the director prior to the day of the event. We also ask that you check with a teacher before bringing in a sweet treat.

## **HOLIDAYS**

At Aunt Jenn's early Learning Center, Inc. we celebrate all holidays in a unique fashion. We are open to learning about each child's family and religious traditions so we can share the information with all the children and recognize each child's experience. We welcome parents to visit and share their traditions with us. If you have any ideas or input about a specific holiday please see your child's teacher or the Director to discuss the topic.

## **DRESS**

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes that affords him/her the ability to move around the Center freely. We believe each child should be allowed to active explore without worrying about soiling their clothes. The children DO play outside everyday excluding severely inclement weather, so please dress them accordingly. Please make sure you child has the appropriate clothing for the day's weather, ie. Swimsuit, towel and water shoes for the summer and hat, gloves, snowsuit or snow jacket and snow pants for Winter. Also remember those cool days during the Fall and Spring that require a light jacket. We also require a seasonable change of clothes to be kept here in a bin labeled with your child's name for accidents involving painting, toileting, or food related, etc. Please remember to label all clothing. We are not permitted to wash children's clothing, so in the case of an accident we will place your child's soiled items in a plastic bag and place in child's cubby to bring home for laundering. Please remember to bring a new change of clothes the following day.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

We will go outside everyday, except severe weather, at least twice, in the morning and the afternoon. Please remember to provide seasonally

appropriate clothing. If your child is not well enough to withstand the outdoor weather for that day please do not send them to school.

Children are always supervised on the playground. They will be given direct supervision and/or assistance while climbing on the large motor apparatus, walking on the stumps, or balancing on the balance beams. Please help us reinforce these rules. You must directly supervise any other children that you bring to the playground with you. Because of Insurance regulations we can not permit the use of the playground outside of school hours and to children that are not enrolled at Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center, Inc. If you bring another child with you to drop off or pick up your child they will be permitted the use of the playground with your direct supervision only.

### **TOYS FROM HOME**

Often when children bring toys from home to school they create unnecessary problems. We ask that you limit the items brought from home to books, music, and games that can be shared with the group. Your child may need a specific item to bring to eliminate separation anxiety issues if this is the case we will be more than happy to work out a solution with you. Your child may also bring a soft, cuddly toy for rest time that will remain in the child's cubby until rest time.

### **NAP AND REST TIME**

After lunch there will be a short rest period. Each child must bring a crib sheet, small blanket and pillow that must be labeled. We will provide hypo-allergenic rest mats that will be assigned to each child and kept here at the Center. We will send these items home on a monthly basis, or when soiled, for laundering. Please remember to return them the following Monday or when your child returns to school. Depending on your child's sleeping patterns children at this age usually nap between 1-2 hours. Children that sleep less will be taken to a quiet area where they will be offered quiet activities until the rest period is over. Please communicate with us if the length of their nap is affecting their sleep at home.

## **PARENT CONCERNS**

If you have any concerns or complaints about our program please do the following:

1. Speak to your child's teacher directly
2. Speak to the Director
3. Call the NYS Office of Children and Family Services if your concerns have not been satisfactorily addressed.

Please remember to feel free at any time to speak to us directly about any concern. We will try as quickly as possible to resolve any issues. Also remember that we are here first to keep your child safe, if time permits we may address an issue immediately, if not we will work together to schedule a time to discuss your concerns.

## **CHILD OBSERVATION REPORTS**

The teachers will keep a journal or portfolio documenting the development of each child. You will be informed when the teacher would like to schedule a conference. Feel free to request additional meetings concerning your child's development or otherwise.

\*Please let us know of any changes in your home situation, which may affect your child's behaviors. It is crucial that we have an ongoing channel of communication. We must develop a sense of unity between the teachers, your child and their home environment in order to work effectively with you and your child.

## **PARENT COMMUNICATION**

Please sign your child in and out everyday on the parent sign-in sheet located in the front hall. It is essential that you check the parent communication area frequently for information regarding upcoming events, important schedule changes, and reminders.

## **SICK DAYS AND ABSENCES**

Please call in the morning to report if your child will be absent. Please let us know in advance about any planned absences. Tuition is due per your contract regardless of absences.

## **FIRE DRILLS**

As per NYSOCFS regulations fire drills are conducted once per month. We will conduct the drills in accordance with Safeco. The Director will call Safeco before the drill to have the system taken off line to perform the drill. The Director will then sound the alarm and the teachers will follow the procedure for conducting the emergency evacuation plan. The children will be taught to follow the teachers quietly outside using the back door of the classroom and exit the playground through the parking lot gate and assemble behind the playground in the fenced in area. Upon meeting the teacher will take attendance and will wait for the all clear signal from the Director. Once the building is clear the Director will disarm the alarm causing it to be silenced. We will then return to the building where the Director will call Safeco back to have the alarm put back on-line. Please discuss this with your child as the sound can be quite alarming.

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS**

The emergency plan is for the safety and protection of the children in the care of this facility should a natural or man made disaster and/or emergency situation occur.

Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center, Inc. is designed for 18 children ages 2 years 9 months to 5 years of age during the hours of 8:00 am and 5:30 pm. We are located at 925 Orlando Street in Kingston, NY 12401.

In case of an emergency which requires evacuation of the building, the Director or Teacher in charge will pull the fire alarm, gather the attendance sheet (sign-in sheet), the emergency bag, and box of shoes, if necessary, and cell phone. She will then join/assist the staff in the process of evacuating the children. She will use the cell phone to call 911. The staff and children will join at the meeting place at the back of the playground where attendance will be taken. Staff will be assigned to the children and the Director/teacher in charge will work to insure each child's comfort and safety. The Director or teacher in charge will notify parents via cell phone.

In the event of an emergency that requires relocation of the children and staff, after following the above procedures, the Director and staff will

escort all children to 909 Orlando Street (pool house). This is the house located directly next to the Center (left side) where there is a pool house located at the back of the property. If a more removed location is necessary, we will proceed further down the street to 887 Orlando Street that is on the same side of the road the last house on the right. The children will be walked down the road with the Director and Staff until we have reached the house. Upon entering safely we will follow the above procedure on contacting the parents.

### **EMERGENCY CLOSING**

In the case of an emergency such as a power failure due to a severe storm, we will close. Parents will be notified by phone of the closing time and the procedure they should follow to insure the safety of children and staff. If parents are not available, their emergency contacts will be notified to pick up their child.

### **HEALTH CARE AND SAFETY PLAN**

Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center, Inc. is committed to protecting and promoting the health of children in a manner consistent with the Health Care plan guidelines issued by the NYS OCFS. This plan has been developed to reflect the most current day care licensing regulations issued by NYS as of January 2010. A copy of the regulations is posted near the daily sign-in log.

The goal of our health care plan is to provide the best possible care for each child in our program. By working together we can achieve a healthy environment for all children, parents, and staff at Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center, Inc. We are not permitted or authorized to administer any medications except topical ointments and sunscreen, with completed parental permission slip.

Child's Health Records- no child may be enrolled in Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center, Inc. until the Director receives documentation of the child's immunization records and physical exam, including lead and TB tests, (or documentation from a health care provider stating that tests are "not indicated"), on the form provided in the enrollment package. This form must be completed and signed by a health care provider before the child begins

attending our program and again a year later. Necessary documentation excluding immunization records, if applicable, must be provided.

Daily Health Information- The director or Teacher in charge will perform a daily check of each child at his/her time of arrival. Each child will be observed for signs of illness/injury that could affect the child's ability to participate in the day's activities, and for **signs of abuse or maltreatment as per NYS regulations.** The child's parents will be asked, How has the child been at home (sleeping normal, eating drinking normally, any unusual events, medications, allergies, other members of house sick?). If you feel your child is not feeling well enough to participate in all aspects of the program, including outdoor play, then your child is probably too ill to be at school. **Children who arrive at school sick or unable to participate, or who become ill during the day, will be sent home.** Any child who becomes ill will rest quietly separated from the other children under direct supervision of a staff person until the child's parent or other emergency contact person arrives. **PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR EMERGENCY CONTACTS ARE UP TO DATE!** A record of each child's illness will be recorded in the child's log. Information about children who attend Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center will be shared with the teachers on an ongoing basis.

Guidelines for excluding a child from care:

\* To ensure the health and well being of all the children and staff and the comfort of your child, please keep children with any of the following home from school:

- Antibiotics- If your child is placed on antibiotics, for any reason, they may not return to care until 24 hours after the first dose was administered. (unless you can supply a note from your physician noting otherwise)
- Fever, Vomiting, Diarrhea - Children must be fever, vomiting, and diarrhea free for 24 hours before returning to care.
- Thick, colored mucous from the nose- (unless diagnosed and documented by a health care provider stating a non-contagious condition such as an allergy).
- Extreme coughing- a coughing condition that prevents the child from participating in the program.
- Impetigo- or other contagious skin condition.
- Mouth Sores- Herpes Simplex, Coxsackie Virus

- Ear Infections- If accompanied by fever and pain. Ear infections alone are not contagious, but the bacteria or virus that causes them can be.
- Conjunctivitis- until 24 hours after treatment began.
- Chicken Pox- until the lesions have dried and crusted.
- Strep- until 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- Head lice Scabies, Pin worms- until 24 hours after treatment has begun. In the case of head lice Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center, Inc. has a no-nits policy for attending school, ie. no nits or lice.
- Skin rashes- if associated with fever, behavior change or fungal infection (ie. ringworm) must be treated for 24 hours before returning to care.
- Hepatitis
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Pertussis, Hib and Tuberculosis

Planning ahead for an ill child- As a parent choosing to place your child in a group setting, it is important to realize that young children's immune systems are still developing, thus making them more susceptible to illnesses. During the first year of care your child may have an average of 6 minor episodes of an illness, usually in the form of viruses or colds. \*\*  
**It is important to anticipate the fact that you will need an alternate plan for care when your child is not well enough to attend. We ask for every parent's cooperation in taking measures to help ensure a healthy school environment for all.**

A child's behavior is often a key indicator of an impending illness. Each child responds differently to an illness. Mild symptoms may make some children lethargic and uninterested, irritated and uncomfortable. The normal dynamics of participating in everyday activities, such as waiting for a turn, or sharing, may be too overwhelming for a child that is not feeling well. Although a child may play happily in the quiet of his/her own home, he/she may be too uncomfortable and stressed to actively participate in a group setting.

Medication- **Any staff member of Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center, Inc. may NOT administer prescription or over-the-counter medications to children.** If your child is taking any medication please administer it before or after care, or you can arrange to come during the day to administer. **ONLY** over-the-counter topical ointments, insect

repellents, and sunscreens can be administered (with a permission slip) by staff. We ask that sunscreen and insect repellants be administered before children arrive at school. A staff member will re-apply as per required throughout the day.

We also recommend that you perform a daily tick check on your child.

## **ACCIDENTS/MINOR INJURIES**

The staff at Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center, Inc. will follow the following steps:

- Attend to the injury as applicable
- Follow parent instructions on emergency information, by sign in sheets for whom to contact first.
- If first contact can't be reached then we will follow emergency contact information on blue card.
- Explain the incident and follow parent's instructions as to picking up their child or allowing their child to remain in care. Confirm with parent that an incident report will be completed for them to sign at time of pick-up.
- Complete incident report.

### **Emergency Care:**

If a child is in need of immediate emergency medical care the Director or Teacher in charge will do the following:

- Call 911
- Call parent or other emergency contact if parent is not immediately available
- Arrange for care including transportation to hospital if necessary
- Accompany child to hospital and remain until parent/guardian arrives.

## **HAND WASHING**

Children will be assisted by a staff member in washing hands when they are soiled, after toileting, before and after handling food, and pets, when returning in from outdoors, and after coming in contact with any bodily fluid.

## **PESTICIDES**

It is Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center, Inc. policy to use only natural non-toxic cleaning materials and products when possible. If pesticide is used while a child is in care, parents will be notified as per NYSOCFS regulations, not less than 48 hours prior to pesticide use.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Each child will be given the chance to self-correct the inappropriate behaviors. If a child is having difficulty a staff member position their body to the child's level having direct eye contact while communicating. If the situation escalates the child will be given the amount of time they need to regain control and join his or her peers while having direct supervision at all times.

- For any action that requires discipline corporal punishment is prohibited.
- Discipline must be administered by and supervised by a qualified staff member.
- Methods of discipline, interaction or toilet training which frighten, demean or humiliate a child are prohibited
- Withholding or using food, rest or sleep as a punishment is prohibited
- Isolating a child in a closet, darkened area, or any area where the child cannot be seen and supervised by a staff member is prohibited
- Any discipline used must relate to the child's action and be handled without prolonged delay on the part of the staff so that the child is aware of the relationship between his or her actions and the consequences of those actions.

When a child's behavior harms or is likely to result in harm to the child, others or property, or seriously disrupts or is likely to seriously disrupt group interaction, the child may be separated briefly from the group, but only for as long as is necessary for the child to regain enough self-control to rejoin the group. The child must be placed in an area where he or she is in the view of, and can be supervised and supported by, a staff member. Interaction between a staff member and the child must take place immediately following the separation to guide the child toward appropriate group behavior. Separation of a child from the group in a manner other than that stated above is prohibited.

## **Child Abuse Policy**

### **Mandated Reporting:**

**Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center, Inc. takes seriously its role in helping to reduce child abuse and maltreatment. Below is Center's mandatory policy for reporting suspected abuse or maltreatment. If you have any questions about this policy, please direct your questions to Jennifer Organtini Judware.**

All staff members are required by New York State law to be mandated reporters of any incident or suspicion of child abuse or of any suspected abuse that may have occurred at home or while in child care.

**All Staff are** responsible for making or causing to be made an immediate report to the Statewide Central Register of the Child Abuse and Maltreatment by telephone, followed by a written report within 48 hours, in the form and manner prescribed by the Office to the child protective service of social services district in the county in which the child resides. All staff members are legally obligated to make a report of the alleged abuse or maltreatment directly to the Statewide Central Register of the Child Abuse and Maltreatment.

If the Director is the person allegedly responsible for the alleged abuse or maltreatment, staff must report the alleged abuse or maltreatment directly to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment.

If the subject of the report is an employee or volunteer for the Center, that employee/volunteer must immediately be separated from all children and appropriate action taken to limit any interaction with children until an investigation has been completed.

In the event a staff member becomes the subject of a report of child abuse or maltreatment that staff member will be placed on a temporary leave of absence until the matter has been resolved with the help of the Statewide Central register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment and/or NYSOCFS.

If it is learned that a staff person has an indicated report of child abuse or maltreatment and continues employment at the center that staff member will be supervised by the Director at all times and will never be left alone with the children.

Staff receives training in child abuse prevention and identification.

If abuse or maltreatment is suspected a report must be made as soon as possible to:

New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment:  
**(800) 635 - 1522**

**The Statewide Central Register is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

# AUNT JENN'S EARLY LEARNING CENTER PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

1. I, \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge and accept the policies and practices as stated in the Parent Handbook.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

2. I, \_\_\_\_\_ allow my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to be photographed and or videotaped for use at Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center, Inc. or newspapers articles.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

3. In case of evacuation from Aunt Jenn's Early Learning Center, Inc. I, \_\_\_\_\_ allow my child, \_\_\_\_\_ to be relocated to one of the emergency evacuation points as stated in the emergency evacuation policy.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_