

PARENT HANDBOOK

**Updated March 2024**

**TICKLES & GIGGLES FAMILY CHILDCARE CENTER, LLC**

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# MISSION STATEMENT

Tickles and Giggles Family Childcare Center is committed to provide a safe, healthy, nurturing environment for all children in our care. Our mission is to promote a high-quality learning environment by supporting all children in our care thorough social, cognitive, physical and emotional development. Tickles and Giggles will create an atmosphere that is nurturing where we will recognize and respect the unique qualities, abilities, and potential of each child and grant them the opportunity to develop at their own pace.

To ensure that each child is successful in our program, Tickles and Giggles Family Childcare Center primary focus will be encouragement of family involvement with communication, cooperation, and collaboration. Our commitment to families is to remain informed through continuing education and training, build trust and partnership, maintain a welcoming environment so that parents are encouraged to become active in the program. To provide outside resources to assist families with parenting support and education.

Staff at Tickles and Giggles will be held to a high standard of professionalism. Each staff member will treat each child and their family with dignity and respect. All staff are trained and continuing professional development is assessed.

# HOURS OF OPERATION

The Center is open from 5:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Full time childcare provides care for children for a maximum of 20 hours a week. Part Time Care is minimum of 20 hours a week. Weekly parents and families who do not use their hours during the week are still responsible for fulltime contract payment.

# ADMITTANCE POLICY

Tickles and Giggles Family Childcare Center is open to all children regardless of race, creed, ethnic, or cultural background whose parents live or work in the area. Tickles and Giggles serves children from six (6) weeks to 12 years of age. Special needs children are included in the program. The center is licensed for 49 children per day.

Families wishing to enroll a child in the program complete a registration form and submit it to our office. Vacancies in the program are filled on a first-come, first-served basis with preference given to full-time enrollment. Once notified of an opening the enrollment fee is required and must be paid prior to your child’s first day of enrollment. In addition to your child’s registration/emergency medical form, registration agreement, a state issued health form, and Parent Handbook acknowledgement must also be completed and turn in prior to enrollment.

Tickles and Giggles offer Full time and Part Time Schedules. With advanced notice, drop-in/hourly care is offered as well.

# ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Parents are expected to bring their children into the center and make contact with the person in charge. This is to ensure safe arrival when your child is dropped off and to be sure that a staff member is aware of their departure.

We request that parents walk their child(ren) out to their vehicle so that no child is ever allowed to be out in the parking lot unattended. We also request that children are not left in a vehicle unattended.

**Tickles and Giggles will implement an arrival cut off time of 9:00 a.m. This time will be strictly enforced. Only prior arrangements or doctor’s appointments will be excused.**

**Late pickup policy:** T&G closes at 6:00 pm. If a child is not picked up by 6:00 p.m., a **$25** late fee will be charged. This fee is collected on the same day as the fraction. If this becomes a habit or problem for our Center, we may refuse service to you.

**REGISTRATION/ENROLLMENT AND FEES**

**Registration:**

At the time of registration, an enrollment fee is due prior to your child’s first day of enrollment and (1) weeks is required in advance to reserve enrollment space. In the event that your childcare needs change prior to enrollment, the enrollment fee is **non-refundable**.

**Family/Military Discount:**

Families enrolling more than one child, will receive a 10% discount off the highest rate.

10% military discount applies to active-duty members (with valid ID).

**Fee/Rate Chart:**

**Registration Enrollment Fee:**

 First Child $50

 Family $100

**Rates:**

**Infant Rates:**

 Full-Time: $220 per week

 Part-Time: $175 per week

**Toddler Rates:**

 Full-Time: $195

 Part-Time: $160

**Preschool/Jr. PreK Rates:**

 Full-Time: $175

 Part-Time: $150

**NOTE: Full time care is 20 or more hours a week. Part time care is less than 20 hours a week.**

**School-Age Rates:**

 Before **and** After School: $100

 Before **or** After School: $60

**\*\*SCHOOL-AGERS ONLY\*\***

When local schools are closed regular Tuition Plus:

$10/Full Day (per day)

$5/Half Day (per day)

 **Summer Camp (School-Age Only)**

 $135/ Full Day

 $100/ Part Day

 **DROP-IN/HOURLY CARE:**

$10 an hour

**SUBSIDY POLICY**

Subsidy Parents/Guardians who are subsidized by any other person or organization are completely responsible for all registration and deposit expenses we require. Any tuition accrued not covered or paid for by the subsidy organization is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

# CENTER ADJUSTMENT POLICY

If your child/children do not adjust to our program within two weeks of care, Tickles and

Giggles reserves the right to terminate care. **\*\*NO REFUND\*\***

# STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Staff members are carefully screened in the selection process and receive orientation before caring for children. They must go through a Criminal and child abuse background check. As a minimum criterion, staff must be enrolled in or have already completed First Aid and Child CPR. They must already possess the State Credentials for childcare. Staff will complete a minimum of 10 in-service training hours and will attend monthly staff meetings.

## HOLIDAY/CENTER CLOSING POLICY

In order to maintain your child’s enrollment and to operate on a functional level, no reduction in program fees will be given for regularly scheduled Center closings or holidays.

Tickles and Giggles will observe the following **PAID holidays:**

* New Year’s Day
* MLK Day
* Good Friday
* Independence Day
* Columbus Day
* Veteran’s Day
* Labor Day
* Memorial Day
* Juneteenth
* Thanksgiving Day and the day following
* Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (Winter Break)

## OTHER CLOSINGS

The center will be open during inclement weather, including public school snow days.

However, in the event the center loses power, which cannot be restored OR the Governor declares that non-essential employees need not report to work, the Center will follow his directive. Parents will be notified of such a closing via announcements, watch your local news stations.

**\*\*THE CENTER RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CLOSE IF WEATHER CONDITIONS PRESENT A SAFETY RISK\*\***

## CHILDCARE FEE PAYMENT POLICY

Childcare fees are due on Monday of each upcoming program week.

You are responsible for your child’s tuition amount based on his/her scheduled (contracted) days, regardless of any days your child is ill, on vacation, or does not attend for any other reason.

Payments are taken through the Pro Care system, Cash, or square payment system.

**LATE PAYMENT FEE**

If payments are not received by Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. of the program week, a $10.00 per day late fee will be charged. If payment is delinquent for two weeks or more, a 30 -day notice to suspend or terminate enrollment may be given. At the time a payment arrangement will be agreed upon, and if it is being adhered to, your child’s enrollment be continued, if payment is not, you will be responsible for any and all expenses or fees associated with collecting payments. Please comment on any problems with the Director to avoid this situation and we will work closely with you to set up payment arrangements to bring your account current.

ACH transactions will be charged a $25 insufficient fund fee for all declined payments.

Drop-off/hourly care fees are due the day of service at drop off.

## VACATION CREDIT POLICY

You are allowed (1) **one** scheduled vacation week per enrollment anniversary year (after the first 6 months of enrollment in each anniversary year) without tuition payment for each child enrolled in the Center. Your child must be absent for five (5) consecutive days when the program is in operation (holidays are except/excluded)

You may request your vacation credit with a minimum of two weeks’ notice, at any time and prior to your eligibility date (i.e. six months after your enrollment anniversary date). If you are not eligible for the credit when you take your vacation, we will credit your account the week you become eligible. Vacation days **cannot** be taken in increments. Must be taken in full.

One week’s vacation consists of your child(ren)’s regularly scheduled days for one week in which they are not in attendance (and is equivalent to your weekly tuition payment or parent share). Requests can be made on the Vacation Credit Request Form.

Drop-in enrollees are not eligible for this credit. Once notice is given to terminate enrollment, you are no longer eligible for vacation credit.

**VACATION CREDITS MUST BE REQUESTED AND USED IN YOUR ANNIVERSARY YEAR SINCE THEY CANNOT BE CARRIED OVER TO EACH NEW ANNIVERSARY YEAR.**

**NOTE: The vacation credit is based upon the current rate/payment or in the event of part-time or school-ager’s rates, it is based upon the schooler or part-time rate paid during the current anniversary or school year.**

### HOLDING FEE

A holding fee (Full tuition rate) is required to hold and maintain your child(ren)’s slot in the event of extended illness, leave, or vacation.

## SCHEDULE CHANGE OR WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE

If you need to change or terminate your child’s enrollment for whatever reason, we must have two weeks’ written notice. No verbal notice will be accepted. Whether requesting a change in schedule or withdrawing a child, from the program, parents are responsible for payment of present status. A change in schedule may be made if space is available.

Failure to submit written two weeks’ notice and adhere to the payment status, Tickles & Giggles will notify you written regarding outstanding balance. If the balance isn’t cleared within time given on notice, Tickles & Giggles will file a small claim against the balance owed. You will be responsible for all court filing fees and past due balances.

## DIAPER & POTTY TRAINING POLICY

**Diaper Policy:**

It is the parent’s responsibility to provide diapers, wipes, and diaper cream for their child(ren). Each child has his or her own clearly labeled bag to hold their change of clothes, diapers, wipes, diaper cream, etc. Diapers are checked frequently and changed every 2-3 hours or more often if required.

### Potty Training Policy

Please make sure that you let the Director and/or Provider know when you are going to start toilet training at home. Keep us up to date on the progress. Training should be done at home over a long weekend or holiday.

Once your child has been trained successfully at home for at least 4 weeks, your child may begin wearing **pull-ups** at daycare. Children will not be trained in underwear.

Please send your child in clothing that is comfortable and easy for your child to remove independently. (NO OVERALLS, TIGHTS/LEGGINGS OR MULTIPLE BUTTONS, ETC.) Please send them wearing elastic band type shorts or pants (depending on the weather)

Bring 2 complete set changes of your child’s clothing (including socks) to keep at the Center.

**IF TRAINING FOR 2 WEEKS, YOUR CHILD SHOWS NO SIGNS OF PROGRESS, WE RESERVED THE RIGHT TO PUT YOUR CHILD BACK IN DIAPERS AND TRY AGAIN AT A LATER DATE.**

## HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SICK CHILDREN POLICY

Our goal here at Tickles and Giggles is to maintain a clean and healthy learning environment for the children in our care. All families will be treated with dignity and respect for their individual needs and/or differences.

### Handwashing Policy

All staff will wash their hands with soap and water during the following situations:

1. Upon arrival and when leaving at the end of the day
2. Before and after handling foods, cooking activities, eating or serving food
3. After toileting self or children
4. Before, during, and after diaper changing
5. After handling or coming in contact with body fluids such as mucus, blood, saliva, or

urine

1. Before and after giving medication
2. After attending to an ill child

g. After giving first aid

Children are assisted or supervised in handwashing:

1. Upon arrival at the center and when leaving at the end of the day
2. Before and after meals and snacks or cooking activities
3. After toileting and diapering
4. After handling or coming in contact with body fluids such as mucus, blood, saliva, or

urine

1. After outdoor play
2. Before and after water table play

**HANDWASHING PROCEDURES ARE POSTED AT EACH SINK USED FOR HANDWASHING.**

### Sanitizing

All toys, tables, chairs, cots, and objects that children come in contact with will be properly cleaned and sanitized daily with an approved sanitizer.

### Emergency Preparedness

Tickles and Giggles has a written emergency plan for responding to fire, tornado, flood, intruders within the Center, intoxicated parents, etc. Immobile children will be pushed by staff in their wheelchair, infants/toddlers will be pushed in evacuation cribs or carry if needed.

### Caring for mildly ill children

The best practice for caring for a mild illness is to keep children at home until they are well to return to care, but unfortunately this is not the case. Tickles and Giggles is committed to combat the spread of illness within the program by following the procedures below:

 In the event that a child becomes sick while in care, the child will be placed in the designated isolation area until the parent(s) are notified and arrangement for pick up is made.

Children with infectious illness **cannot** attend care.

When children may not attend care:

Fever 99.9 degrees or higher (No fever present for 24 hours and without medicine)

Rash (Visible unexplained rash. Must have a doctor’s note stating non-contagious and can return to care.)

Vomiting or/and Diarrheal – symptoms must be gone within 24 hours

Staff will conduct a daily health check each morning for each child arriving using the form daily childcare health check. Each child will be monitored throughout the day and upon departure and documented on the daily childcare health check. If a child becomes ill or suspected of one of the above communicable illnesses while in care, the staff will notify the program director immediately, and the child be placed in the designated area until parent is notified for pick up. If a child has been diagnosed as having an infection and/or contiguous illness, a doctor’s note must be presented before being accepted back into care.

Child given any type of medicine prior to drop off will not be allowed into care. This is a liability issue for the staff and center. The child must wait an hour prior to drop off to be accepted into care.

### Administering medication

Prescription and over-the-counter medications must be given to staff members in the original container, clearly labeled with the child’s name and birth date. **Tickles & Giggles staff will not administer medication without a signed Medication Authorization Form.**  Forms can be obtained from my child’s teacher or from the Director and/or Assistant Director.

All medications will be stored and located in the office and only administered by directors.

Prescription medications will only be given if a doctor’s note is provided with a beginning and end date. A medical authorization form must also be filled out and signed by a parent or guardian. Prescription medication will only be given at the center if they are not able to be given at home. (ex. Twice daily can be administered at home. Three times per day requires a middle of the day dose and can be given at the center.)

Over-the-counter medicine will only be given for special circumstances, with a doctor’s note that has a beginning and end date.

### On-going requirements for health and immunization

To prevent and control communicable disease among the center’s staff and children, the following procedures must submit the following:

1. Completed Health assessment from licensed health physician.
2. At enrollment or within 30 days of enrollment, immunizations records must be

document on a Certification of immunization Status showing age appropriation immunization was given.

 Once all assessment and immunization records have been submitted from parents/guardian, the program director will review copies. If there are outstanding immunizations, the parent/guardian will be notified in writing. The parent will be given 30 days to have.

Certification of Immunization Status update. After immunizations have been updated, a copy of the Certification of Immunization Status will be placed in the child’s file.

Physical on file must be updated at least annually.

Parent’s that fail to comply with the immunization schedule, the child will not be allowed to return to care until update immunization is given.

### Accidents/Incidents

Staff members shall document accidents and incidents that occur at Tickles & Giggles using Accident/Incident Report. If the injury is serious, a parent needs to be contacted before pick-up. The parents shall sign the report the **same day** as the incident. A copy may be given to the parents. All Accident/Incident Reports must be given to the Director and/or Assistant Director to be placed in the child’s permanent file.

First aid kits are located in each classroom and in the Director’s office.

## MEALS

The Center provides a well-rounded USDA approved menu for all enrolled children. Breakfast, Lunch, and PM Snack will be served for all children.

Breakfast is served at 7:30a.m. – 8 a.m., Lunch 11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., PM Snack 2:00p.m.

Children are encouraged to try all foods served. Second items will be offered. Water is made available to children at all times.

Please do not bring food or drinks to the Center unless recommended by a doctor and the childcare provider is notified before arrival (may interfere with other children’s allergies).

Menus will be posted in the classrooms and in the common eating area and parents are informed of the meals that day.

**FOOD ALLERGIES:**

A child with allergies must have an Allergy Plan posted in the kitchen as well as child’s classroom and all staff are informed of the allergy, treatment and necessary procedures to follow in case of a reaction.

**NAP TIME**

We at Tickles & Giggles Family Childcare Center feel that all children need some down time to relax and rest. Infants nap in assigned cribs according to their individual schedule. As recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, infants are placed on their backs to sleep. Any changes to this recommended policy must be made in writing by the child’s health care provider. Toddlers and preschoolers rest on assigned mats each day after lunch. All children are given the opportunity to sleep. If they do not sleep, quiet activities are provided for them. Bedding that is bring from home, we ask that you take home and launder the bedding every Friday and return it on Monday. We are not responsible to provide extra bedding for your child should you forget it. All bedding must be labeled with a black permanent marker.

## BITING POLICY

Here at Tickles and Giggles biting is strictly prohibited. However, in the event a child has bitten another child a 4-strike rule is then implemented. Every occurrence is documented and signed by the parent or guardian.

This does not include developmental or reaction bites. Limited of course and is a case-by-case basis.

Below is my 4-strike rule:

**Strike 1 -** This is when the first bite occurs. Both the bitter and bittee will then be monitored to limit this reoccurring.

**Strike –** This is when the second bite occurs. At this point the bitter will be shadowed, and their areas limited when other children are present.

**Strike 3 –** This is when the third bite occurs. Parents will be called immediately to pick up their child. Care will be suspended for 48 hours. Both parent and provider will meet in person to discuss another plan of action.

**Strike 4 –** This is when the fourth bite occurs. Care will be immediately terminated.

This policy is necessary to prevent any child from being harmed. It is our goal to keep every child in care safe.

## PROPER DRESS/CHANGE OF CLOTHES POLICY

Children are asked to dress in play clothes. Taking part in all activities is part of the fun and no child should be having to worry about getting dirty. Since many activities take place outdoors, please dress your child appropriately for the weather.

Children are required to bring extra two (2) set of clothes, which are stored in their cubbies. Please check cubbies for any soiled clothes. If your child wears any Center’s clothes, please wash and return promptly.

In cold weather, please send gloves, hats, coats, etc. as we will be going outside. **LABEL EVERYTHING** with your child’s name.

Clean out your child’s cubby and take all personal items HOME ON FRIDAYS TO BE CLEANED AND RETURNED ON MONDAY.

**The Center is not responsible for any misplaced personal belongings, damage, theft or storage of any items, including but not limited to, strollers, car seats, etc.**

## CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**Enrollment procedures for children with disabilities and chronic illness (special needs)** Childcare programs provide public accommodation and therefore must comply with the American with Disabilities Act. Childcare programs should becommitted to meeting the needs of all children, regardless of special health care needs and disabilities.

Families that are enrolling a special needs child will be given An Emergency Care Plan which will note the child’s disabilities. Followed by Special Health Care and Emergency Information for Children with Special Needs forms that will be filled out along with the families’ health care providerand childcare program staff.

Children with special needs will be given the opportunity to participate in the program to the fullest extent possible. To accomplish this, the childcare program may consult with outside agencies/organization as needed with parental consent and written authorization.

Individual written plans of care for children with special care needs will be followed in all emergency situations. The Program Director will be responsible for making sure the plan is updated annually, at a minimum.

All staff will be held accountable for maintaining confidentiality at all time with families of special needs children in our program.

## SCHOOL-AGE POLICY/PROCEDURE

The before and after school program operates during the school year from 6:00 a.m.-8:15a.m. and from 3:30p.m.-6:00p.m. It serves children in grades K-5. All children must have medical immunization and a registration form on file.

The staff will provide a wide range of activities appropriate for each age child. Activities include free play with a variety of toys, and games, arts and crafts, outdoor play, special movie or TV time, story time, homework/quiet time, and snacks.

Children are expected to follow all the rules and regulations in this handbook. We reserve the right to dismiss any child from this program who may destroy any of our belongings, be disrespectful/harmful to staff or other children around them or be unmanageable at any time.

It is the parent’s responsibility to notify the center if your child will need transportation to or from school if they are checked out or absent from school. Failure to notify the Center will result in termination of school transportation or care.

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

The following policy is effective for all children in our Center. All efforts are made to help discipline policy is designed to help the child develop self-control, self-esteem and respect for the rights of others. When problem do arise, the following disciplinary steps are followed:

* Redirection of activities.
* Restate the rules.
* Discuss problem-solving techniques.
* Time out.
* Note home to parents.
* Meet with Director, Parent, Child, and Provider.
* Dismissal from program.

**NOTE: No Corporal Punishment, Restraint, and Physical Confinement and Detention is forbidden.**

**SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT**

We at **Tickles & Giggles Family Childcare Center** maintain a smoke-free environment for children, staff members, and childcare providers. Due to hazards from exposure to second-hand smoke and as a licensed childcare facility it shall be the policy of this childcare facility to provide a tobacco-free environment for children, staff members, childcare providers, and parents.

**Tickles & Giggles Family Childcare Center** maintains a smoke-free environment. Smoking and the use of tobacco products are prohibited at all sites, including buildings, grounds, facility own vehicles, parking lots (cars parked in the childcare lots).

This applies to all staff members, childcare providers, parents, visitors, contractors, subcontractors, volunteers, and other guests in the childcare building, grounds, or properties.

**Tickles & Giggles Family Childcare Center adheres to the following guidelines:**

* All applicants for employment will be informed of the smoke-free policy prior to the applicant accepting an offer of employment.
* This policy will be reviewed at New Hire Orientation and through internal communication.
* Staff member childcare providers, parents, and visitors will be notified of the policy. Appropriate smoke-free signage will be posted.

## PARENT PARTICIPATION POLICY

### New Family Orientation

Each family is encouraged to schedule a time with the Director to complete a “New Family

Orientation.” This orientation is a great time for parents to drop-off routine care items (diapers, wipes, etc.) as well as an opportunity to participate in a portion of classroom activities with their child, familiarizing themselves with their child’s routines at Tickles & Giggles. Important policies and procedures are also reviewed with the Director at this time, as well as the paperwork required for enrollment completed. Typically, “New Family Orientation” is scheduled one week prior to the start date.

### Parent Participation

Parent participation is strongly encouraged in our program. Some possible opportunities to participate and contribute to your child’s Tickles & Giggles’ experience:

* Field Trip transportation and supervision
* Leading or assisting special projects
* Construction or collection of raw materials for art projects, dramatic play props, etc.
* Eating lunch or snack with your child-please inform the teachers one day in advance  Volunteering in your child’s classroom.

### Parent-Teacher Conference

Parent-teacher conferences typically be held each time your child transitions classrooms and two times per year for preschool programs. Th goal of the parent-teacher conference is to gain insight int your child’s development both in the center setting as well as home setting. During the conference, your child’s development and any goas you may have for your child will be discussed. Parents are encouraged to request conferences whenever they feel it’s necessary.

### Room Transitions

Your child will transition to a new classroom when he/she has reached the developmental milestones for a particular classroom. As the time for transition to a new room approach, you will receive a letter containing information about your child’s transition into a his/her new classroom. Both your child’s current and future teacher will be available to address any questions or concerns you have during the transition process. Before the transition into a new classroom has been completed, parents are encouraged to schedule a meeting with the new teacher in order to familiarize themselves and the new classroom, children, and curriculum.

### Daily Sheets (ProCare)

For children enrolled in the infant and toddler programs, a daily “recap” sheet will be completed to tell you about your child’s day. This sheet contains information about toileting, meals, naps, and activities. Parents of children in the preschool program rooms may request a daily chart be filled out for their child.

### Program Evaluations

Tickles & Giggles ask parents to complete program evaluation annually. The information gathered from the anonymous surveys is used by the staff to develop goals or our center to improve the overall quality of care at our center. A parent’s point-of-view is different from a teacher’s point-of-view. Therefore, parent feedback on the program evaluations is very important to be success of our program and satisfaction of our families.

### Questions/Concerns

If you have questions or concerns, do not hesitate to bring it to the attention of the teacher mostly directly involved. If the concern is not resolved, the director, Bridget Starks, can be reached at 910-824-7564 or by email at TicklesandGigglesFC@gmail.com. The director is available to assist parents and staff in resolving concerns.

***A signature page will be available for you to sign indicating that you have read and understood this Parent Handbook. A copy of the signature page will be placed in your child’s folder. You will be notified of any revisions to this handbooks in writing.***