

Parent Handbook

Troy Early Childhood Center Too
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Age 6 weeks- 3 years

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Ages 3-13 years

Table of Contents

Letter to Parents – Pg.3	
Purpose, Philosophy, and Goals- Pg. 4	Late Pick-Up Policy- Pg. 12
About the Owners and Business- Pg. 4	Parent Contacts- Pg. 13
Available Programs- Pg. 5	Parent Referral- Pg. 13
Curriculum and Classroom Details- Pg. 5	Insurance- Pg. 13
Tods Classrooms- Pg. 6	Release of Information- Pg. 13
2's Classrooms – Pg. 6	Health and Safety- Pg. 13
Preschool Curriculum and Assessment- Pg. 6	Nutrition- Pg. 14
Preschool Classroom- Pg. 7	Food From Home- Pg. 14
Preschool for All Grant Program- Pg. 7	Disciplinary Policy- Pg. 15
School Aged Program- Pg. 7	Discharge- Pg. 15
Classroom Bulletin Boards- Pg. 8	Discharge Policy- Pg. 15
Enrollment- Pg. 8	Parent Signed Handbook Receipt- Pg. 16
Registration Fees- Pg. 8	
Hours of Operation- Pg. 8	
Tuition- Pg. 8	
Late Fees/Outstanding Balances- Pg. 9	
Subsidy Payments- Pg. 9	
Illness/Vacation- Pg. 9	
Observed Holidays- Pg. 10	
Facebook- Pg. 10	
Brightwheel App- Pg. 10	
Family Networking Group- Pg. 10	
Happy Feet- Pg. 10	
Field Trips- Pg. 11	
Items Needed for School- Pg. 11	
What to Wear to School- Pg. 11	
Items from Home- Pg. 11	
Arrival and Pick up- Pg. 12	
Late Arrivals and Absences- Pg.12	
Transitions- Pg. 12	

Dear Troy Early Childhood Center Families,

We are happy you have expressed an interest in TECC. We understand that care for your child is an important decision and at TECC we strive to give all our children the best care possible. TECC values each of our children, not only providing care, but also by creating an atmosphere where learning takes place everyday.

TECC is filled with dedicated staff, who will strive to build foundations of learning that will last a lifetime. We share a vast knowledge in the care and development of the young child, striving to expand our knowledge through professional literature, workshops, and trainings. All staff are trained in first aid and are CPR certified yearly.

This handbook states the policies and procedures of the centers. DCFS is our governing body and we follow all DCFS guidelines and are monitored and evaluated twice each year at a minimum for adherence to all policies. Once enrolled, your family will be enrolled in Brightwheel, receive calendar of events, newsletters, and notes keeping you updated on day-to-day information.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about what our centers have to offer your child and family. If you have any additional questions, please call, email, or visit. TECC welcomes family members to visit at any time.

Sincerely,

Troy Early Childhood Center Staff
And
Christi and Jeff Counton- Owners
Kelley Koelker- Executive Director

Purpose, Philosophy, and Goals

TECC supports its families and community by providing quality care to each child in a loving environment. Students engage in learning, using the Creative Curriculum, a developmentally appropriate curriculum, to develop children's emotional, physical, and intellectual development. Children engage in hands on learning experiences, as we collaborate with families, and provide diverse opportunities.

Emotional Development- To provide the child with freedom, within limits, to develop as an individual while learning independence and self-discipline.

Physical Development- To provide an environment enabling children to develop their bodies as well as their minds. Furnish well-balanced meals and snacks, indoor and outdoor play, and rest time to foster physical growth.

Intellectual Development- To provide developmentally appropriate activities and hands on learning, organized around school wide investigations, to stimulate growth.

About the Owners and Business

Jeff and Christi Counton are the parents of 4 children and are the owners of Counton Learning Centers, dba Troy Early Childhood Centers. In 1999, Troy Early Childhood Centers was purchased. With two children of our own at the time we struggled to find care that we felt was acceptable for our children and family needs. We wanted the children to have the advantage of a strong learning curriculum with children their own age, but also required the hours a day care center could provide; child safety was also a huge concern. In 2002, Troy Early Childhood Center Too was added; allowing us to add infant care; meeting the same high standards as our other age groups. We designed our infant care with the ability to separate our tiny infants from those that are mobile. TECC South was added in July 2016 allowing our school age children an environment that was best suited for older learners- PreK students were added in Fall of 2017 to allow for the expansion of toddlers at TECC Too and to allow families to have children served in one location where possible.

Jeff is a business owner and brings his knowledge of management to our business. Christi has over 3 decades of teaching experience in early childhood education. She holds her Bachelor's degree in Elementary and Early Childhood Education and a Masters Degree in Elementary Education with a Specialization in Early Childhood. She has taught in every age group within a child care center, then in a self contained early childhood special education classroom, then preschool blended classroom since 1988. Christi continues to teach full time in the Granite City School District and oversees and manages Counton Learning Centers.

Available Programs

This center is licensed to serve children 6 weeks- 5 years of age. We offer the following academically enhanced programs:

- Infants Program- 6 weeks- 15 months (ratio 1:4)
- Toddler Program- 15 weeks- 2 years (ratio 1:5)
- Two's Program- 24 months- 3 years (ratio 1:8)
- Preschool Program- 3 years- 5 years (ratio 1:10)
- State Funded PreK program- PFA 3 years- 5 years (ratio 1:10)

Both Preschool and PreK/PFA (preschool for all) programs follow the same curriculum, however, the Illinois State Board of Education as well as DCFS monitor the PreK/PFA program. We currently have a grant to service 40 students through this grant. PreK/PFA classrooms programs are 5 days a week for 2 ½ hours a day. We currently serve 20 students at Site 2 and 20 students at South. Staff and students meet all ISBE qualifications. Screenings will be done yearly to determine eligibility for this program. Children will be cared for the rest of the day and follow same preschool programming as other children in the center.

Children can be combined with same aged peers at the start and end of each day to allow us to stagger staffing and allow for the best use of staff. Children can be combined with other age peers during the first and last hour of each day in order to maintain staffing and opening and closing of classrooms.

Curriculum and Classroom Program Details

Infants-2 Years Curriculum and Assessment

Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers is used in all our infant/toddler/2's rooms. Ages and Stages Questionnaires are used to monitor developmental milestones. We provide a wide array of developmentally appropriate activities for your child in a physical environment that will stimulate and encourage maximum growth. Our classrooms have daily schedules that allow for routines and trust of caregivers. Individualized/group lesson plans are posted to enhance your child's curiosity for the world around them and nurture individual development

Infant Classrooms- (6 weeks-15 months)

We provide a loving environment with opportunities to cuddle with a caregiver, explore using the five senses, manipulate the environment through hands-on exploration, learn communication skills through an interactive language rich classroom, kick, bounce, and participate in many musical experiences, and nap in individually assigned cribs.

Toddler Classrooms- (15month- 24 months)

Our toddler classrooms serve as a transitional classroom where children begin eating at group tables and napping on cots. They are given a greater amount of creative exploration experiences. Language rich environments are integral in our toddlers learning to express their needs and wants. We help them to learn how to resolve conflict with peers through words and signs. Children explore their environment through purposeful play and exploration. Sensory experiences are important at this age, as they are very orally stimulated we will work to help them find other outlets for sensory seeking.

2's Classrooms (24 months-36 months)

Our 2 year-old classrooms is a busy place. It will vary between active and quiet time activities. Transitions will be limited and learning will follow the children's lead and interests. The teacher will set up the classroom for exploration and facilitate interactions between peers and help tie language to the children's experiences. Music and movement is used both in large group activities and in transitions as to help hold the children's attention. Sensory exploration and social interactions are key to the developing two year old. We will work toward learning to follow a schedule using many visual supports and consistency and understanding what comes next and their control over their own environment.

Preschool Curriculum and Assessment

Our preschool classrooms offer a wide variety of program choices and services to meet the needs of our unique children and families. Creative Curriculum for Preschool is the curriculum used to guide learning that is based on the Illinois Learning Standards and provides high-quality early education in spacious classrooms that are divided into interest areas which stimulate brain development and challenge children at their individual developmental levels: Block play, art, writing, dramatic play, library, music/movement, sand/water, science/discovery, math/manipulation, and outdoors.

Teaching Strategies Gold is used for developmental assessment of all of our preschool students. Parent/Teacher conferences are held with all our preschool students families in order to share their individual achievements and preparedness for Kindergarten.

Literacy Nights and Parent Education Activities are held bi-monthly in order to collaborate with families. Literacy events allow us to share the learning experiences with families and showcase activities we have been doing in the classrooms. We base the parent education activities off suggestions from parents on where they need assistance or knowledge.

Preschool (3-5 years or Kindergarten)

Our preschool classrooms serve children through individualization and creativity in thinking is encouraged as the children learn through play. We utilize a hands-on approach to our lessons plans, as children learn best by doing. Teachers serve as facilitators in setting up the classroom to allow for children to learn the needed skills through exploration. Teachers will join the play of the children to offer open-ended questions and to help guide the learning. Small group and individual instruction is used to work on specific targeted skills. Our preschoolers also have the privilege of participation in off-site field trips to enhance their lessons.

Preschool for All Grant Program (3 years to 5 years)

We are a proud provider of the Illinois State Board of Education Preschool for All program. We were among the first private programs receiving a Grant award establishing collaboration in 2002. Through this collaboration we are able to offer two half day, Pre-K programs to 40 qualifying children, where an Early Childhood certified teacher leads the learning process. Children participate in play-based screenings to qualify for this no-cost program. We also offer wrap-around childcare services on-site for a fee. This program meets as well as our preschool classrooms listed above all follow the same curriculum and classroom program delivery.

School Aged Programs (Kindergarten – 13 years)

Before and After School Care-During the school year school year classrooms will supply a comforting environment where kids can unwind after school. A nutritious breakfast and after school snack will be offered daily. Those children wanting/needing to complete homework will be facilitated by center staff in helping them understand the lessons and help them navigate their homework. Centers will be available for children to choose the activities that follow their interests. Art/crafts, games, manipulatives, cooking, blocks/building, and library/quiet area. Gross motor experiences are available for a large part of the day either in the indoor gym area or outdoors on the playground.

Summer Program- All day program will offer weekly off campus field trips along with activities brought into the center to offer varied activities. Daily lessons/exploration in cooking, art/crafts, science, group games, reading, math/manipulatives, and blocks/building. Long-term studies will be offered over the summer. Learning activities based on students ages and developmental needs will be offered to help keep school skills fresh while having fun at the same time. School age students will be paired up with younger buddies for reading and other

learning opportunities. Multiple outdoor/gross motor times will be available during full days at the center.

Classroom Bulletin Boards

Every classroom posts their weekly lesson plans, classroom rules, menus, parent expectations (created by family network group), and monthly calendar for parents review.

Enrollment

Upon completion of child file, medical information and physical, and non-refundable enrollment fee a spot will be reserved for your child. If all spots for a classroom are full you may reserve a spot on our wait list with a nonrefundable enrollment fee.

Full Time- Attends 5 days per week

Part time- Attends less than 5 days per week

Registration Fee

The annual, nonrefundable registration fee of \$50 for one child or \$75 for a family is payable upon enrollment and on June 1st of each year. If your child pulls and re-enrolls this fee is due at the time of enrollment. Children who are pulled will be added to the waitlist upon payment of the registration fee. No guarantee will be given for a spot or a specific start date. A new Emergency Contact form will be filled out at this time as well to maintain up to day information on your child. Children who are pulled at any time will be added to the waitlist upon payment of the registration fee. No guarantee of a spot or a specific start date will be given.

Hours of Operation

Monday-Friday 6:30am-6:00pm

Before/After School 6:30am-8:30am and 3:30pm-6:00pm

Middle school 6:30-7am/3:00-6:00pm

Full day care offered in the summer, on school closings, and school holidays if center is opened.

Tuition

Tuition rate sheets will be available in the office and are updated in January of each year. Tuition is due on the first day of attendance each week, whether in

attendance or absent. There will be a \$5.00 late fee added daily for each day unpaid. Tuition may be paid credit card or electronic check through the brightwheel app or by cash or check at the center. Many families set up auto pay through their bank as well. There is a \$25 return check fee for any returned checks. If you choose to pay by cash please see a director to hand them cash directly and get a cash receipt, please never put cash in the payment box as we will not be able to verify the payment without a cash receipt. Tuition is tax deductible on your income tax, for parents working or going to school. Tax receipts with totals paid at year-end can be printed directly from the Brightwheel App. If you are unable to print it TECC administration can print a copy for you.

Part Time Schedules

Part time students (less than 5 days a week) must maintain a consistent schedule. Any changes must be approved at least a week in advance of the schedule to make sure staffing is in place. If you are a weekly student and need to add an additional day to your week please verify availability with the office first and then your tuition will be adjusted. Full payment is required even if you don't attend your minimum days for the week

Late Fees or Outstanding Balances

A daily late fee of \$5.00 will be added for each day the balance is left unpaid. Tuition over one week late will result in your child not being accepted for care until balance is paid in full. Outstanding balances will be sent to collections and the cost of collections will be added to your bill. Daily late fees will still apply.

Subsidy Payments

Troy Early Childhood Centers accepts subsidy payments (CHASI and DHS), however, parents or the responsible party must pay the registration fee, field trip fees, and any other fees not covered. There may be an additional supplemental fee added to your co-pay each month that will be due at the beginning of every month. These will be adjusted and listed yearly in January on the tuition rate sheet.

Full Time- Attends year round 5 days per week

Part time- Attends less than 5 days per week

Illness and Vacation Allowances

Annually, full-time children (those attending 5 days a week) will be allowed 1 illness week at a half weeks' charge. The child may attend two days of the week used as an illness week. All other absences will be charged at the regular rate. Children enrolled full time will also be eligible for a vacation week after 3 months

of care. This week is allowed tuition free. Children only attending for summer only are not eligible for tuition free vacation or illness week.

Observed Holidays

Troy Early Childhood Centers operate on tuition only. Due to this, payment is also made for holiday closings. We are closed on the following days:

January- New Years Day

February- Presidents Day

April- Good Friday

May- Memorial Day

July- Independence Day

September- Labor Day

November- Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving Day

December- Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and The Day After Christmas

Facebook

TECC utilizes a private Facebook account to share center information, special events and photos with families. You must be approved and verified in order to join our group in order to keep it private and open to only current families. If you would like to join please send a request to join the group *Troy Early Childhood*. If you do not want your child to be in posts on this site, please fill out the picture form accordingly in their daycare file.

Brightwheel App

TECC utilizes the *Brightwheel App* to communicate with families about their child's day at our centers. Families will check their child in via the app and can receive updates about their child's day, communicate with teachers and management, and receive notes and center information. Classroom staff as well as administration access notes sent by families. We ask that families check this app throughout the day, as we will send important information first through the app before making a phone call. In the case of an emergency or urgent matter a phone call will be made to the number listed in your child's file.

Family Networking Group

We have created a networking group of family members and administration that meet on a semi-monthly basis to discuss topics that are of importance to our centers and the general welfare of the children and families we serve. Please consider joining this group and help us collaborate in order to make TECC the best center for families, students, and staff. The private Facebook group is *TECC Family Network Group*. Please ask to join, once verified you will be added.

Happy Feet

Happy Feet is a supplemental program offered year round 1 day per week to any 2-5 year old at our center. Children will have a ball at their feet throughout the entire thirty-minute session. Happy Feet uses songs, stories, adventures, nursery rhymes, and games with a soccer ball to maximize individual skills and motor skill development. The Happy Feet curriculum is designed to gradually develop more advanced physical skills and self-belief as the age and skill levels increase. To make sure every child has a great experience, the classes are non-competitive. Brochures and sign up information are located in the centers lobby or learn more by visiting happysoccerfeet.com.

Field Trips

TECC believes in enhancing the school experience with field trips offered both on and off the school grounds for our students. Off site field trips are only offered for our preschool and school aged children. Notification will be provided and written permission will be required for any child to attend. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend with their child to share in the experience. Busing will be provided by an outside agency that is licensed and insured. Parents will need to meet with the Director to make arrangements for any child not attending the event so we are prepared with adequate supervision. Busing is usually contracted for trips however we do have a van that we will use on occasion for small groups of preschoolers or school aged children if it is an in town trip.

Items Needed for School

We ask that you send one blanket for your cot nappers to use at rest time. Diapers, wipes, and any necessary personal care items should also be sent for your child based on their needs. Infants will need to have enough bottles with lids for the day. (We will rinse but send home to be washed and sterilized) Formula or breast milk can be sent in daily or labeled and left at the center. Mothers are always welcome to come and breast feed.

Naptime is from approximately 12:00 pm-2:30pm. A complete set of clothes suitable for the season is also required as accidents and spills do happen. Please put these items in a labeled Ziploc bag. We brush teeth after meals, so please send a toothbrush and small tub of toothpaste. Sunscreen is applied in summer each time children go outside, Sunscreen must be lotion type; aerosol spray is not allowed.

What to Wear to School

The children will be very active and engaged in hands on learning that can cause them to become dirty at school. They should wear clothing that is appropriate, comfortable, and seasonal. Keep in mind that we are teaching independence so clothing that children can fasten themselves is helpful. If your child chooses to wear a dress please add leggings or shorts underneath. Closed toe shoes are the

safest shoes for active play. We will go outside year round down to 35 degrees so coats, hats, and gloves are needed as weather gets colder.

Items from Home

Items from home (including toys and food) should be left at home or in the car where they can be waiting for your child at the end of the day. During instances approved by the centers, toys or items from home may be allowed but should remain in your child's cubby until allowed by designated staff. All items coming to school should be labeled with child's name.

Arrival and Pick-Up

Safety for your child is our highest priority. Our parking lots are a busy place; please hold your child's hand while in the parking lot for safety. Doors have keypads to ensure only TECC families are able to enter. Please make sure the door shuts and latches behind you. Parents are required to walk their child into the classroom. This allows us to make sure your child is safely in the care of our staff and you have a chance to share any important information at drop off.

Please sign your child in daily.

Children will be released to anyone on the pick up list completed by families. In the event that the person is not know to staff ID will be required for release.

Late Arrivals and Absences

Please inform us if your child will be a late arrival or absent. This helps us maintain the correct amount of staff and meals prepared for all children. Excessive tardiness and/or absence could result in the dismissal of your child from our care.

Transitions

Transitions will occur semi annually in most cases in order to allow children to move up with their peers. Transitions will occur slowly over a weeks time to allow for a smooth and comfortable transition. Tuition rates will change as a child ages up to the next age level but room change may not happen on a child's birthday. A packet will be provided prior to the transition to explain what to expect at the next program level along with a schedule of the transition for your child. Parents are welcome and encouraged to meet the staff prior to the beginning of the transition.

Late Pick-Up Policy

TECC understands that emergencies and/or accidents do happen; however TECC policy for late pick up is as follows:

Any child that has not been picked up by 6:00pm will be charged \$5.00 for the first 1-5 minutes and an additional \$1.00 per minute for every additional minute

late per child. Traffic issues do not excuse the late fee that will be charged. Chronic late pick-ups or early drop offs will be reviewed for removal from the program at the discretion of management.

Please note that we are not authorized to have children in the building before 6:30am or after 6:00pm. If a parent or authorized adult will be late, it is their responsibility to notify the office as soon as possible. Payment for picking up late must be paid at this time.

Half day Preschool programs are also subject to the same late fee schedule after the end of the preschool hours. Children remaining at the center into the lunch service, will be served lunch and a \$5.00 fee will be added for this meal.

Parent Referrals

We believe that a referral from a current family is the greatest form of flattery. Upon the start of care from a newly enrolled family a \$50 credit will be posted to your account as a thank you for being the referral source.

Parent Contacts

Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns pertaining to their child with the staff at the centers. The Director will be available to handle any questions, comments, or concerns. If a meeting needs to be had with the teacher the Director will schedule a sub to step in for the teacher during the meeting. When in the classroom teachers need to give 100% of their attention to the children in their care so this is not the best time or place for a meeting. If the Director of the site is not on duty, an Assistant Director will be available at those times to assist you. If you do not get your needs met through the Director, the owners are also available. You may contact them through the Director.

Insurance

Individual health insurance is not offered by the centers. TECC does maintain insurance at the States requirements. In case of accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact the parents/guardians. If necessary, we will call an ambulance. The Director or assistant will make all the decisions about the care of your child until your arrival. It is to your child's benefit that you keep the center and classrooms up to date with current phone numbers, emergency numbers, and pertinent medical information.

Release of Information

It is our policy to maintain the confidentiality of all children and families in our centers. However, if you choose to have information about your child shared, we

will accommodate your wishes. We require a signed written request from you as well as from the person requesting information.

Health and Safety

Every child must have a completed DHS Certificate of Child Health Exam form required by DCFS. Children must have a current up to date immunizations record and TB clearance. Physicals must be updated every two years and before entering Kindergarten. The health of all children in the centers is important to us; therefore we ask you to follow the guidelines below.

Do NOT send your child to school if

- They have a fever (101 F requires the child be sent home)
 - They are vomiting
 - They have diarrhea
 - They have heavy nasal discharge
 - They have a constant cough
 - They have a rash
 - Their eyes are red and/or goopy
- Have had any of the above symptoms, but not limited to, in the past 24 hours.

Please notify the center when your child will be absent. A doctor's note from the treating doctor who diagnosed the disease, or from a pediatrician who has seen and reevaluated the child is required for the child to return to school after a contagious disease.

Medication (prescription and over the counter), in their original containers with full labels will be given to your child, by a Director, if accompanied by Doctor's instructions. The medication along with instruction from the Doctor needs to be given directly to the Director on duty. Medication will be stored in a locked container in the office.

Children in attendance that are showing symptoms of sickness will be evaluated and parents will be alerted to symptoms even if not at a level of needing to go home or see a doctor. Contagious illnesses and diseases that have been verified to be in our classrooms will be divulged to parents of children who could potentially be effected. Information on the symptoms and the illness will be shared to help parents know what to look for in their own child allowing us to be proactive in addressing the containment of the spread of the illness.

Nutrition

We follow all the guidelines of the Child and Adult Care Food Program. We serve nutritious food for breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack and evening snack daily. We provide Rice cereal, and make our own fruit and vegetable baby food. Breast Milk and formula are to be provided by parents. We are a peanut free school and so no foods served or brought into our centers can contain peanuts. Every September you will be

required to complete a Household Income Eligibility Application. If your child has an allergy or intolerance to certain food you may get a Doctor's note to provide their meal, brought in meals must meet CACFP's guidelines.

Food from Home

All centers serve many students with a variety of food allergies some of which are life threatening. No outside food can be brought in and eaten at school due to DCFS regulations. Parties are an exception to this rule but items brought in must be given to staff and off the approved item list and must all be store bought and packaged.

Disciplinary Policy

Discipline at the earliest level is comprised of teaching children social and emotional skills in order to navigate their worlds. We will work to teach children to understand and respond to various situations and feelings. Children learn best when they learn and are guided through real life experiences. We will work with the children to teach them to handle situations in a positive and productive way.

Teachers will use role-play, guidance, positive reinforcement and praise to encourage appropriate behavior. We will partner with families share social emotional lessons done at school to carry over to home. We will combine with families to create a plan to help children that require extra support by combining our knowledge of the child to create a plan that will support the child consistently between home and school.

In accordance with DCFS regulations no child shall be subject, under any circumstances, to corporal punishment in any manner upon the body or verbal abuse. No child shall be deprived of regularly scheduled meals as punishment. The centers attempt to teach self-control through positive reinforcement. When this is unsuccessful we use refocus. When redirecting or refocusing is unsuccessful, a child may come to the office in an attempt to decrease excessive stimulation in the classroom and keep the classroom environment stable for the other children.

Discharge

The discharge of a child may occur for any act by the child or the family, which could threaten the well being of the group. Other possible reasons for discharge may include, but are not limited to, continuous discipline problems, non-payment or late payment of fees, non-compliance with the center rules or policies, or the withdrawal of the child as a result of being unable to benefit from the program.

Discharge Procedure

Written notice of consideration of discharge will be given to parents, including reasons of consideration of discharge, along with suggestions of alternative courses of action when possible. If the problem does not correct itself or improve in a reasonable amount of time, one week's notice will be given to parents before discharge to allow time to find alternative care. Immediate discharge will be applied in the event that a child s a physical

threat to other children or staff at TECC. In the event of non-payment for care, a child can be discharged from the center after missing only one week of pay without notice.

**In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202)720-5964. USD is an equal opportunity employer*

I have read and received the Parent Handbook for Troy Early Childhood Center (2024 Edition). I understand the contents of the handbook and know that a copy is available for me at anytime requested. If handbooks are changed or updated I will be notified and will be asked to sign another handbook receipt.

Child(ren) Name(s)

Parent/Guardian Signature/Date

Parent/Guardian Signature/Date