



Stepping stones  
learning center

## Parent Handbook

Hours of operation: Monday through Friday 6:45 am-6:00 pm

Age 4 months to 12 years old

2691 Crow Canyon Rd San Ramon CA 94583

925-820-8820

### Purpose

The purpose of Stepping Stones Learning Center is to provide each child with a nurturing environment in which a child will grow to his or her full potential socially, emotionally, cognitively and physically.

### Goal

The primary goal is to develop each child's positive sense of self. We plan to achieve this by dedicating ourselves to nurturing young children with love and caring, encouraging self help skills, providing varied activities for their enrichment in a safe environment, and by assisting their families in guiding their child's development skills.

### Philosophy

We believe that young children learn best through carefully planned play activities which provide them a wide variety of opportunities to express themselves and to learn about the world around them. We strive to inspire a love of learning through active participation in developmentally appropriate group and individual experiences. Young children learn best by doing.

The philosophy of Stepping Stones Learning Center is based on the premise that the best possible education for young children is a joint venture. The equal importance of home and school is stressed and every family is encouraged to become actively involved in the school. We encourage the parents to seek assistance of our qualified teachers in nurturing their child's development. Stepping Stones Learning Center sees its role as a catalyst in the greatest adventure of providing the highest quality child development education.

We are state licensed and operated on a nondiscriminatory policy of race, religion, color, creed and ethnic background.

### Arrival

When the child is dropped off by the parent/guardian, we require each child to be brought inside the building by their parent/guardian. The staff will do the Daily Inspection for Illness. We will not accept a child who was sent home for illness for less than 24 hours or has been exposed to a contagious disease. After the child has been determined to be without obvious signs of illness and has been accepted, the parent/guardian must sign the child in with his/her full legal signature and indicate the time.

### Pick-up

Our staff will not allow any child to leave the school with anyone other than their guardian, unless the Director has received prior permission. This policy is strictly enforced. ID's will be checked regardless of relationship to the child. State law requires a full signature on sign-in/out sheets and indicated time.

There will be a late charge if your child is picked up after his/her scheduled time. After 6:00 pm there will be a late charge of \$1.00/minute paid directly to the teacher on duty. This is a

penalty, not a service provided by Stepping Stones Learning Center.

### **Absence Procedure**

Children enrolled in the Stepping Stones Learning Center are expected to maintain regular attendance. If your child is absent, please call the office at 925-820-8820 to notify school personnel of the reason for his/her absence. A written excuse is required to verify absences of longer than 5 days. The written verification is to be provided for each day your child is absent from preschool. Excessive unexcused absences will result in your child being dropped the program.

### **Lunch/Snack**

Infant care food service:

Since individual needs for each infant differ, an individual feeding plan will be completed and available for use prior to the infant's first day at Stepping Stones Learning Center. The Director or the Assistant Director, and the infant's authorized representative will develop and update it as often as needs change.

For children less than 18 months old, parents need to bring their own formula and snack depending on the individual needs. All food and formula will be stored in the refrigerator before use. We will not serve honey to any infant for the first year of life. Honey may carry botulism spores that can be harmful to young infants and has been known to cause infant botulism.

Nutritious lunches are provided by Stepping Stones Learning Center for children 18 months and above. Lunches include vegetable, fruit, bread, milk, and the main dish everyday. Monthly lunch menus are provided in all classrooms and we appreciate your suggestions.

We also provide morning and afternoon snacks. Snacks usually consist of foods such as bread, fruits, crackers, or trail-mix. Juice or milk is included with all snacks.

### **Medication**

The school can only administer medications and over-the-counter products when specific requirements are met. The requirements are as follows:

1. The school must have parental permission in writing. A record will be kept by the school staff of any medications administered to the child, noting the date, time, and by whom the medication was given.
2. Medication must be given to the teacher by the parent. **DO NOT SEND MEDICATIONS WITH THE CHILD.**
3. The medication is current (not expired).
4. Any medication container having a detached or excessively soiled or damaged label will be returned to the parent for a new label from the issuing pharmacy. Unused portions will be returned to the parent. Medicines with a specific expiration date will not be used after the date of expiration. Medicines will be stored in a locked cupboard out of reach and inaccessible to children. These requirements are for all medications. All medications must be in ORIGINAL containers, whether prescription or non-prescription.
5. The medication must be in a labeled pharmacy bottle which states the following:
  - The name of the medication
  - The prescription number
  - The strength and quantity
  - The expiration date of time-dated medication
  - The directions for use
  - The child's name
  - The physician's name
  - The date of issue

- The name and address of the licensed pharmacy issuing the medication.

If a prescribed over-the-counter product is required, it must be in the original labeled container accompanied by physician's directions.

In the event of sudden illness or serious injury, parents/guardians will be notified immediately. It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to provide the school with other emergency contacts who are able to pick up the child immediately. If the nature of illness or injury needs to have no delay in getting medical treatment, then Stepping Stones will contact 911 or bring the child to an emergency room while the parents/guardians are being reached. If the nature of illness can wait for the parents/guardians/emergency contact to get to Stepping Stones, then the child will be isolated from other children before the authorized representative arrives.

For the protection of all of our children from diseases we require that children be kept home if they experience any of the following:

- **A fever of 100 or above:** Your child should stay at home if s/he has an oral temperature of 101 degrees or greater; a rectal or ear temperature of 102 degrees or greater; or an under arm temperature of 100 degrees or greater and accompanied by behavior changes and/or other symptoms of illness such as a sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, etc. (A temperature over 99 degrees under the arm in an infant under 4 months of age should be evaluated by a health care professional.)
- **Vomiting:** Repeated forceful evacuation with other symptoms or child's inability to eat. Parent will be notified and the child may be monitored. If vomiting continues or other symptoms occur, the child will be sent home immediately.
- **Diarrhea:** Loose bowel movements for two (2) days in a row or three (3) times in one day. Children may return after they are symptom free for 24 hours.
- **Body rash** with a fever. Must bring a written release from a health care professional to return to school.
- **Discharge from the eyes:** Pink eye or any other eye infection is highly contagious. Child can return 48 hours after antibiotic or with a written release from a health care professional.
- **Sore throat with a fever and swollen glands or mouth sores with drooling.** Must bring a written release from a health care professional to return to school.
- **Strep throat:** Children who are diagnosed with strep throat may return to school after 24 hours on an antibiotic.
- **Head Lice:** Hair must be washed with medicated shampoo and be free of live lice and most dead nit (eggs) before returning to the center.
- **Severe coughing:** Child gets red or blue in the face, or makes a high pitched whooping sound after coughing.
- **Any other diagnosed contagious illness or disease:** such as chicken pox, whooping cough, and scarlet fever. Children may return to school when they are no longer contagious.

If your child is diagnosed as having lice, scabies, impetigo, ringworm, or any other contagious disease by your source of medical care, you must notify the school within twenty-four hours.

#### **Elementary Care:**

We provide transportation to and from several elementary schools in San Ramon. Transportation costs are included in the tuition. No adjustments or credits will be given for unused days or holidays. There is a \$10 fee for returning to pick up a child who has missed the bus or when we have not been notified of a child's absence regardless of the cause. Our program is set up in a manner that involves students in crafts, games, cooking projects, and occasional field trips. An afternoon snack will be provided daily. A teacher will direct and help with homework activities from 4:00 to 5:00. Tuition is based on children attending public school daily schedule. There is an additional charge for days when public school is closed.

## **Emergency and Health Information**

Your cooperation in filling out the health and emergency cards at the beginning of the school year and updating them as needed will help us keep our records up to date. It is extremely important that we have your current address and phone number in case we need to reach you regarding your child. Please contact the director to advise of any changes in the emergency card information.

## **Discipline Policy**

Because we believe in the value of each and every child and the child's right to be treated with dignity and respect, our staff will NEVER use or direct another to use any of the following methods to address behavior:

1. Any type of corporal punishment, including but not limited to: spanking, rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, and hitting.
2. Any type of emotional abuse, including but not limited to: name calling, ostracism, shoving, making derogatory remarks about the child or child's family, using any language that threatens, humiliates or frightens the child.
3. Separation from the activity group, except as stated under the behavior guidance policy.
4. Punishment for lapses in toilet habits.
5. Punishment by use of withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care.
6. Use of physical restraints such as ties or traps. Securely holding a child within a teacher's arm is permitted when necessary to protect the child or other children from injury or harm.

If a child exhibits persistent unacceptable behavior that requires an increased amount of staff guidance and time, a plan to address the behavior will be developed in conjunction with the parents, staff, and director. Child is never subjected to corporal punishment or emotional abuse.

## **Admissions and Enrollment Procedures**

Children must be between the ages of four (4) months old and twelve (12) years old. Parent must meet with the director for an interview to set the goals and individual plan for each child and to see if the facility can meet the child's needs.

The following forms must be completed prior to attendance:

1. Parent's Rights
2. Personal Rights
3. Parent's Agreement
4. Consent for emergency medical treatment
5. Emergency Information
6. Health History
7. Immunization Records
8. Physician exam result including TB test result (TB tests will be given after one year old)
9. Infant needs and services plan (for infant)
10. Toddler toilet training plan (for toddler option)

Registration and tuition fees must be paid prior to starting date. Stepping Stones Learning Center only accepts checks (payable to Giant's Na's), cash or cashier check for payments.

## **Immunization**

Immunizations are required by the State of California before children may be enrolled in school. Child must have 3 Polio, 4 DTP, 1 MMR (given on or after the first birthday) 1 HIB (given on or after the first birthday), 3 Hep B, 1 TB test (with results within the last year), and 1 Varicella (chickenpox). (Note: if child had chickenpox disease, it must be indicated on Immunization Record by child's physician to meet requirements.)

## Health Requirements

Each preschool child shall have a complete physical examination within 90 days prior to enrollment. This is required by the State Dept of Education.

## Registration

There is a non-refundable one-time registration fee of \$100.00 per child. This fee is not applicable towards tuition and it is required upon filling out an enrollment agreement. There is also a two weeks deposit which will be returned to you when you give 30 days written notice before you withdraw your child from the school.

## Tuition payments

Payments are to be made by the fifth of each month. Tuition becomes delinquent as of the sixth day and a late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed.

Fees delinquent longer than two weeks may result in termination of a child's enrollment. There will be a \$25.00 penalty for each check returned by the bank. Two returned checks will be cause for payments to be made in the form of money orders or cash only. All tuition checks are to be made payable to "Giant Na's".

Stepping Stones requires a two week advance tuition deposit for each child. This deposit will be held by Stepping Stones and may be used for delinquent payments or final notice at the school's discretion.

Stepping Stones does not offer any credit towards tuition due to illness, holidays, or vacations. These days were taken into consideration when tuition was determined. Tuition rates are standard even during weeks of holidays and when school is closed.

There are three exceptions to this rule:

There is a 10% discount for two full time siblings.

There is a 10% discount for the month in which a child you refer enrolls.

Stepping Stones reserves the right to close for a period of one day to one week for repairs or other service, giving 30 days notice. We also observe the following holidays and will therefore be closed (holidays occurring on a Sunday will be observed on the following Monday):

Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday	President's Day	Memorial Day
Independence Day	Labor Day	Veterans Day
Thanksgiving and day after	Christmas eve and day	New year's eve and day

## Licensing Compliance

The State of California licensing agency (Community care licensing) wants you to be aware that they have the authority to:

Interview children or staff and inspect/audit child or facility records without prior consent.

Observe the physical condition of the child, including conditions which could indicate abuse, neglect or inappropriate placement, and to have a licensed medical professional physically examine the child.

## Rest Time

The morning is an active time and rest time allows the children a chance to relax and get ready for the afternoon activities. Some children might not sleep, however, all children are required to lie down and rest quietly on the mats we provide. Parents shall furnish bedding marked with the child's first name and last initial. A blanket, sheet, pillow case, and a pillow are needed

from home. Bedding should be taken home at the end of each week for cleaning and returned on Monday.

### **Withdrawal/Schedule Change**

Stepping Stones reserves the right to put all new children on a thirty day trial basis to ensure that our environment is well matched with their needs. Our staff and administration have developed policies to maintain a safe environment for all children. In the event of inappropriate behavior directed from a child to another child or teacher (hitting, kicking, biting), parents will be notified immediately. The director will decide if further action is necessary (parent involvement, suspension, or dismissal).

### **Termination of care/by the Center**

As stated above, the child's adjustment to the Center and the appropriateness of this particular care arrangement for an individual child may be cause for concern for the child's well being. If the Center does not feel that it is meeting the child's needs, we reserve the right to terminate the care arrangement on a time-line that is in the child's best interest. Other reasons that may result in termination of care include:

1. Failure to complete required paperwork in a timely manner
2. Failure to provide verification of child's physical examination within thirty (30) calendar days of enrollment in a Center program
3. Failure to provide updated immunization records as needed
4. Failure to pay fees and penalties. Delinquent fee. Checks returned by the bank.
5. Three (3) late pickups of your child within a six (6) months period.
6. Three (3) consecutive days of absence without notification will be considered a voluntary withdrawal by the parent.
7. Failure to adhere to Stepping Stones policies or comply with community care licensing requirements
8. Ineligible for services due to laws, regulations or other legal requirements
9. Lack of cooperation from parents with the Center's effort to resolve differences and/or to meet the child's needs through parent/staff meetings or conferences.
10. Child exhibits special needs related to a serious illness that we cannot meet at the Center. In this case, the Center's staff will make every effort to involve the parents and possibly other resource persons, (as appropriate, in order to jointly decide on the best course of action for this child before termination occurs.

### **Termination of care/by the parent**

Since preschool space is limited in this area, any children absent for a period of 3 days without notification will be considered withdrawn. The vacancy will be made available for another child and re-enrollment of the previous child will depend upon availability. Stepping Stones requires a 30 days advance written notice of any schedule changes.