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# Parent Handbook



## Parent Handbook Policies and Procedures

### WELCOME

#### Welcome to **Sugar & Spice Family Daycare!**

We are honored to be part of your child's early years.

Our mission is to provide a nurturing, home-like environment where children feel safe, valued, and excited to learn each day.

This Parent Handbook outlines:

- Our early learning philosophy
- Safety & health practices
- Business policies and expectations

We encourage open communication and look forward to working together to support your child's growth and happiness.

We can't wait to learn and explore with your child!

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

At **Sugar & Spice Family Daycare**, we focus on the whole child — social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development — all within a loving home environment.

We are committed to:

- Building confidence and independence
- Encouraging curiosity and hands-on learning
- Developing language, problem-solving, and motor skills
- Teaching kindness, respect, and cooperation
- Creating joyful memories every day

Children thrive when they feel secure, supported, and celebrated — that is at the center of everything we do.

We proudly provide:

- ✓ Mixed-age learning
- ✓ Consistent, experienced caregivers
- ✓ Personalized attention
- ✓ Engaging routines and activities
- ✓ Reliable, high-quality care for working families

Together, we help each child build the foundation for a lifetime of learning

## **COMMUNICATION**

We believe strong, open communication builds strong partnerships. We encourage families to share any changes at home or concerns that may impact your child's day.

We use the **ChildPilot app** for:

- Daily reminders and updates (when possible)
- Messaging
- Reporting absences and schedule changes
- Emergency alerts and announcements

Messages received after business hours or on weekends may be answered during the next business day unless urgent.

We welcome questions and feedback at any time – we are a team in your child’s success!

### **ENROLLMENT POLICY**

All required electronic forms must be completed in **ChildPilot** before attendance can begin and must be kept current.

Required forms include:

- Enrollment Information
- Child Health / History form
- Current Immunization Record (updated after each vaccine/booster)
- Emergency Contact & Authorized Pick-Up List
- Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment
- Medication Permission (as needed)
- Photo/Media Permission selection

Parents are responsible for updating contact information and permissions promptly through ChildPilot.

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Normal hours of operation are 7:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. Extra hours may be available by request and availability only. Please speak with Kimberly about your needs and the cost of additional hours and days.

### **DEPOSIT**

A one-month deposit is required for each child at the time of enrollment. This deposit will be applied to the child’s final month of care, provided proper notice is given.

Parents/guardians who choose to discontinue enrollment at Sugar & Spice Family Daycare must provide written notice at least thirty (30) days prior to the child’s final

month of care. If the required written notice is not provided, the one-month deposit will be forfeited and will not be applied toward tuition.

### **CHILDCARE RATES**

Number of Full Time days a Week	Non Potty Trained Rate	Potty Trained Rate
5	\$80.00 a day	\$75.00 a day
4	\$86.00 a day	\$80.00 a day
3	\$93.00 a day	\$86.00 a day
2	\$101.00 a day	\$94.00 a day

### **Rates, Sibling Discount & Potty Training Policy**

All rates are per child.

A 10% sibling discount is applied to the second child enrolled from the same immediate family. If children attend on different schedules, the discount will be applied to the least expensive rate.

#### **Potty Training Rate Definitions**

##### **Non-Potty-Trained Rate**

The non-potty-trained rate applies to any child who:

- Is in diapers or pull-ups,
- Is actively in the potty-training process, or
- Is not fully potty independent.

##### **Potty-Trained Rate**

The potty-trained rate applies only to children who are fully potty trained and independent. Fully potty-trained children:

- Recognize the need to use the toilet
- Can undress and dress themselves without assistance
- Use the toilet independently
- Do not have regular accidents

If a child no longer meets these requirements, tuition may revert to the non-potty-trained rate.

### Temporary Potty-Training Regression

Temporary regressions may occur due to illness, developmental changes, routine disruptions, or other age-appropriate factors.

Occasional accidents are developmentally normal and do not automatically result in a rate change. Parents/guardians will be notified if concerns arise.

If a regression continues and the child no longer meets the criteria for the potty-trained rate (including frequent accidents or the need for regular assistance), tuition may be adjusted to the non-potty-trained rate until the child is once again fully potty independent. Any rate adjustment will be discussed with parents/guardians in advance and applied in a consistent and reasonable manner.

### Additional Days of Care

Extra days of care must be scheduled and approved in advance with Kimberly and are subject to space availability.

### Rate Increases

The provider reserves the right to adjust tuition rates annually. Parents/guardians will be notified in writing in advance of any rate increase, including the effective date of the new rate.

### Payment Procedures

A **monthly statement** will be provided through the **ChildPilot app**. Statements will include:

- Monthly contracted tuition
- Charges for any approved extra days of care
- Late payment fees
- Overtime fees, if applicable

All applicable charges will be reflected on the monthly statement.

**Tuition is due on the 1st of each month.**

## **Accepted Payment Methods**

Payments may be made by:

- Cash
- Check (payable to **Kimberly Horn**)
- Venmo: **@Kimberly\_Horn**
- Zelle: **908-938-0176**

## **Cash Discount**

A **5% discount** is applied **only** when:

- Payment is made **in cash, and**
- Payment is received **on or before the 1st of the month**

The cash discount **does not apply** to any other payment method or payment schedule.

## **Alternate Payment Schedules**

Payments may also be made:

- **Bi-weekly** (due on the 1st and the 15th of each month), or
- **Weekly** (due on the first day of the week the child attends)

When using bi-weekly or weekly payment schedules:

- The **cash discount does not apply**
- Statements will still be issued **monthly only**

## **Late Payments**

A **\$50 late fee** will be assessed if payment is **more than five (5) days past due**.

## **Returned Checks (NSF Policy)**

If a check is returned due to **non-sufficient funds**, a **\$50 NSF fee** will be charged. Parents/guardians are responsible for **all fees** incurred by **Sugar & Spice Family Daycare** as a result of the returned payment.

Childcare services will be **immediately suspended** until full payment of outstanding tuition and NSF fees has been made in **cash**.

### Overtime Fees

Overtime fees apply when a child is picked up **after the contracted pick-up time**.

- Overtime is charged at **\$25 per 15-minute interval, per child**
- Fees apply unless prior arrangements have been made and approved

If you anticipate being late, please arrange for another **authorized adult** (listed on your authorized pickup form) to pick up your child.

### Holding Fee

If you request that **Sugar & Spice Family Daycare** hold an available opening for your child(ren), a **holding fee of 50% of the monthly tuition** will be required each month to reserve the space.

Holding fees may apply in situations including, but not limited to:

- Holding a space until a future start date
- Maternity leave while keeping a sibling home
- Choosing to keep a child home for the summer

**If your child attends during the holding period, full tuition is due for the days attended**, and the holding fee does not replace or reduce regular tuition for those days.

### CHANGE OF SCHEDULE

We will make every effort to accommodate schedule changes whenever possible.

- A minimum of one (1) month's notice is required for any change in days or hours

- If hours or days are reduced, those hours may be filled by another child and may not be available again in the future
- Requests for additional hours or days are subject to space availability.
- If a schedule change is approved:
- A new fee agreement must be completed
- Parents are responsible for payment of all contracted hours, whether the child attends or is absent for any reason.

### **ABSENT DAYS, SICK DAYS & EARLY DEPARTURE**

Tuition is based on **reserved time**, not attendance.

Payment is required for **all scheduled days and hours**, whether used or unused. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Sick days
- Doctor appointments
- Family visits
- Birthday parties
- School events
- Camps or sports activities
- Vacation days
- Early departures

Please report absences through the **ChildPilot app**.

### **Provider Vacation**

The provider may take up to fifteen (15) working days of paid vacation per year, not including the week between Christmas and New Year's when the daycare is already closed.

- Families will receive at least one (1) month's notice of vacation closures.
- If a substitute provider will be covering, families will be notified at least two (2) weeks in advance.

- Hours may be slightly adjusted during substitute coverage.

Parents are required to maintain backup care arrangements for closures due to provider vacation, sick days, holidays, emergencies, child illness, or other unforeseen circumstances.

### **Holidays**

Parents are asked to respect the holiday schedule and plan accordingly. Please mark your calendars and refer to the ChildPilot App calendar for updates and reminders.

Tuition is still due for holidays that Sugar & Spice Family Daycare is closed. No credits, refunds, or make-up days will be given for holiday closures.

Sugar & Spice Family Daycare will be closed on the following holidays:

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (July 4th)
  - If July 4th falls on a Tuesday, we will be closed July 3rd & 4th
  - If July 4th falls on a Thursday, we will be closed July 4th & 5th
  - If July 4th falls on a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, we will be closed July 4th only
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve through New Year's Day (December 24 – January 1)

### **SNOW DAYS & INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In the event of inclement weather, parents must check the ChildPilot app for delays or closures.

- If the State issues a travel ban, Sugar & Spice Family Daycare will close

- If your child is present and you are unable to arrive due to weather, your child will be cared for until pickup by you or an authorized emergency contact
- Fees will still apply

## **EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS, PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES & NATURAL DISASTERS**

The health and safety of our families is our top priority.

Sugar & Spice Family Daycare will remain open unless required to close by state or local authorities. During emergencies, the Director may implement temporary operational or policy changes. Written notice will be provided to families, and these temporary policies will supersede the Parent Handbook until normal operations resume.

### **Payment During Closures**

- Full tuition is required if daycare is forced to close for up to two (2) weeks per incident
- If closure exceeds two weeks, families will be required to pay a 50% holding fee
- Full tuition is required while the daycare remains open
- If daycare remains open and families choose to keep their child home, a 50% holding fee will apply

### **Provider Vacation**

The provider may take up to fifteen (15) working days of paid vacation per year, not including the week between Christmas and New Year's when the daycare is already closed.

- Families will receive at least one (1) month's notice of vacation closures.
- If a substitute provider will be covering, families will be notified at least two (2) weeks in advance.
- Hours may be slightly adjusted during substitute coverage.

Parents are required to maintain backup care arrangements for closures due to provider vacation, sick days, holidays, emergencies, child illness, or other unforeseen circumstances.

## Open Door Policy

Parents are welcome to visit during normal business hours. Please ring the doorbell and wait for staff assistance.

We use the ChildPilot app to provide daily updates. While we strive for timely updates, there may be delays as our priority is caring for the children.

## Potty Training

We are happy to support potty training when both the provider and parents agree to proceed consistently.

We recommend the book "Potty Training in 3 Days" by Brandi Brucks.

When beginning underwear:

- Start potty training at home over the weekend
- If your child can remain dry over the weekend, underwear may be brought to daycare
- Children must bring at least five (5) complete changes of clothing
- Pull-ups must be provided for nap time

Progress updates will be shared regularly.

Once a child is fully potty-trained and independent, tuition will be charged at the potty-trained rate

## Supplies

Sugar & Spice Family Daycare provides:

- Luvs diapers or equivalent
- Water-based, unscented, alcohol-free wipes

Parents may supply alternate brands at their own expense.

Families must provide:

- At least one full change of clothing (weather appropriate)
- Labeled bottles or sippy cups
- Comfort item from home (photo, stuffed animal, or blanket)

Seasonal items such as sunscreen, bug spray, swimsuits, and snow gear are the responsibility of the family.

All items must be labeled.

### Arrivals & Departures

Parents must escort children to the back door and ring the doorbell. Staff will assist with drop-off and pickup.

Children should arrive:

- Clean and dressed appropriately for the weather
- With hair and teeth brushed
- Ready for the day's activities

Please offer a cheerful goodbye to support a smooth transition.

#### **Safety Notice:**

Any adult arriving under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted to take a child. Authorities will be contacted immediately, and the individual will be permanently removed from authorized pickup lists.

Children are released only to parents or authorized pickup persons. Photo identification may be required.

### DRIVEWAY SAFETY

For everyone's safety:

- Children must never run in the driveway unattended
- Hold your child's hand when walking to and from your vehicle
- Drive no faster than 5 MPH
- Do not park or drive on grass
- Yield to exiting vehicles
- Do not block the driveway
- Close and latch the deck gate at all times
- Children may not open the gate

### Nap / Quiet Time

All children are required to participate in rest or quiet time.

- Infants nap on their own individual schedules.
- Younger children will take a scheduled nap.
- Older children will rest quietly and may be offered books or other quiet activities.

Nap and quiet time allows children to recharge and is also the provider's designated time for necessary tasks such as cleaning, documentation, and lesson planning.

Children are expected to rest quietly and may not disrupt others during this time.

### Meals and Snacks

Sugar & Spice Family Daycare is proud to provide breakfast, morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack, all included in your daily fees. Meals and snacks consist of all-natural, organic, and kid-friendly foods, and are planned to be healthy, well-balanced, and age-appropriate.

If your child has specific dietary needs, allergies, or medical conditions, please inform us in advance. A doctor's note may be required when dietary restrictions are related to allergies or medical conditions. If we are unable to meet your child's dietary needs, families may be required to provide meals from home.

If your child regularly requires additional snacks or meals, families may either supply the extra food or will be charged as follows:

- \$5.00 per snack
- \$10.00 per meal

Families of infants must provide formula or breast milk. Please bring extra quantities in case of spills or emergencies. All bottles and containers must be clearly labeled.

Children with food allergies must have a written note on file specifying the allergy.

### ACTIVITIES & CURRICULUM

Sugar & Spice Family Daycare uses a theme-based curriculum designed to encourage exploration through music, art, dramatic play, storytelling, games, books, and hands-on learning.

Participation is encouraged but never forced. Children must remain respectful and non-disruptive during activities.

### **DAILY SCHEDULE**

A consistent daily schedule helps the day flow smoothly, allows children to anticipate upcoming activities, and supports the achievement of developmental and educational goals. There may be times when adjustments to the schedule are necessary to best meet the needs of the children.

Because we are a small family daycare, we value flexibility. If children are deeply engaged in play or learning activities, such as building with blocks or participating in group play, scheduled activities (such as snack time) may be adjusted accordingly.

Infants follow an **individualized schedule** based on their personal needs for feeding, sleeping, and care.

7:30 a.m.-	8:30 a.m.	Arrival & Breakfast
8:30 a.m.-	10:00 a.m.	Free play
10:00 a.m.-	10:15 a.m.	Snack time
10:15 a.m.-	11:00 a.m.	Circle Time/Project time
11:45 a.m.-	12:15 p.m.	Lunch time
12:30 p.m. -	2:30 p.m.	Rest time
2:30 p.m.-	3:30 p.m.	Project/Free play
3:30 p.m.-	3:45 p.m.	Afternoon Snack

### **Provider Vacation**

The provider may take up to fifteen (15) working days of paid vacation per year, not including the week between Christmas and New Year's when the daycare is already closed.

- Families will receive at least one (1) month's notice of vacation closures.
- If a substitute provider will be covering, families will be notified at least two (2) weeks in advance.
- Hours may be slightly adjusted during substitute coverage.

Parents are required to maintain backup care arrangements for closures due to provider vacation, sick days, holidays, emergencies, child illness, or other unforeseen circumstances.

### **ILLNESS POLICY (State-Mandated – New Jersey)**

Your child **cannot be admitted for care** if they have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Fever of **101°F or higher**
- Acute diarrhea and/or vomiting
- Red eyes with discharge
- Severe pain or discomfort
- Skin rashes lasting more than one day (excluding diaper rash)
- Sore throat or severe coughing
- Difficulty or rapid breathing
- Visibly enlarged lymph nodes
- Blood in urine

If your child develops any of these symptoms while in care, you will be contacted to arrange **immediate pick-up**. If you cannot be reached, your **emergency contact** will be called.

### **Doctor Visit Requirement**

If your child is **seen by a doctor for a sick visit**, a **doctor's note** is required before your child may return to care. The note must state:

- Diagnosis (when applicable)
- That the child is **not contagious**
- Clearance to **return to childcare**

Children may also return after being **fever-free and symptom-free for 24 hours without medication**, if a doctor visit did not occur.

### **Provider Illness & Prevention Measures**

My family gets sick too. If a member of my household is ill, families will be notified, and that individual will be **isolated from the children**.

We take every precaution to help prevent the spread of illness, including:

- Daily disinfection of toys and rooms
- Frequent handwashing (before/after meals and outdoor play)
- Shoes removed indoors
- Regular vacuuming and mopping

While we cannot prevent all illness, we do our best. Please consider other families when deciding whether to bring your child to daycare. If you are unsure, **call first** – we are happy to discuss symptoms with you.

If emergency services are required for your child, the **parent/guardian is responsible for all resulting medical and transportation costs**.

### **MEDICATIONS**

Medication may only be administered with **written parental permission**.

- All medication must be in its **original container**
- Clearly labeled with the **child's full name**
- Prescription medication must include the **prescription label**
- Required medication authorization forms are available in the **ChildPilot app**

### **Provider Sick Days**

In the event the provider is ill, experiences a family emergency, or is unable to secure coverage, families will be notified as soon as possible so alternative care arrangements can be made.

Families will be charged for their regularly scheduled days during provider sick-day closures

### **BELONGINGS FROM HOME**

Please bring a **labeled bag** containing:

- At least **one full change of clothes** appropriate for the season
- Comfort items such as a stuffed animal or small blanket are welcome.  
**All items must be labeled** with your child's full name.

Seasonal items (sunscreen, bug spray, bathing suit, swim diapers, snow gear, etc.) are the responsibility of the family and may be requested as needed.

### **TOYS FROM HOME**

Please leave personal toys at home whenever possible.

If a toy is brought:

- It must be labeled
- It must be shared during the day
- If it becomes disruptive, it will be put away

Sugar & Spice Family Daycare is not responsible for lost or broken toys, though we will do our best to return them in the condition they arrived.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

Each child's birthday is their Special Day!

Families may bring treats to celebrate, provided all allergies are considered and approved in advance.

Personal gifts for the birthday child should be given outside of daycare hours.

### **Photos & Videos of Children**

Photos and/or videos of the children may be taken for classroom activities, art projects, and to share updates on **Sugar & Spice Family Daycare's** website and Facebook page.

If you prefer that photos or videos of your child **not** be used or shared, please notify us in writing. We will ensure that your child is excluded from all public postings.

### **Discipline & Guidance Policy**

Sugar & Spice Family Daycare uses **positive, age-appropriate guidance techniques** to help children develop self-control, respect for others, and problem-solving skills.

When a child has difficulty following directions or treating others, materials, or equipment with respect, the following steps are used:

- **Redirection** to an appropriate activity or behavior
- **Positive reinforcement** for appropriate choices
- **Time-out/rest period**, when necessary, in a safe and age-appropriate manner

If a child exhibits **ongoing or repeated behavioral challenges**, the provider will work collaboratively with parents/guardians to develop strategies that support the child's success. If behaviors continue and are **disruptive, unsafe, or harmful to other children**, families may be asked to arrange alternative childcare.

Under **NO circumstances** will any of the following be used:

- Spanking or corporal punishment
- Physical punishment or restraint
- Verbal abuse, shaming, or name-calling
- Isolation or confinement
- Withholding of food, drinks, naps, or sleep

All guidance practices are consistent with **New Jersey childcare regulations** and are designed to promote a safe, nurturing, and respectful environment for every child.

## Termination Policy

If you decide at any time to discontinue your child's enrollment at **Sugar & Spice Family Daycare**, you must provide **written notice at least thirty (30) days prior to your child's final month of care**.

Written notice must be dated and submitted to the provider and must include the intended last month of attendance. All fees due must be paid in full.

If proper written notice is not provided, **any fees paid, including the deposit, will be forfeited**.

## Provider Terminating Services

The provider reserves the right to terminate childcare services **without notice** for any of the following reasons:

- The child's behavior poses a safety risk to themselves, other children, or staff
- The child is unable to adjust to the daycare environment and continued attendance is detrimental
- Fees are unpaid or consistently overdue
- Breach of contract or handbook policies
- A parent or guardian poses a risk to the provider or children
- A parent arrives under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Failure to complete required forms
- Lack of parental cooperation
- False or misleading information provided verbally or in writing
- Any situation in which the provider determines immediate termination is necessary

Whenever possible, the provider will give **one to two weeks' notice** if services must be terminated. Termination notices will not be accepted while the provider or family is on vacation.

## Liability

Parents/guardians agree to be financially responsible for any damage to the provider's real or personal property, or to the property of another child, caused by their child. Damaged property must be repaired or replaced promptly.

### Dogs on Premises

Dogs are present at **Sugar & Spice Family Daycare**. Dogs are never left alone with children and are supervised at all times. All dogs are child-friendly and accustomed to being around children.

Children are taught appropriate dog-safety rules. Misbehavior toward dogs is not permitted, and families are expected to ensure respectful interactions at all times.

### Divorce Records & Custody Agreements

Families with custody arrangements must provide **current court-ordered custody documentation** to be kept in the child's file.

Without custody paperwork on file, the provider has no legal authority to prevent a non-custodial parent from picking up a child. If valid documentation is provided and a non-custodial parent attempts pickup, authorities may be contacted.

### Child Neglect & Abuse (Mandated Reporting)

Sugar & Spice Family Daycare is a **mandated reporter** under New Jersey law. Any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect—physical, emotional, or neglect—must be reported immediately to the Division of Youth and Family Services.

This policy exists solely for the protection and well-being of children and is required by state law.

### Revisions to Handbook & Childcare/Fees Agreement

This Parent Handbook and the accompanying childcare/fees agreement may be revised annually or as needed.

Families will be notified in writing of any changes. Every effort will be made to provide **at least thirty (30) days' notice** prior to policy or rate changes. All families are required to sign a new acknowledgment when revisions are made.

### A Final Note to Our Families

Thank you for choosing **Sugar & Spice Family Daycare** and for taking the time to review our Parent Handbook. We consider it a privilege to care for your child and to partner with you during these important early years.

Our goal is to provide a safe, nurturing, and loving environment where children can grow, learn, and thrive at their own pace. Open communication and mutual respect between families and providers help create the best possible experience for everyone.

If you ever have questions, concerns, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out. We value your trust and look forward to sharing many happy moments, milestones, and memories with your family.

Welcome to the **Sugar & Spice Family Daycare** family – we are so happy to have you!