

My 1st Steps Preschool



Employee Handbook

Revised: September 2019

The Management of ***My 1st Steps Preschool*** welcomes you and is proud to have you as a staff member of our team. Whether you are a new employee, or have been with us for some time, you are our most important and valued assets. We hope you feel comfortable with your work environment and with the people around you.

Good Luck and best wishes for a long and satisfying career with our Center. Share your passion for children daily and your rewards will be many!

Sincerely,

Lisette Costa

Lisette Costa

President

My 1st Steps Preschool

Table of Contents

Introduction

Employee Welcome Statement 6-7

My 1st Steps Preschool Mission Statement

Preface

Policies and Procedures

At Will Employment 7-9

Statement of Policy

Equal Employment Opportunity

NAEYC Guidelines

Confidentially

Curriculum

Accidents

State Licensing Rules and Procedures

Employee Policies

Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment 10-12

Child Abuse Prevention Policy

Enhanced Discipline Policy

Gross Misconduct

Reporting Abuse and Neglect

Employee Practices

Employee Status 12-19

Staff Schedules

Time Off/Absentees

Time Keeping

Overtime/Clock In and Out

Orientation

Training

Introductory Period

Employment Termination

Outside Employment

Coaching and/or Progressive Disciplinary Action

Personal Appearance

- Jewelry
- Shoes
- Clothing

Professional Demeanor

- Four Characteristics to Maintaining Professional Demeanor

Performance Evaluation

- Daily Support
- Coaching Meetings
- Six Months Reviews
- Introductory Period Evaluations
- Formal Performance Evaluations

Visitors

- Staff Guest

Pay Roll

Pay Checks 19-20

- Pay Deductions
 - ✓ How Does This Work?
- Administrative Pay Corrections
- Employee Check Loss Policy

Benefits

Childcare Benefits 20-21

FMLA

Paid Vacations

Paid Holidays

Sick Leave

Mental Health Days

Jury Duty

Funeral Leave

General Policies

Use of Equipment and Vehicle 22-23

No Solicitation/No Distribution

Employee Children (Not Enrolled)

Telephone

Meals

Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (See attached)

Field Trip Policy

Employee Acknowledgment Form 24

Employee Handbook

Welcome to the children's center at ***My 1st Steps Preschool!***

This center is a model center of quality in childcare and education. As an employee of the ***My 1st Steps Preschool*** you will be expected to exemplify excellence and quality of service and care. By following the employee policy and procedures outlined in this handbook, combined with NAEYC Code of Ethics, you will be well on your way to meeting the goal of excellence and quality. This handbook is just a broad tool for conduct. You will be oriented on more specific policy and procedures through our on-going professional development to help guide decision-making and best practices. Be sure to always keep the Code of Conduct at the forefront of all decision making concerning children.

MY 1ST STEPS PRESCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

My 1st Steps Preschool's Mission is to provide guidance and support for your child during their "1st Steps" toward developing a life-long love of learning through play and creativity, while also providing the critical elements to build the foundation needed for their future academic success.

- **We** foster innovation.
- **We** embrace team work.
- **We** strive for excellence.
- **We** respect and support families.
- **We** commit to service at all levels.
- **We** respect and appreciate diversity.
- **We** actively listen and seek to understand.
- **We** communicate openly and productively.
- **We** use resources creatively and responsibly.
- **We** abide by the NAEYC Code of Ethics and Statement of Commitment.

Our Vision

To provide the first steps to all young learners through love and creativity, while providing the critical elements of future school success.

PREFACE

We have prepared this Handbook to provide you with information about our policies, rules, and present benefits. Please set aside some time to become familiar with this Handbook. It will be very helpful in answering many questions that arise. We recognize, however, that no Handbook can answer every question. If you do not find an answer to your particular question in this Handbook, or if you would like a particular policy or procedure clarified, please feel free to ask the Director or Office Manager. We will be glad to help you answer every question.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

AT WILL EMPLOYMENT

This handbook is prepared to provide you with information and guidelines. It is not a contract of employment between **My 1st Steps Preschool** and you, as the employee. Since North Carolina is an at-will employment state, you are not under contract for employment. Thus, employment is not for a definite term. The Center or you may terminate employment at any time, for any reason or for no reason.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

My 1st Steps Preschool strives for each employee to be treated with respect and in a fair and just manner. In keeping with this policy, all persons will be considered for employment, promotion or training on the basis of qualifications without regard to race, age, handicapping condition, color, creed, sex, or national origin.

My 1st Steps Preschool guarantees fair treatment of all employees. The Center strives to maintain a work environment in which all staff are free from harassment, and expressly prohibits any form of unlawful harassment of employees and co-workers on race, color, religion, creed, gender, national origin, age, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, or the presence of handicaps or disabilities. However, all employees must be physically able to safely supervise young children.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at **My 1st Steps Preschool** will be based on merit, qualification and ability. **My 1st Steps Preschool** does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, physical disability or any other characteristic protected by law. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination and access to benefits and training.

Employees with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the work place are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the Director. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful acts and/or discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

NAEYC GUIDELINES

All teachers are expected to follow the NAEYC GUIDELINES. All staff is expected to adhere to the NAEYC code of ethics at all times. The code is attached for review. Teachers must provide warm, nurturing interactions on the child's level. Such interactions should be guidance and developmentally appropriate early education. Direct Supervision of every child is expected at all times. Failure to provide supervision will be subject to discipline up to termination.

State ratios are important indicators of quality. The center strives to keep state ratios at all times. Please be sure that you always adhere to the state ratios. Make sure that you receive additional help when the number of children approaches over limit. Ratio adherence is a dual responsibility between teachers and management. Never leave your group without any emergency assistance. Call the front desk for assistance when you need to leave the group and the total number of children in attendance exceeds the state ratio.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Due to the sensitive nature of information that you will know as a teacher of young children, it is imperative that you keep sensitive information confidential. Any information about children or their families must be shared on a **“Need to Know”** basis only. Thus, be very sensitive about discussing children’s developmental needs and family information in public places such as lounge or hallway. This does not exclude off premise discussions and/or conversations. Follow the Code of Ethical Conduct and questions of major concerns should be forwarded to the Director. Protection of the interests of each child and family is vital in maintaining a standard of professionalism and privacy.

Also strive to be supportive of center efforts by avoiding negative or malicious discussions about center issues. Together we can achieve great child care and education for our parents and children. Stay positive and focus on the needs of the children in your care.

CURRICULUM

My 1st Steps Preschool will use a state and nationally approved curriculum on a daily basis; which will provide all teachers with the instructional guidelines necessary for developing age appropriate learning activities for children.

ACCIDENTS

All accidents must be reported immediately to the Director/Assistant Director. Accident(s) reports must be written, signed by an administrator, given to parents, and copied for the child’s file. Close supervision of children is the best anecdote to accidents. Use risk management to keep the environment safe and hazard free. ***My 1st Steps Preschool*** strives to provide the best in equipment, that is kept maintained, and in overall good working conditions, so all children will be safe in the classroom or playground areas. Safety is a joint effort of all staff and employees requiring all of us to become risk managers.

STATE LICENSING RULES AND REGULATIONS

ALL staff is expected to be knowledgeable in The Minimum Standards for Child Care. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- Staff in our childcare center must be at least 18 years of age and have a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Note: A 16 year old that attends school can work as volunteer childcare assistant.

- Each staff member must have current training in first aid with rescue breathing and choking and CPR for infants and children.
- Each staff member must provide a statement informing the facility about any of the offenses listed in the North Carolina Controlled Substance Act.
- Each staff member in our facility must execute and submit a completed Background Check Form as required by North Carolina DHHS.

SELECTION OF EMPLOYEES

Employees are selected on the basis of their qualifications to fulfill established specifications for the job. General criteria include **current** education, experience, mental capacity, physical ability, and willingness to work in the specific environment **and obtain continuing education as necessitated by NCDHHS**, and ability to perform the essential functions delineated in the Job Description.

EMPLOYEE POLICIES

SEXUAL AND OTHER UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT

*Sexual harassment **will not** be tolerated in any way, shape or form.*

My 1st Steps Preschool is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. As an example, sexual harassment (both overt and subtle) is a form of employee misconduct that is demeaning to another person, undermines the integrity of the employment relationship and is strictly prohibited.

Any employee who wants to report an incident of sexual or other unlawful harassment should promptly report the matter to the Owner/Director. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.

Corporal Punishment is the infliction of physical pain on a child as a means of controlling behavior. This includes, but is not limited to, spanking, hitting, shaking slapping, thumping, or pinching a child. (This will **not** be tolerated at all).

ENHANCED DISCIPLINE POLICY

Behavioral Expectations –

At My 1st Steps Preschool we are committed to fostering kindness, care, respect and trust. In order to support the creation of such an environment, we do not allow any fighting, kicking, pushing, biting, name-calling, physical aggression or exclusion at preschool.

Children will work to identify and appropriately express their emotions. Positive attention and verbal praise will be used on a regular basis.

Discipline –

Children who behave inappropriately are dealt with in a way that preserves their dignity and trust. If a problem occurs, the teacher will employ simple redirections, speak with the child individually, and provide acceptable choices. If a child is unable or unwilling to demonstrate self-control, a brief quiet time (a “time out” in view of the group for as many minutes as they are old) will be administered to help regain that control. This happens only when other measures have been exhausted, previous warnings have been given, or when behavior is aggressive or harmful to others.

Corporal punishment or total isolation of a child will **never** be used by anyone as a form of discipline at My 1st Steps Preschool. We don’t spank or yell.

Removal From Class –

Many behavioral issues are minor and are dealt with at school. Parent involvement is only sought after the child has had opportunity to improve his or her behavior and is still having trouble. A child may be dismissed from our preschool if one or more of the following conditions are repeatedly observed:

- A child’s conduct hurts or endangers others
- A child intentionally destroys property
- A child’s behavior is unruly, disruptive, and prevents others from fully participating in or benefiting from class activities.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

The mission of My 1st Steps Preschool is to nurture all children entrusted to our care in a warm and loving environment. In keeping with that purpose, this policy seeks to assure that our center is continually working toward providing an environment safe from physical and sexual abuse for those participating in receiving and providing childcare services. All employees shall seek to provide open lines of communication with parents. We will operate with an open door policy allowing parent access

to programs at any time. When those who are employed at **My 1st Steps Preschool** engage in any and all kind types of child abuse, sexual exploitation, or sexual harassment, they violate the terms of their employment.

GROSS MISCONDUCT:

Some offenses are so serious that they can result in termination without previous warnings. The following examples are listed for the guidance of all. This list is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all prohibited activity. The following actions may result in immediate termination:

- Inappropriate behavior toward parents. (All staff is expected to be professional and courteous at all times. If a parent is rude to you, please allow your Director to handle

the situation)

- Neglect or physical abuse of a child
- Withholding of food, nap or other comfort from a child
- Failure to report to work three consecutive workdays without proper notification
- Falsification of center records (**i.e. employment application, time clock, and your records**)
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Smoking in prohibited Areas
- Conviction of a felony for any offense committed while employed by the center.
- Fighting, threatening violence or boisterous or disruptive activity in the work place
- Leaving a child unattended (**inside or outside**)
- Allowing a child to leave the center with an unauthorized person
- Sleeping while supervising children
- Habitual absenteeism or tardiness without notice or unauthorized absences from workstation during the workday
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of employer-owned or customer-owned property
- **Insubordination** that show gross disrespect such as threatening, profanity, or yelling at the Directors.
- Unauthorized use of telephones, mail system, or other employer-owned equipment (**No cell phones allowed in the center during workhours!**)
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the work place, while on duty, or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct
- Sharing confidential information about the center or any of its employees
- Promoting and sharing rumors or negative information about the Center

There will be repercussions to any violation of the above rules. Depending on the severity of the offense and the Director's discretion, violations may be followed by a warning, a **two-day** suspension, and/or termination of employment.

Note: Severe offenses may result in **immediate** termination!

REPORTING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

ALL employees must report all actual or suspected child abuse of any child attending the Center as soon as possible to the Director.

North Carolina law requires caregivers to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the North Carolina Department of Protective and Regulatory Services of law enforcement. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a crime. If you suspect a child has been abused, neglected or become dependent, please call our Intake Workers at 919-989-5300 (during business hours) or our After Hour/On-call workers at 919-989-5000 (after business hours)

Note: Employers are **prohibited** from retaliating against caregivers who make reports in good faith.

EMPLOYEE PRACTICES

EMPLOYEE STATUS

Full-time employees have a basic schedule between thirty-five (30) and forty (40) hours per week.

Part-time employees have a basic schedule between ten (10) and thirty-four (29) hours per week.

STAFF SCHEDULES

Hours of work are subject to change by Director to meet the needs of our families and Center. Any requests for days off must be given in writing one week in advance for approval. Any requests for special days for consideration at the last minute will be honored whenever possible and when coverage is available.

TIME OFF/ABSENTEES

The center cannot operate effectively or efficiently unless its employees can be depended upon to show up for work on a timely and consistent basis. **My 1st Steps Preschool** depends upon each employee, and when one person is absent, a replacement must be hired for the day. Thus, absenteeism has a particularly disruptive effect on both the Center and the Children. Employees, who take excessive time off, or abuse the benefits of sick, personal, and vacation provided are subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

Employees requesting leave related to any medical condition concerning the employee or family members **will be required to provide a physician's statement** verifying the condition, its beginning and expected ending dates, the need for the employee to be given or to provide care, and the estimated time required. This means a signed doctor's note must be brought on the day the employee returns to work.

Note: Foreseeable absences must be requested at least **7 days** in advance.

- Request for leave should be in advance for foreseeable events (at least 7days) and as soon as possible for unforeseeable events. Requests for leave must be made in writing on the **Employee Time-Off Request Form**. Request will be evaluated based on a number of factors, including anticipated work load requirements, staffing considerations, and hardship to **My 1st Steps Preschool** operations during the proposed period of absence. All requests must be approved. Requests that cannot be accommodated may be denied or deferred. Completing a request form does not guarantee time-off.
- Absences due to illness, children's illness, or family emergencies must be called in AT LEAST two hours before employee is scheduled to work. Even sooner if at all possible!
- Car trouble is not considered an emergency. Please arrange for a ride from a friend or family member if the problem arises.

- Employees are required to call the Director, Dionisia Valdez-Sanchez 919-763-3903, ext. 700. If the Director is **Not** available, the President, Jackie Costa must be contacted (919-763-3903, ext. 701). Please try both numbers until the phone is answered. The following are not acceptable and could be cause for immediate termination:
 - ✓ Leaving a message on the answering machine at the Learning Center.
 - ✓ Calling or texting a co-worker.
 - ✓ Texting or leaving a message for the Director without talking to her directly on the phone.
- It is your responsibility to notify your Director personally **BEFORE** your starting time. State the reason for your lateness and when you expect to arrive at work. Failure to call in personally to report absence or lateness is a violation of Center rules, and the absence or lateness will be considered unauthorized. Calls from friends or relatives on your behalf will not be accepted as an authorized notice of absence or lateness; you may be required to submit evidence verifying the reason for your absence or lateness. Failure to provide the requested substantiation will result in discharge.

Please Note: All absences will be monitored. Excessive absences, or pattern of absences that begin to occur, will be addressed by the Director and could possibly be grounds for termination. It is important to understand that when we are short of staff, it is not only stressful on the other staff members, but affects the children as well.

- Without a doubt, working in a child care environment can sometimes be very stressful. Please let the Director know if a situation arises where time is needed to regroup or even a “*stress free*” day off needs to be taken. ***My 1st Steps Preschool*** strives to be sensitive to the needs of its employees and will try to make arrangements to accommodate an over stressed staff member. Simply walking out or not returning from break leaves co-workers in a bind, but even more important, the children who are left are the ones who suffer.
- Any employee, who chooses to walk off the job or simply does not return after leaving for break and/or lunch, will be reported to Child Care Licensing for **NEGLECTFUL SUPERVISION**. This action results in the employee not being allowed to work in child care again. Also, the employee’s last paycheck will be mailed to the employee on the next pay period and may not be picked up at the Learning Center office. This also applies to employees who simply do not show up for work and does not call or give notice of their decision to quit.
- If any employee plans to terminate employment with ***My 1st Steps Preschool***, a **two week** notice in writing is required. If this procedure is followed, the employee’s paycheck can be picked up at the Center’s office.

TIME KEEPING

Accurate recording of time worked is the responsibility of every full time and part time hourly employee. Federal and state laws require ***My 1st Steps Preschool*** to keep accurate records of time worked in order to calculate employee pay and benefits. Time worked is all the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties.

Employer will determine the hourly schedule for each employee. Employees should be sure to review any schedule changes noted on the office write-in calendar. Employees should record the beginning and ending time of all work shifts, and any split shifts or other departure from work for personal reasons.

Note: Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee's time record may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

OVERTIME/CLOCK IN AND OUT

Overtime is paid to non-exempt employees for all hours worked in excess of **40 hours** per Monday through Friday work week. Overtime pay is one and one half times your regular hourly rate of pay and must be authorized by Director. It is the Employees responsibility to clock in and out properly. Any failure to clock in or out properly may result in a ***delay*** in payment of wages due.

ORIENTATION

All new employees are oriented to the ***My 1st Steps Preschool*** policies and procedures. Such an orientation should begin on the first day of employment and continue throughout his/hers **first 30 days**. Each staff member will be assigned a mentor to make sure that all procedures are explained and demonstrated. The **90-day** review will evaluate an employee's performance of all expectations explained during orientation. Any staff member may ask the mentor or director for further explanation or clarification of policies at any time. It is each staff member's responsibility to uphold center expectations at all time.

In accordance with NCDHHS SECTION 12: STAFF ORIENTATION REQUIREMENTS:

CHILD CARE RULE .0707 Staff Orientation

Each staff member who is expected to have contact with children must receive at least 16 clock hours of on-site training and orientation. Some topics must be covered within the first 2 weeks of employment and others within the first 6 weeks of employment.

Within the first two weeks:

- Recognition of the signs and symptoms of child abuse or neglect and the employees duty to report suspected abuse and neglect
- The center's operational policies, including the center's safe sleep policy for infants (if center licensed to care for infants)
- Adequate supervision of children, taking into account their age, emotional, physical and cognitive development

Within the first six weeks:

- First-hand observation of the center's purposes and goals

- Instruction in the employee's assigned duties
- Instruction in the maintenance of a safe and healthy environment
- Review of the center's personnel policies
- Review of the child care licensing law and rules
- Explanation of the role of state and local government agencies in the regulation of child care, their impact on the operation of the center, and their availability as a resource
- Explanation of the employee's obligation to cooperate with representatives of state and local government agencies during visits and investigations

ONGOING/ Continuing Education:

In accordance with NC GENERAL STATUTE 110-91(11) Approved Topic Areas for In-Service Training:

- Training must be in the following topic areas:
- Planning a safe, healthy learning environment;
- Steps to advance children's physical and intellectual development;
- Positive ways to support children's social and emotional development;
- Strategies to establish productive relationships with families;
- Strategies to manage an effective program operation;
- Maintaining a commitment to professionalism;
- Observing and recording children's behavior;
- Principles of child growth and development;
- Learning activities that promote inclusion of children with special needs.

My 1st Steps is dedicated to the professional growth of our employees and proudly pays for all trainings that employees are required to complete.

We encourage our employees to schedule trainings through the following venues:



<http://www.partnershipforchildrenjoco.org/>



<https://www.prosolutionstraining.com/>



Child & Adult
Care Food Program

<https://www.nutritionnc.com/snp/training.htm>

The Director will assist and encourage all staff members to complete all necessary trainings throughout the year. A Quarterly review is conducted to ensure that all staff members have their required hours and that the proper documentation is included within each employee's file.

PLANNING TIME:

All employees that are teaching students, are expected to plan projects and lessons for their students. My 1st Steps Preschool pays for (2) hours a week for planning. Teachers must provide detailed lesson plans for review and approval to the Director at the beginning of each week.

INTRODUCTORY PERIOD

The introductory period is intended to give new employees the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and to determine whether the new position meets their expectations. *My 1st Steps Preschool* uses this period to evaluate employee capabilities, work habits, and overall performance. Either the employee or *My 1st Steps Preschool* may end the employment relationship at will and at any time during or after the introductory period with just cause to be documented and explained in a **written notice** to be signed by both parties.

All new and rehired employees work on an introductory basis for the first ninety (**90**) calendar days after their date of hire. Any significant absence will automatically extend an introductory period by the length of the absence. If *My 1st Steps Preschool* determines that the designated introductory period does not allow sufficient time to thoroughly evaluate the employee's performance, the introductory period may be extended for a special period.

Upon satisfactory completion of the introductory period, employees enter the established employment classification for their position.

EMPLOYMENT TERMINATION

Termination of employment is an inevitable part of personnel activity within any organization and many of the reasons for termination are routine. Below are examples of some of the most common circumstances under which employment is terminated:

- Absence without a leave authorized by the Director of ***My 1st Steps Preschool***.
- Failure to report to work or from lunchbreaks.
- Failure to return from an approved leave without notifying the Director will be considered a resignation without notice.

Note: Such resignation will result in immediate termination, and will render the employee **ineligible** for rehire by ***My 1st Steps Preschool***.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

An employee may hold a job with another organization as long as he or she satisfactorily performs his or her job responsibilities with ***My 1st Steps Preschool***. **ALL** employees will be judged by the same performance standards and will be subject to ***My 1st Steps Preschool*** scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outsidework requirements.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES is any employee to care for enrolled (not related) children during the operating hours of the Center. NOR shall any employee transport (non-related) enrolled children during the operating hours of the Center.

If ***My 1st Steps Preschool*** determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance or the ability to meet the requirements of the center, as they are modified from time to time; the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment if he or she wishes to remain with ***My 1st Steps Preschool***. **Note:** Further more you cannot be employed by a competitor, as this will cause a conflict of Interest in your employment at ***My 1st Steps Preschool***.

COACHING AND/OR PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINARY ACTION

You are expected to follow all policies and procedures for smooth operation and safety of the children in your care. However, everyone occasionally make mistakes or needs guidance for optimal performance of teaching duties. When an employee needs guidance, progressive discipline procedures will be followed. Those procedures may include, but may not be restricted to the following:

- Oral coaching or warning, written warning, written improvement plan, administrative leave with or without pay, up to termination. (Nothing in this policy or in the handbook is intended to limit in any way the center's right to terminate at any time, with or without cause and with or without advance notice.)

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Dress, grooming and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the image ***My 1st Steps Preschool*** presents to parents and their children, visitors and guests. Our philosophy is to provide a culture that allows staff to dress in a style which presents a neat, business-like appearance and that promotes confidence and professionalism to the public. We expect you to accept the responsibility of dressing appropriately for your position or situation. With that in mind, the following dress code will be implemented and enforced at all times.

All employees should wear appropriate tops, blue jeans, and comfortable shoes, such as: tennis shoes.

- **Jewelry** should be conservative. Long chain necklaces or pendants should not be worn as they can present a safety hazard to small children. Earrings should also be small, conservative, and secure, to prevent children from grabbing and pulling loose.
- **Shoes** must be neat and in good repair at all times. Tennis shoes or flats are best. Since you are expected to engage the children in activities on the playground the shoes should be appropriate for the situation. Open toe or open heel shoes are not recommended for safety reasons. (**No Flip-Flops**)
- **Clothing** should be clean and in good repair at all times. You are hired to work with children and being down on the floor frequently is part of the job responsibility. Clothing must be appropriate to engage children in all types of activities throughout the day. Jeans, shorts, or Capri's are allowed: however, they must fit loosely with no holes or lavish accessories. Use a conservative outlook when deciding upon apparel. (All employees must wear their **My 1st Steps Preschool** shirts on designated days and can be purchased upon hire.)

Note: Employees who report for work inappropriately dressed will be sent home and directed to return to work in proper attire. Under such circumstances, employees will not be compensated for the time away from work. Consult your Director if you have questions as to what constitutes appropriate dress.

- **Smoking or Alcohol** is not permitted on the center premises at any time.

PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR

Demeanor involves your manner and your non-verbal tone and gestures. At **My 1st Steps Preschool** every teacher must be conscious of their emotional undertone that they are exuding.

Four Characteristics to Maintaining Professional Demeanor:

- Pleasant Smile
- Gentle Approach
- Friendly Greeting/Conversation
- Maintaining Professionalism

Note: All employees at **My 1st Steps Preschool** will greet every parent and family with a smile; to let them know that you are truly happy to care for their child.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

DAILY SUPPORT- Employees are strongly encouraged to discuss job performance and goals with the Director on an informational, day-to-day basis.

COACHING MEETINGS- **My 1st Steps Preschool** will also support all employees with on-going and regular coaching meetings to address any employment issues at which performance concerns may be addressed (on an as needed basis). These may also come in the form of staff meetings after regular

work hours have ended. All employees are strongly urged to attend all staff meetings when announced.

SIX MONTH REVIEWS- Six month reviews are to be performed **twice a year** to measure individual performance of established objectives and personal growth goals for the coming six months.

INTRODUCTORY PERIOD EVALUATIONS- A formal performance evaluation will be conducted at the end of employee's initial period of hire, known as the introductory period (**90 Days**).

FORMAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS- Additional formal performance evaluations may be conducted to provide the Directors as well as the employee the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting goals. The Directors will be responsible for coordinating evaluations through the appropriate the Director for providing necessary support.

VISITORS

A variety of visitors enter our building each day. All visitors must sign in at the front desk and wear an **identification badge** at all times. It is important for all employees to present a warm, welcoming, and professional impression at all times. To ensure a safe environment for the children, employees should notice that all visitors have an identification badge.

Staff Guests

ALL personal visitors should be scheduled during the employee's break time and restricted to lobby area until staff member is available. If an employee's child (who is enrolled in another classroom in the Center) wishes to visit the parent, the needs of the parent's classroom take precedent.

PAYROLL

PAYCHECKS

Direct deposits are done **Friday** of each week at **My 1st Steps Preschool**. Your management team will distribute paystubs by noon or no later than the end of the day on the designated days.

PAY DEDUCTIONS

The law requires that **My 1st Steps Preschool** make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these are:

- ✓ Federal/State taxes. **My 1st Steps Preschool** also must deduct Social Security taxes on each employee's earning up to a specified limit that is called the Social Security "Wage Base."
- ✓ Garnishment of Wages from State/Federal Government agencies
- ✓ Voluntary Deductions (such as: living expenses, advances, voluntary benefits, etc.)

How Does This Works?

My 1st Steps Preschool matches the amount of Social Security taxes paid by each employee. (If you have questions concerning why deductions were made from your paycheck or how they were calculated, your Director can assist in getting these concerns answered.)

ADMINISTRATIVE PAY CORRECTIONS

- **My 1st Steps Preschool** takes all reasonable steps to ensure that employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck and that employees are paid promptly on the scheduled payday (**Friday of each week**) by the end of each individual employee's work day.

In the unlikely event that there is an error in the amount of pay, the employee should promptly bring the discrepancy to the attention of the Director so that corrections can be made as quickly as possible.

BENEFITS

CHILDCARE BENEFITS

Full time hourly employees are eligible for free tuition for their own children, only for before and after school care that results in less than 2 hrs per day. Enrollment will be offered as space allows within our licensed ratio and group size requirements.

Note: All staff parents must adhere to the same enrollment and attendance policies that regular customers observe, and the child or children must be the natural/adopted child or children of the employee, or must have legal guardianship to qualify.

FMLA

See Director (Family Medical Leave Act)

PAID PERSONAL TIME OFF (PTO) - Applicable to Salaried Employees Only

PTO pay is earned after a year of service. PTO's are paid to employees who work a minimum of **30 hours** per week and are considered full time. After the **first** anniversary date of hire, you earn **1 week (40hours)** and after **third** anniversary date of hire the employee earns **2 weeks (80 hours)**. All vacations must be requested on a leave authorization form and approved by administration.

Note: Any employee, who leaves in good standing with proper notification, can have pay in lieu of taking accrued time off. Leave of absence without pay may be granted when coverage is available.

PAID HOLIDAY TIME OFF - Applicable to Employees who have had more than 2 years of continuous service.

My 1st Steps Preschool grants holiday time off to all full time employees for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. You must work or have approved leave for the day before and the day after the specific holiday to qualify for holiday pay.

SICK LEAVE

Full time, salaried employees are provided (6) paid sick days. Employees must call immediately, if and when they will not be present due to their own personal illness or of their child's illness. An employee may submit a physician's note and request additional days from their PTO sick leave bank when missing more than three consecutive days due to illness.

*IMPORTANT – If you have any illness that may be contagious, you may NOT return to work without a doctor's note releasing you to full work duty.

MENTAL HEALTH DAYS

Up to two (2) **sick days** may be used as mental health days to reduce stress. Mental health days must be pre-approved by the Program Director after **12 months** of service. If the employee is salaried, these days will be paid, if the employee is hourly, these days will be considered Excused Absences.

JURY DUTY

Jury Duty is considered part of your civic duty, and thus the center will pay the difference between your regular pay and jury duty pay. ***Proof of Attendance and wage earned*** for jury duty attendance must be submitted for the pay subsidy. If the employee is salaried, these days will be paid, if the employee is hourly, these days will be considered Excused Absences.

FUNERAL LEAVE

Bereavement time for up to **three** continuous days for scheduled time lost due to death of an immediate family member, including parent, spouse, child, brother, sister or a spouse's parent. If the employee is salaried, these days will be paid, if the employee is hourly, these days will be considered Excused Absences.

GENERAL POLICIES

USE OF TELEPHONE AND MAIL SYSTEM

Calls for or by you should be conducted either before or after a shift, or on a lunch break. Cell phones are not to be used in the classroom or on the playground. They should only be used on breaks when off the clock. In emergency situations, please advise the Director and she will be happy to make other arrangements.

Note: This includes **NO** texting on the cell phone while in the classroom or while children are in your care.

Personal use of telephone for long-distance and toll free calls is **Not** permitted. There will be no personal phone calls while on duty at the Center. ***My 1st Steps Preschool*** phone is for **business purpose only**. Our children should have your full attention at all times.

To ensure effective telephone communications, employees should always use the approved greeting

and speak in a courteous and professional manner. Please confirm information received from the caller, and hang up only after the caller has done so.

The use of postage paid by **My 1st Steps Preschool** for personal correspondence is **Not** permitted.

USE OF EQUIPMENT

Equipment essential in accomplishing job duties are expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using property, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance and follow all operating instructions, safety standards and guidelines.

NO SOLICITATION/ NO DISRTRIBUTION

In order to avoid annoyance to our employees and interference with our operations, no employee is permitted to distribute literature or solicit other employees for any purpose on Center premises during working time. The Center premises include all areas where employees perform their assigned work tasks. Working time includes the time during which you are actually scheduled to work, and does not include scheduled rest periods, meal breaks and other specified times when you are not expected to be working.

Non-employees may not solicit for any purpose, or engage in the distribution of literature of any kind while on Center premises.

EMPLOYEE CHILDREN (NOT ENROLLED)

ALL employees should make appropriate advance arrangements for their child (ren) care during their scheduled work hours. Children up to age 12, may **Not** stay in any classroom or remain unsupervised at the Center. On planned school vacations, school age children (up to 12 years old) may attend **My 1st Steps Preschool** after school program, provided space is available and arrangements have been made with the Director, discounted rates may apply.

MEALS

Your own meals are to be eaten in the office or in other areas where no children are present. You are to clock out for your lunch break unless otherwise authorized by the manager to work through the break. When the center is serving family style meals, staff is expected to participate by eating with the class during mealtime in order to model appropriate behavior, nutritional choices and manners. You are expected to only eat center food that is offered to all children in your care while in the presence of children. If you bring food from home or order out, please consume such food on your break away from the children. You would not want someone to eat something that smells delicious in your presence and not offer to share the food with you. Always avoid drinking hot beverages around the children to avoid possible burns. Any beverages other than those being offered to children must be consumed from a closed container and kept away from the children. (Please remember to keep respect for all of the children in your care.)

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

I have received and read the **My 1st Steps Preschool** Employee Policy and Procedures Handbook. I expect to be guided by the rules and policies contained therein. I further understand and agree that my employment with **My 1st Steps Preschool** is at will and may be terminated by the Director of the **My 1st Steps Preschool** at any time for any reason or without reason. I understand that nothing in the Personnel Policies and Procedures handbook or in any oral statement or representation by any employee or representative of **My 1st Steps Preschool** shall be deemed to create a contract of employment or any other modification of the at-will employment relationship. I also understand that any or all of the provisions contained in the Employee Policy and Procedures Handbook may be modified, amended, or eliminated by **My 1st Steps Preschool** at any time with or without notice.

I have received and agree to abide by the following rules, policies, laws, and procedures as set forth in the following documents:

- The North Carolina Child Care Law and Rules
- My Applicable Job Description
- The Voluntary Enhanced Standards
- The Orientation Checklist

Print & Sign Employee Name

Date

Print & Sign the Name & Title of Authorized Personnel Date