Welcome to

OVER THE RAINBOW

Learning Center

Parent Handbook

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Section 1- Welcome to Over the Rainbow

A. Welcome

Welcome to Over the Rainbow! Choosing a childcare center for your child is one of the most difficult and important decisions that you will make. We are pleased that you have chosen us, and will work very hard to provide the highest quality program for you and your child.

Over the Rainbow was founded in 2012 in Hamden CT, in 2014, Over the Rainbow expanded to our site in Cheshire. At Over the Rainbow we provide quality child care in a loving center environment for children from 6 weeks to school age. The centers are licensed by the State of Connecticut.

As Owner of Over the Rainbow, I am committed to the profession of early childhood education. I hold a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education and taught kindergarten for 6 years before following my passion into owning my own school.

As you will read below, our mission, philosophy and core values are simple, and we will assert 100% of our efforts each day to accomplish it. The following material and information will hopefully provide you with a better perspective about our program, commitment, and philosophies.

We look forward to working with you to provide the best program for your child. We are pleased that you have chosen, or are interested in, our program for your childcare needs. Our staff of dedicated and caring educators of young children will strive to give you and your child a happy and meaningful experience.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, concerns, or suggestions. (info@overtherainbowkids.com) or your center's director at

Executive Director: executivedirector@overtherainbowkids.com
Regional Director: regional@overtherainbowkids.com
Cheshire Center: director.cheshire@overtherainbowkids.com
Hamden Center: hamden2@overtherainbowkids.com

Jaime Tessman
Owner

B. Mission

Over the Rainbow Learning Center exists to provide a safe, developmentally appropriate environment for infants, toddlers, and preschool children. Our focus is to provide a stimulating early care and education experience which promotes each child's social/emotional, physical and cognitive development. Our goal is to support children's desire to be life-long learners.

C. Philosophy

At Over the Rainbow we strive to provide high quality child care in a warm, home-like atmosphere where children feel loved and secure. OTR is a place where children learn and grow through hands-on, developmentally appropriate activities. Our curriculum focuses on the whole child and includes activities such as music, dance, art, science, math, language arts, and outdoor play. It is a place where children's basic needs are met in a safe, happy, clean and attractive atmosphere.

D. Core Values

Family-Our families and children are the most important to us
Excellence-We strive to be the very best in everything we do
Fun- We want everyone we impact to leave with a smile
Kindness-We are friendly, warm, and compassionate

The following information has been compiled to familiarize you with the policies and procedures, daily routines, and educational activities of our program. Please read this handbook carefully and feel free to ask questions about any material that may be unclear to you.

Section 2-Curriculum

Our curriculum is based on the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards. These standards serve as the foundation for supporting ALL young children in Connecticut, no matter where they live, play and learn. The CT ELDS are statements of what children from birth to age five should know and be able to do across the earliest years of development.

The learning progressions within the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards promote:

- Equality for all children, through the setting of high, but appropriate, expectations
- High-quality early learning experiences, by providing clear goals and trajectories of learning
- Provision of individual support based on each child's growth and development
- Families' understanding of what their children are learning and how they can support them
- Teachers' understanding of age-appropriate content and approaches to children's learning
- Communication across sectors, based upon these common goals for children

Teachers plan curriculum based on weekly themes. However, if the children are engaged and show a deeper interest in a theme, the teachers will extend their learning experiences. Some themes may last one week; some may last longer.

While planning, teachers consider the ranges of development within each group and include activities for children at all levels of learning. Our goal is to always support, encourage and build upon each child's learning, never to frustrate.

Our program addresses the needs of the whole child, taking into account all of their developmental needs: physical, social, emotional, and cognitive. We feel that a program that addresses only the cognitive or academic needs of children cannot prepare them with all of the skills they will need for life.

Section 3-Enrollment/Financial Policies

A. Admission/Enrollment

Before the first day of attendance, the following forms must be completed and returned to the Director. NO EXCEPTIONS!!! The forms are as follows: Application, Emergency Release, Tuition Agreement, Evacuation, Behavior Management, Medical/Immunization Record, Parent Code of Conduct and Parent's Handbook Acknowledgment form.

Physical Examination - The Connecticut State Department of Health requires that each child admitted to the Center be examined by a licensed physician and have a signed certificate indicating the date of the exam. Yearly updates on exams are needed for all children, as well as documentation of updated immunizations.

At enrollment, parents will be presented with an Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form. Parents are encouraged to include any and all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick-up their child. In an emergency situation, the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached, staff will call the persons listed on this form until someone can be reached.

Should the staff contact a parent and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list.

The persons on the Emergency/Alternate pick-up form will be required to provide a photo ID prior to OTR releasing the child. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

All changes and/or additions to the Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form.

B. Parent Onboarding

As your family joins the OTR community, we look forward to supporting your child's transition into their new classroom. To help them feel comfortable with their teachers, peers, and environment, orientation visits are encouraged—and required—prior to their first day. These visits help build familiarity, ease any anxieties, and set the stage for a successful start.

Mandatory Pre-Start Visits Include:

- A 30 minute classroom visit with your child to meet their teacher and peers
- Meeting with your Director to go over important policies and procedures about our center
- Time for parents to ask questions and discuss their child's needs with staff

Your participation in this visit is essential and helps us create a warm and supportive beginning for your child.

There is no tuition due for this visit.

C. Center Hours

Our center in Hamden opens at 6:30 a.m. and closes at 6:00 p.m. Our center in Cheshire opens at 6:30 a.m. and closes at 6:00 p.m.

Your specific hours will be outlined in your childcare agreement. We require two weeks' notice if you need to change your contracted hours.

Understand in the event if you change hours or add days from your child's schedule, the weekly payment will be adjusted and the Child Application Agreement Contract will still be in effect.

In cases of emergencies, which may hinder you from picking your child up on time, we would appreciate a phone call. Please also try to let us know in advance if you need to drop off earlier than your normal drop-off time so that child/staff ratios are maintained at all times.

D. Kangarootime(parent app)

OTR utilizes a Free App called KT Connect through Kangarootime. This App allows teachers to summarize your child's day and keep you informed of eating habits, sleeping habits, diaper changing, potty training, daily activities, special interests and supplies needed. This app is also used to check

your child in and out during drop off and pick up. Our parent app also allows our parents to view their accounts and message teachers and management.

Open communication is very important between staff and parents. If at any time you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak up. Your child's experience is at its best when we can discuss issues openly. However, please remember that our teachers' main priority is the care and education of each child. They may not always be able to message back immediately. For any communication that is urgent please call the center.

E. Dismissal Guidelines

Children's Behavioral Issues Policy

OTR reserves the right to request a child be picked up if he/she exhibits:

- Abusive verbal or physical behavior towards staff or classmates
- Disruptive behavior that does not respond to appropriate discipline

OTR may work with parents in one or more of the following ways:

- Parents may be provided with information explaining Over the Rainbow's policies and procedures regarding behavioral issues.
- A parent conference may be held. The goal of the conference will be to establish a written plan to support the child in developing appropriate self-control. Failure of a parent to establish and implement a plan may result in disenrollment.
- Over the Rainbow will assist parents with seeking and finding proper resources to aid in educating their child on appropriate behavior.

Child Dismissal

Children are expected to respect their peers, teachers, and persons of authority. This policy is for all children, especially for our Preschool and Pre-K students who are of an age where they can understand the consequences of inappropriate behavior. The following are examples of unacceptable behavior:

- Hitting- regardless of whether injury occurs
- Throwing objects
- Destroying equipment (ripping books, disrespectfully breaking toys, marking walls or furniture)
- Aggressive or threatening behavior
- Profanity
- Continually disrupting class
- Attempting to exit the classroom, playground or group in an unsafe manner

If a child has a predisposition to this type of behavior, it is the family's responsibility to educate their child as to Over the Rainbow's policies and procedures on acceptable and unacceptable behaviors.

If a child exhibits unacceptable behavior, parents may be called to immediately pick up their child. The parents are responsible for tuition during the time that parents are asked to pick up their child. When the child returns, if the unacceptable behavior is exhibited again, the child may be immediately dismissed. The Security deposit and payment for the current week on your account will be forfeited.

Family Dismissal

(Please refer to our Parent Code of Conduct- this must be signed by both parents)

Adults shall model exemplary behavior for children. A childcare center is an environment that must be appropriate for children in all areas and at all times. This includes classrooms, playgrounds, hallways, and parking lots. The following are examples of unacceptable behavior and/or actions:

- In order to promote wellness, health and safety- drugs and alcohol are not permitted on OTR property
- Parents, guardians, and authorized pick up persons must not arrive at the center smelling of marijuana or any other substance that may cause concern for the well-being of children and staff. Repeated incidences may result in further action including but not limited to a meeting with management and possible termination of services
- Profanity, speaking or behaving aggressively, in a threatening manner or inappropriately to any employee, child or fellow client is not permitted. OTR reserves the right to judge whether an adult is exhibiting rage, anger, or appearing emotionally unstable.
- The family is not meeting their tuition obligation
- The family is not compliant with Over the Rainbow's policies and procedures
- Repeated late pick-ups
- Breach of our Confidentiality Policy
- Any reason deemed necessary by management for the goodwill and safe operation of the center

If an adult or any family member exhibits unacceptable behavior, the entire family may be immediately dismissed. The Security deposit and payment for the current week on your account will be forfeited.

F. Summer Camp

Summer Camp is an extension of our program and is MANDATORY for our Preschool, Pre-K and Toddlers moving into our preschool room for the summer. There will be a one-time non-refundable fee charged to your weekly invoice in the month of March. This fee is to help offset the costs of vendors and additional supplies. During the summer it will be packed with vendors associated with the themes, activities, arts and crafts, and water play.

G. Inclement Weather Days

In consideration of the needs of our working families, we take great efforts to remain open under almost all situations. However, on occasion, like everybody else, we have to give in to the weather or some other emergency.

The center will generally remain open on inclement weather days. When the center must close or open late due to snow or inclement weather, parents will be notified by Channel 8 WTNH, Channel 3 WFSB, and through our parent communication app (kangarootime) before 6 am. If the center needs to close early because of inclement weather, you will be notified as soon as possible. If the parent(s) cannot be reached, the person listed on the emergency list will be contacted to pick up your child.

There is no credit given for vacations, scheduled school holidays, child illness, or for closing due to emergencies or inclement weather.

H. Tuition, Payments, and Security Deposits

Your specific days and rates will be outlined in your Child Care Enrollment Contract. Tuition is due on Monday of the current week.

- If your child will be absent on the first day of your child's attendance for that week due to a vacation, holiday, etc., you are still responsible for payment on the current Monday. Otherwise, a late fee will be charged to your account.
- All payments must be made through our electronic media. You may use a credit card or your checking account information.
- A non-refundable security deposit equal to one week's tuition and a $150 non-refundable registration fee is required to reserve a space for your child. The one week's tuition will be credited to your child's last week in our care, provided the office is given two weeks' notice in writing. If a two-week notice is not given, your security deposit will be forfeited. Upon re-registration, you will need to pay a new security deposit. If there are any changes to your child's contracted schedule or there is a rate increase, the security deposit must be updated accordingly.
- We reserve the right to change tuition rates with thirty days' notice.
- A $50, per child, fee will be charged annually on September 1st regardless of original enrollment date. This applies to all full and part-time children. This supply fee will be used to cover classroom materials, art supplies and other essentials.
- Full Tuition is due even in the event of absence, illness, holiday and inclement weather, pandemic, flood, mechanical system failure, or any other reason deemed necessary.
- I understand that my child cannot be enrolled at Over the Rainbow for less than two days per week.

I. Financial Assistance

We accept Care-4-Kids childcare subsidies. Parents of a subsidized child must complete all required paperwork on time. Parents of subsidized children are also required to sign a fee agreement, agreeing to be personally responsible for the payment of tuition until C4K sends over the approved certificate and in the event they become ineligible to receive childcare subsidies or their subsidy is modified. Parents are responsible for the difference between our tuition and the amount paid by Care-4-Kids.

J. Late Fees and Returned Payments

A fee of $8.95 will be charged on all returned payments along with a $40 late fee. If more than 5 payments are returned, at the discretion of the owner, payments may be continued on a **cash only** basis. Tuition is due on Monday of the current week. A late fee of $40 will be added to any account if payment is not received by Monday 5 pm. Tuition, including all late fees, must be paid before Wednesday or care will no longer be provided. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Our center closes at 6pm, anyone arriving late will be assessed an additional charge of $30.00 per 15 minutes or any portion off. This late fee will be added to your account.

K. Discounts

Over the Rainbow offers a multiple child discount for one or more siblings simultaneously enrolled during the same school year. The discount applies to the tuition of all related children in a household. We also offer discounts for military (active or inactive), teachers, policemen, firemen, or nurses.

L. Holiday

We will be closed on the following holidays and staff training days(**):

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King Jr. Day**	Veteran's Day**
Good Friday	Day before Thanksgiving close at 3pm
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving and the day after
Juneteenth**	Christmas Eve
Fourth of July	Christmas Day and the day after
Last Friday before Labor Day**	Closing at 3 pm on New Year's Eve

If any of the holidays fall on Saturday, the center will be closed on Friday, and if the holiday falls on Sunday, the center will be closed on Monday. Parents are responsible for payment of these holidays or the center closing due to weather or circumstances beyond our control.

M. Vacations

As a benefit to our amazing families, OTR offers a one week half off tuition for all full time students. The vacation week can be used only once during a calendar year at the families' choosing. The family must be enrolled at OTR for at least 90 days and the child may not attend during that week. A two week notice is required for using the vacation week. If a child takes a vacation for additional weeks throughout the year, full tuition will be due.

N. Notification of Withdrawal and Non-Payment

Parents may terminate this service by giving two weeks' notice, in writing, to the office. Earlier notice, if known, would be greatly appreciated. Absences of more than a week without notification or payment of tuition will result in an automatic withdrawal. Re-admittance will include all back pay including late fees and a registration fee.

We reserve the right to reevaluate any child or family's continued participation in this program to determine whether it adequately meets the child or family's needs.

- Failure to abide by any of the policies in this handbook may result in termination
- Nonpayment of tuition or any fees mentioned in this handbook
- Some reasons for termination may be: a child who is having an extremely difficult time adjusting and making it difficult for us to care for the other children properly; a child who exhibits severe emotional or social problems which are detrimental to the other children in care; excessive and/or controllable biting, inappropriate language; destructive or harmful behavior; misconduct from any parent, guardian or family member and/or a parent who abuses the policies outlined in this handbook

- Unless the child is in immediate danger to himself or the other children, two weeks' notice will be given should the withdrawal of the child be required.
- Please see Dismissal Guidelines, page 7 for further information

Section 4-Confidentiality Statement

Our professional ethics require that each employee maintain the highest degree of confidentiality when handling children, family, and our co-workers' matters. This policy has been adopted to ensure the protection of individual rights to privacy for children, families, and employees of Over the Rainbow. The dignity of children, families, and employees must be respected and protected at all times. This policy extends to both internal and external disclosure.

Families and coworkers may entrust us with important information relating to their personal matters or those of their children. It is our policy that all information considered confidential will not be shared with other families or other employees. If there is a question of whether certain information is considered confidential, the employee should first check with his/her immediate supervisor.

We are committed to providing an atmosphere for the children free of judgment or bias and dedicated to remaining focused on creating a positive learning environment and working environment for co-workers. Our professional ethics require that each employee maintain the highest degree of confidentiality when handling children or family matters. Within Over the Rainbow, confidential and sensitive information may only be shared with employees of Over the Rainbow who have a "need to know" to most appropriately and safely care for each child. Confidential and sensitive information about children, the center, and/or family members must not be shared. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, special needs information, or health-related information with anyone associated with Over the Rainbow.

Family members may notice children at OTR who have special needs or who exhibit behavior that appears inappropriate (ex: biting) and as such they may be curious or concerned about the child. Our Confidentiality policy, however, protects every child's privacy. Therefore, employees of Over the Rainbow are strictly prohibited from disclosing any information regarding a child to anyone other than the child's parents or legal guardians. If other parents have any concerns, please direct them to the Center's Director.

To maintain this professional confidence, no employee shall disclose children or family information to other parents or families, friends, or members of one's own family. Employees shall not discuss matters of a confidential nature with a parent or family member without obtaining prior approval from the owner first.

Violation of the Confidentiality Policy:
Breach of our Confidentiality Policy, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment with Over the Rainbow. If parents or guardians fail to adhere to our confidentiality policy, the family will be subject to termination of enrollment. It is essential for all members of the Over the Rainbow community to uphold our confidentiality policy to maintain a safe, respectful, and trusting environment for everyone.

The following policies regarding confidentiality must be observed by all employees of Over the Rainbow:

Confidentiality of Children's, Families, and Employee Information:

- Information and documentation that are considered confidential include but are not limited to medical records, educational records, special needs records, financial records, and any other private information about the children and their families.
- Access to children's and employee records is limited to appropriate employees.
- Children's and employee records must not be removed from the school
- Children's and employee records must never be left out where other people may have access to them
- Children's, families, and employees' private information must never be shared with other employees except on a "need to know" basis. Employees must be particularly aware of their surroundings when discussing this information. Special caution must be taken to be sure other children, families, or employees do not overhear confidential information.
- All requests for release of information will be coordinated by the Center Director.
- Information will only be released with the express written consent of a child's family member or by the employee
- Photographs, videos or audio recordings of Over the Rainbow students, family members or employees, whether physical or digital, are exclusively for communication, education or promotion of Over the Rainbow. All employees of Over the Rainbow are prohibited from using any such records for personal use, including display on social media. In addition, all such records require written permission. If you are unsure of whether a child, family member, or employee has given permission to be recorded, contact your Center Director. By signing this document, you are providing authorization for OTR to use your image for marketing and further promotion of the company.

Section 5-Program Overview/Classroom Procedures

A. Arrival & Departure

All children must be brought into the Center by an adult each day and will only be released to an authorized adult.

Anyone arriving early or late will be assessed an additional charge of $30.00 per 15 minutes or any portion of. This additional charge will be placed on your account.

Please inform our staff of any pertinent information when you drop off your child (ex: medicine given, woke up early, last feeding, etc.)

At pick up time, feel free to come into the classroom and talk to the teachers briefly about your child's day.

Please remember your child needs to be signed in at the beginning of each day, and signed out at the end of each day. You can do so using our Kangarootime app. This is a CONNECTICUT STATE requirement for the safety and well-being of your child.

Children are not allowed to go home with anyone other than a parent, guardian, or designated person on the release form. If someone other than the usual pick-up person is going to take your child home, please provide the office with a written note which includes the pick-up person's name so that we can compare it to their identification.

A photo ID (driver's license) is required prior to any child being allowed to leave the Center with anyone that we are unfamiliar with.

Should a person arrive to pick up, who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, staff will not allow the release of the child and may have no recourse but to contact the police. This is for the child's safety.

At no time should anyone and/or their belongings enter the building smelling like marijuana.

NO CHILD WILL EVER BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE CENTER WITH ANY PERSON NOT AUTHORIZED BY THE PARENT.

You are required to notify us by 9:00 am, or earlier if possible, if your child will not be coming for the day or will be arriving late. If your child needs to be picked up early for a doctor's appointment, etc., please let us know in the morning or call ahead so that we may have your child ready.

Parents are responsible for their child once they enter the child's classroom. Please be in control of your child during these times. Parents picking up their child near closing time should be quick to exit so the staff can be out at 6 pm. Habitual tardiness may result in termination. Please understand that our staff have been here all day and would like to go home to spend time with their families.

It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from their parents when being dropped off. We find that it is best to be very brief at drop off time, the longer you prolong the departure, the harder it gets.

B. Attendance and Appointments

Please inform us as soon as possible if your child will be absent, arriving early, or staying late. This will allow us to adequately staff and prepare for children's activities. If your child is ill, we request that you notify the center director not only of the absence, but also of the nature of the illness. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable illness, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the Center Director, so that the parents of the children in the school may be notified that a communicable illness is present. Once again, only the communicable illness information will be shared. OTR will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality.

I understand that my child cannot be enrolled at Over the Rainbow for less than two days per week.

To ensure a calm and restful environment for all children we ask that drop off and pick up do not occur during rest time 12-2. Interruptions during this time can be disruptive to sleeping children and making it challenging for others to settle. If your child is arriving late please bring them in before rest time begins, if your child needs to be picked up please do so before or after rest time. We recognize that emergencies do occur, please notify us and we will plan accordingly.

There will be no refunds or adjustments made to tuition and child schedules for time missed due to illness, holiday, inclement weather, vacations, a pandemic, floods, mechanical system failures, circumstances beyond our control, and days off listed in the parent handbook. That space is reserved for your child. MISSED DAYS CANNOT BE MADE UP. Children leaving for the summer will not be

guaranteed a space for the fall. Children will have to be re-enrolled in the fall and space will then be available on a first-come basis. However, we will hold a full-time space for children attending a minimum of 2 full days per week during the summer.

C. Schedule

Our infant room will follow the parents' written daily agenda for their infant, outlined in the Infant Care Plan provided. All other classrooms have a daily schedule posted in their room. Children enjoy a structured program and need routines to feel secure in their environment.

D. Communication

Communication is very important to us. We welcome questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind that affect a positive outcome for the child. We provide a monthly newsletter that will explain some of the activities we are doing, events that will be happening, birthdays, and any other pertinent, fun or helpful information that may be of interest to you. You are always welcome to contribute to our newsletter. The newsletter will be distributed via Kangarootime. We use Kangarootime to communicate daily summaries of each child's activities. The same app will also be used for sending pictures and videos as well as classroom announcements.

E. Rest Period

Over the Rainbow provides a rest period for all children from 12-2. During this time your child will nap or rest on a center provided cot. Parents are required to bring their child a crib sheet and blanket. These items will come in every monday and returned home every friday to be cleaned and returned the next week. Infants will be on their own schedule for nap times.

F. Clothing

Your child will be active both indoors and out. The most appropriate clothes for the school day are easy-fitting, easy-dressing, comfortable, washable play clothes that will adapt to food spills, paint, sand, and water play. We will post reminders for parents to update changes of clothing as the weather begins to change.

All clothes brought to school should be LABELED to prevent loss. Over the Rainbow is not responsible for lost, stained or soiled items of clothing.

Two full extra sets of clothing must be left at the Center at all times for all children.

For your child's safety, please send rubber soled shoes for outside play. Dress shoes, sandals, and flip-flops are not appropriate for the playground.

All children will go outside every day, weather permitting. We cannot allow children to stay indoors due to colds, ear infections, etc. If your child is well enough to come to school, your child will be expected to participate in all activities of the day.

Coats, hats, gloves, snow pants, scarves and winter boots must be provided in the winter months. The children don't need to wear their winter boots to school. Teachers will change the children into their winter boots when they go outdoors.

All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. This includes coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and boots. Parents are requested not to dress children who are toilet training in overalls, onesies, or clothing with difficult closures.

Children are discouraged from wearing jewelry of any kind. It is a safety hazard for your child as well as the other children enrolled in the program. In addition, we will not be responsible for lost or stolen valuables. Hair beads, barrettes, bobby pins, etc. are also discouraged. These accessories are considered to be safety hazards. When choosing accessories for your children to be mindful of the potential safety issues they present, not only for your child, but also for other children attending.

G. Photographs and Social Media Policy

At Over the Rainbow, we value the safety, privacy, and well-being of the children, families, and staff within our community. To ensure that our online presence reflects these values, we have established the following social media guidelines:

- **Respecting Privacy**: We respect the privacy of all children and families. No photos, videos, or personal information about children may be shared online without explicit consent from their parents or guardians.

- **Professional Conduct**: Employees and staff are expected to maintain professionalism on social media and avoid sharing any work-related content without prior approval. Personal and professional social media accounts should remain separate.

- **Positive and Respectful Communication**: We encourage positive, respectful engagement online and ask that any concerns about the daycare be addressed privately, rather than on social media platforms.

- **Parental Engagement**: Parents and guardians are welcome to share their child's experiences at Over the Rainbow but should refrain from posting photos of other children or staff without permission.

By participating in the social media activities associated with Over the Rainbow, all individuals agree to follow these guidelines to help maintain a safe, respectful, and positive online environment.

H. Shoe Free Environment in the Infant Room

Over the Rainbow strives to keep our infants safe by keeping as many germs as we can out of the classrooms. We require no shoes when entering any infant room for all of our crawling infants. Please remove your shoes upon entering the infant rooms.

I. Family Responsibilities for the Infant Room

In the infant room at Over the Rainbow, family responsibilities are essential to ensuring the well-being, comfort, and developmental progress of the child. Here are some common family responsibilities for parents or caregivers: Please ensure that all necessary supplies are provided, all health and medical information is up to date and provided to the center, and an updated infant care plan is provided as needed. Communication with the classroom teacher is imperative.

J. Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is an important aspect of every child's day. Children need fresh air, sunshine, and the freedom to play outdoors in all seasons. Children will play outdoors daily except for rain or extreme heat/cold, which will be determined by the director. Parents may not request their child be excluded from outdoor activities "because they may be coming down with something." In a childcare setting, the child who is too sick to go outside is considered too sick to be at the center. Even in the winter months, short periods of outdoor play are vital to maintaining good health.

K. Open Door Policy

We maintain an open-door policy for all parents. Parents are welcome to call or drop in any time during regular childcare hours. We would appreciate you taking into consideration our schedule when dropping in or calling, and remember that visitors usually cause the children to react in an excited manner that does not normally occur when we are alone with the children.

L. Toys from Home

Toys from home should not be brought to school except on Show-n-tell days. Please do not send in any guns or war toys. Children tend to be very interested in a "new toy" and the owner is usually less than happy to share his toy with everyone. We will not be responsible for lost or broken toys. Books are always encouraged.

M. Changes

Families frequently have changes, new homes, new jobs, and new telephone numbers. Please keep us informed. Accurate information is critical for efficient, professional handling of emergencies. Please let us know of any changes in writing as soon as possible.

N. Babysitting

We discourage school employees from accepting extracurricular babysitting jobs from current and former family members at any of our centers. Our teachers are childcare professionals and deserve to be treated as such. Our teachers are much more than baby-sitters during the day, and deserve to be viewed as such by family members. In addition, after spending a busy day with children at school, all employees need free time away from the children and vice-versa.

O. Pictures

Professional pictures may be taken at various times throughout the year. No one is obligated, at any time, to purchase these pictures. We will take candid pictures of the children at various times during the day for classroom projects, bulletin boards, newsletters, and social media. If you do not want your child photographed for any reason, please let us know.

P. Transitioning

Before it is time for your child to move into a new room, a transition notice will be given to the parents. It will include the final date the move will occur and the new teachers' names. Transitioning occurs according to availability, the child's age, maturity, and developmental skills. Transitions will start gradually and not fully occur until all conditions are met.

Section 6- Health, Hygiene and Safety

A. Hand-Washing

At Over the Rainbow, the health and safety of the children and staff are our top priority. Proper handwashing is an essential practice to prevent the spread of germs and ensure a safe, healthy environment for all.

B. Restroom/Diapering Procedures

At Over the Rainbow, we prioritize the health, hygiene, and well-being of all the children in our care. Proper restroom and diapering procedures are essential in maintaining a clean, safe, and respectful environment for both children and staff. Children who are potty trained will be encouraged to use the restroom regularly, especially before meals, outdoor activities, or after naps. For younger children, diapers will be checked regularly and changed as needed, or at a minimum of every 2 hours, to ensure that children remain clean and comfortable.

C. Toilet Training

We begin to potty train your child in our Toddler rooms. Please let your child's teacher know if you and your child are working on potty training sooner. Potty training works best when parents, teachers, and children work at it together. This is an important period for your child and it is most successful when we work together. We ask that you provide several complete changes of clothing, including socks, extra shoes, and an adequate supply of training pants or pull-ups for your child. **Only the pull-ups that unfasten on the sides can be used** during potty training. No other pull ups will be accepted. Your child's teacher will notify you when your child will be ready for underwear. Clothing for this stage should be selected for easy on and off. Tuition will be reduced when the following two requirements are met: your child is accident free for two consecutive months, upon recommendation of the teacher and when they enter the preschool room.

D. First-Aid

Over the Rainbow's staff is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for children. All lead teachers are certified in First Aid and CPR for both children and infants.

In the event of an accident, we are authorized to cleanse with soap, bandage a wound, apply ice and provide warmth and rest. Parents will be notified by a note in Kangarootime or phone call of a minor

incident. In the event of a serious accident, OTR will use the nearest medical facility to the center. Upon enrollment, parents sign an authorization form for emergency treatment by hospital staff.

The Center staff will handle the emergency first, and then notify the child's parent(s). If a parent cannot be reached, we will phone the emergency contacts indicated on your enrollment form. Someone will need to meet the child at the hospital and assume responsibility for the child.

Please keep us informed of any changes in the phone numbers of the individuals you have listed as emergency contacts.

E. Communicable Illness

In the event there is a communicable disease in the community or at Over the Rainbow that poses a risk to staff, students, or families, Over the Rainbow will follow the advice of the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), our local health department, and the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Families are expected to pay tuition for any days missed per the terms of their Tuition Agreement.

F. Immunization Requirements

The Connecticut State Department of Health requires that each child admitted to the Center be examined by a licensed physician and have a signed certificate indicating the date of the exam. Yearly updates on exams are needed for all children, as well as documentation of updated immunizations. Immunizations for your child must be kept up to date and documentation provided to the center according to the schedule set forth by the Connecticut State Department of Health. OTR does not accept religious exemptions for immunizations.

G. Illness

Children should be fully able to participate in all activities, including outdoor play, which occurs twice daily. Please have your child dressed appropriately. Because of staffing, all children must participate in outdoor activities. All children well enough to be at the center will be considered well enough to go outside.

Children who are mildly ill (ex: minor cold symptoms) may remain at the center. Children with symptoms of communicable diseases remain with a staff member until the parent or designated representative arrives for the child. We make every effort to reach the parents when a child is ill, but after 30 minutes we will contact the emergency contacts indicated by the parents. We ask that your child be removed from the program within one hour of the phone call.

We will not serve children with:

- Fever of 101 or higher auxiliary
- Any viral illness
- Any suspicious rash, including skin lesion or wound (may or may not have bleeding or oozing)
- Vomiting
- Uncontrolled diarrhea or diarrhea accompanied
- Conjunctivitis, also called "pink eye" or any suspicious eye discharge
- Mouth sores
- Scabies, head lice, or other infestations

- A barking, hacking, or productive cough raising consistent phlegm OR uncontrolled green nasal discharge
- Any illness or condition requiring one-on-one care
- Any contagious illness
- Any condition preventing your child from participating comfortably in the program activities, including outdoors

Children may be readmitted:

- Your child must be fever, vomiting, and diarrhea free, WITHOUT THE USE OF MEDICATION for a full 24 hours AT HOME before returning.
- Any child prescribed an antibiotic must take the prescription for a full 24 hours at home before returning.
- Your child must be free of any open, or oozing skin conditions.
- If your child was excluded for scabies, lice, or another infestation, they may return after your child is larvae or nit-free. They will be checked at the center.
- If your child was excluded because of a contagious illness, a doctor's note stating the specific illness in detail that your child is no longer contagious is required before readmission, as long as it complies with the above policies.

H. Medication

We cannot administer medication to any child without a medication authorization form signed by the parent and the child's doctor. The parent will also provide the medication in the pharmacy prepared container, labeled with the name of the child, the name of the drug, strength, dosage, frequency, physician's name and date of the original prescription. Only an Over the Rainbow certified trained staff may administer medications, or receive medications from parents and return medications to parents. Non-emergency medications will be kept in a locked box in the office. Emergency medications will be kept in an unlocked box in your child's classroom.

Children with severe allergies: OTR staff who are medication certified will administer an EPI-PEN. OTR will administer "emergency medications" when needed.

Section 7- Behavior Management

A. Discipline/Guidance

We intend that each child enjoys the planned classroom activities by understanding that they are responsible for their actions. With prior knowledge of our basic rules of safety and good conduct, each child is made aware of how to exercise self-discipline and know that we are here to help them, and that we want them to succeed. As in any group activity, the inappropriate behavior of a few children can spoil the experience for the entire group. This center does not allow the use of corporal or physical punishment by its caregivers. Some behavior techniques used by the center are praise, reinforcement, and redirections. The following behavior policies apply directly to each child and will be used in determining the eligibility to continue as a participant in our program. A child may lose privileges for certain activities, be suspended from the program, or be terminated from the program for:

1. Repeatedly being rude and discourteous to staff and peers
2. Engaging in fighting as their only means of solving an issue
3. Refusing to follow basic rules of safety
4. Defacing the school's or other children's property
5. Excessive biting

If a child has proven they are unwilling to respond to these policy rules, the parent will be contacted immediately. Depending on the severity of the infraction, the parent will be expected to:

1. Pick the child up immediately from the center
2. Meet with Management for a conference concerning the problem, during which time, suspension or termination from the program may be a consideration
3. The center will work with the parents in securing professional help for the child, if needed. If professional help is needed and is not sought within 30 days, the center will have no alternative but to discontinue enrollment for your child immediately.

It is our desire that every child enjoys their daycare/preschool experience. It is for this reason we have initiated policies we feel are fair, easily complied with by any child and benefit everyone.

B. Special Needs and Accommodations

Over the Rainbow, is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all children, regardless of their individual needs. We believe that every child deserves equal access to educational and developmental opportunities. OTR has many resources for parents to help their child succeed. If you are interested in learning more about these programs please contact your Director.

C. Biting Policy and Guidelines

Over the Rainbow recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through 2 ½ year old classrooms. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their children may be bitten, or may bite another child. The staff understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations which provoke, or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. The staff will not punish, or harshly discipline children in the younger classrooms for biting behavior; they will simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior. When the biting places the other children and staff at risk, this behavior could result in immediate termination of child care.

Definition of Excessive Biting: Biting may be deemed excessive if:

- A child bites **more than three times in one week**.
- Biting results in **broken skin or serious injury**.
- A child **bites the same peer repeatedly**.
- Staff interventions show **little to no behavioral improvement**.
- Classroom safety or harmony is **compromised**.

Children older than 3 years of age may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. For children in this age group who bite, the staff will observe the child to determine what provokes or elicits this

inappropriate behavior. Parents are expected to cooperate with staff to help their child control this behavior.

Parents will be notified by incident/accident report that a biting incident occurred during the day. The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is considered to be confidential and cannot be disclosed. The staff of Over the Rainbow cannot discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other party.

D. Incident Reports

If your child should sustain an injury while attending Over the Rainbow, the staff person who witnessed the injury will fill out an accident report. The report will indicate the time of the accident, how it occurred, the type of injury, and any medical attention given or required. The report will be signed by the staff member who witnessed it, the person in charge, and the parent. A copy will be placed in your child's file and a copy will be given to the parent at pick up and will be noticed either by phone or Kangarootime message when the incident/accident occurs. A child exhibiting extreme, excessive, or inappropriate behavior will have an incident report filled out which documents this behavior. This report will be kept in your child's file. Parents will be notified of the behavior with an incident report or phone call if needed.

Section 8-Food

A. Serving Times

Morning and afternoon snacks will be provided to your child each day. Please provide lunch and beverages for your child. Each room is equipped with a microwave, if you wish for your child to have a hot meal. All perishable foods need to be refrigerated. All food must be prepared and ready to eat (ex: peeled, cut into pieces). Any food that is a choking hazard (grapes, hot dogs, etc.) must be cut into lengthwise pieces to help prevent choking. OTR does not permit the use of glass containers in the center.

B. Food Allergy Policy

Food allergies are becoming more common among infants and young children. Allergic reactions can range from mild skin rashes to severe, life-threatening reactions with breathing difficulties. It is important to reduce the likelihood that these reactions will take place while the child is at child care.

When children with food allergies attend our child care facility:

- The director will provide the family with the **Food Allergy Action Plan**. This action plan must be filled out and returned before the child starts care.
- Based on the child's Food Allergy Action Plan, caregivers will receive training and put into practice:
    - Preventing exposure to specific food(s) that trigger allergy
    - Recognize symptoms of allergic reaction
    - Treating allergic reaction
    - Medication will only be administered by our Med certified staff members
- Parents and staff shall arrange to have appropriate medication (if necessary) on site,

proper storage of medication, equipment and training for use while in child care.

- The director will promptly take proper steps outlined in the Action Plan if a reaction occurs in child care.
- The director will notify emergency medical personnel if epinephrine has been given.
- The director will notify parents of any allergic reaction or possible contact with food that may cause an allergic reaction.
- Individual child's food allergies will be posted prominently in the classroom and/or wherever food is prepared.
- Action Plan and medication will be taken on field trips, including the playground or on walks by classroom teachers that are medication certified.
- The director and school nurse will check expiration dates on all emergency medications monthly.

Section 9-Supply Agreement

The following supplies, according to the child's age, should be marked with the child's name and left at the Center: two complete changes of clothes, wipes, diapers, pacifiers, bibs, sheets, and blankets. Parents will be notified when more supplies are needed.

Section 10- Emergency Preparedness

A. Shelter in Place

In the event of severe weather, such as tornadoes, hurricanes, winter storm, or any other unsafe situation where evacuation is not possible, staff and children will remain indoors in a safe location located in the basement away from closed windows and doors. Staff will have appropriate supplies available for the comfort and engagement of the children. First aid staff will be on hand to administer first aid, as needed, until emergency personnel can arrive. Parents will be notified after the immediate danger has passed. Parents are not permitted access to the facility until it is determined that it is safe to do so.

B. Lock Down

Should an emergency or threat that involves potential violence in or around the facility requires the need to stay put, the director/person in charge will notify the staff by doing an all call across our phone system that they should begin the lock-down procedure. 911 will be called.

Each staff member is responsible for the children in their care at that moment. The staff will gather the children to the safest area of the room, away from windows and doors. Doors and windows will be locked, lights turned off, and curtains/blinds closed to all interior windows.

Staff will calm the children and help them stay quiet. Attendance will be taken periodically. The director/person in charge will remain in constant contact with the emergency personnel. Parents are not permitted access to the facility until it is determined that it is safe to do so. During the emergency, the director/person in charge will do all they can to notify parents by way of phone and Kangaroo Time messaging. However, certain emergency situations may preclude this possibility.

C. Fire

In the event of a fire, evacuation front the building will be through the closet fire exit. Staff will be responsible for supervising the children under their care and leading them to the fire exit. Immediately, the group will walk to the back corner of the parking lot safely away from the building, and line up to take a name to face attendance. The director or person in charge will be responsible for taking the emergency binder, a portable first aid kit and cell phone with them. All staff are responsible for taking out their iPads that contain sign in and out information of each child in their care. Should it not be possible to return into the center, staff will safely get the children to the designated safe place. Parents will be notified and directed to the evacuation location to pick up their children. Ratios will be maintained at all times and two staff members 18 years or older will remain with the children until all children are picked up.

D. Medical

In case of a medical emergency, a qualified staff member will attend to first aid as needed. Another staff member will notify the family of the child. Attempts will be made to consult with the child's physician/dentist. For extreme emergencies, 911 will be called. An ambulance will take the child and a staff member to the nearest hospital. The child's file including their emergency permission form will be brought with them. A program staff will notify the family or alternate pick-up person to meet the child at the emergency department. Additional staff will be called in if necessary to maintain the required ratios.

E. Emergency Evacuations/Reunification

We are committed to being fully prepared for emergencies by maintaining up-to-date emergency contact information for each child, as well as having clearly defined procedures for evacuations, relocations, and reunifications. If children need to be evacuated or relocated due to an emergency, our staff will ensure that the reunification process is conducted in a safe and organized manner.

Section 11- Center Policies

A. Smoking/Vaping Policy

Over the Rainbow is a completely smoke-free environment. Smoking, vaping, or the use of any tobacco-related products is prohibited on the premises of Over the Rainbow Learning Center, including in all indoor and outdoor areas. This includes cigarettes, cigars, e-cigarettes, and other smoking devices. Tobacco products may not be used or disposed of in any area of the daycare center.

B. Prohibition of Alcohol, Drugs, Firearms, Tobacco, and Other Toxic Material

At Over the Rainbow Learning Center, the safety, health, and well-being of our children, staff, and visitors are our top priority. As such, we have a strict policy prohibiting the use, possession, or presence of alcohol, drugs, firearms, tobacco, and any other harmful or toxic substances on the premises.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Alcohol and illegal drugs, including marijuana
- Firearms, weapons, or any items that could be used as weapons
- Tobacco, vaping products, and any smoking-related substances
- Any toxic or harmful materials that could pose a risk to health or safety

In the case where a parent, guardian, or visitor enters the center smelling of marijuana or under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they may be asked to leave the premises immediately to ensure the safety of all individuals at the center. This is to maintain a healthy and safe environment for all children and staff. If necessary, alternative arrangements will be made for the child's safe departure.

Any violation of this policy, including the presence of any harmful substances or intoxication, will be addressed promptly. In serious cases, we reserve the right to contact the appropriate authorities to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in our care. At no time shall a parent come into the center smelling of illegal drugs or marijuana.

This policy applies to all individuals while on the premises of Over the Rainbow Learning Center, including during drop-off, pick-up, and center-related events. Our goal is to maintain a safe, supportive, and healthy environment for every child and staff member, and we appreciate your cooperation in adhering to these standards.

C. Abuse/Neglect Mandated Reporter Policy

The State of Connecticut mandates that all child care providers must report suspected child abuse/or neglect to the proper authorities. This Center requires its staff to immediately report every situation that they feel Abuse or Neglect is involved.

D. Complaint Procedure

This procedure is for Child Care Centers and Group Child Care Homes which are licensed under the authority of Connecticut General Statutes 19a- 79-1a through 19a-79-13. Most problems within a child care program and can be resolved by:

1. Discussing the problem with the classroom teacher.
2. Discussing the problem with the program director.
3. 3. If the problem is not resolved you may contact the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood

Licensing Division. In case of an emergency, notify the Licensing Division as soon as the emergency is under control.

- By phone to the Complaint Desk at (800)282-6063 or (860)500-4450 or
- By filing online at www.ctoec.org/contact-us/file-a-complaint

In case of abuse/neglect or life threatening situations call 911 or the Department of Children and Families (DCF) at (800) 842-2288 and the OEC Division of Licensing.

All inspection reports and corrective action plans are available for your review:

- At your child care program
- Online at www.211childcare.org , or
- By FOI request from the OEC Licensing Division:
- https://oecct.govqa.us/WEBAPP/_rs/

E. Client Referral Program

At Over the Rainbow Learning Center we love and appreciate each and every one of our families. We are honored you choose to recommend our Center to your family and friends day after day. As a way to say “thank you” we are offering a referral program to reward our existing students and families.

For every full time new family referral, who registers in our Learning Center and is enrolled for 90 days, you will receive a free week’s tuition applied to your account. Referred families must tell us that they were referred and by whom during their tour.

Take advantage of this offer. There is no limit to the number of referrals you may send our way!

F. Surveys and Experience Evaluations

The program of Over the Rainbow will be evaluated by the parents each September, annually. Results will be reviewed and provisions may be made for improvements. These are a VERY IMPORTANT source for us to maintain the quality of our programs and we urge you to participate when requested. However, we seek your input at any time and urge you to communicate any concerns or problems to your Center Director immediately. Should you feel this leaves your concerns or problems unresolved, please do not hesitate to email Jaime Tessman, Owner, at info@overtherainbowkids.com.

G. Verification of Legal Custody

If there is an issue as to who has legal custody of a child, we must have a copy of the court order recognizing the parent who has legal custody on file. Otherwise, we have no choice except to release the child to his/her parents.

In the absence of a court order on file with OTR, **both** parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Over the Rainbow cannot limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent without a court order, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, Over the Rainbow suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued. Our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. Over the Rainbow staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

H. Video Surveillance Policy

Over the Rainbow is proud to offer parents, teachers, and students the safety and security of a surveillance camera system. The benefits of having video surveillance in early childhood centers are well documented, and any such benefits far outweigh the potential drawbacks that the cameras may present. To ensure the safety and security of all children, staff, and parents, as well as the security of a daycare facility. Over the Rainbow is equipped with a video surveillance system which includes cameras in classrooms and outdoor play areas.

Purpose:

- The cameras are intended to help promote the safety and security of people and property. They can assist Over the Rainbow in reviewing an incident not seen by a teacher or director.

- It also permits Over the Rainbow to evaluate teachers to ensure they are providing the highest quality of care. Teachers are made aware and understand the importance of our camera security system.

Placement:
Cameras are located in all classrooms, common areas, and outdoors. Cameras are not located in staff rooms or restrooms.

Access:
The school's administrative team is the only people with video data access. Parents will not have access to video footage, even incidents involving their child, to protect the confidentiality of other children and staff. Over the Rainbow will, of course, provide footage if it is required due to a subpoena or other legal proceedings.

Privacy:
Because we insist on protecting the privacy of all children, parents, and staff, our surveillance system/security cameras are for internal purposes only. Security camera recordings will be deleted after 30 days. If an incident comes to our attention that requires further attention for licensing and/or legal reasons, we will download the footage onto locked hardware, and remove the data from the server.

I. Handbook Acknowledgement Form

We retain the right to enforce these policies at will. Lack of enforcement of a certain policy, at any time, does not indicate that the particular policy is no longer in effect.

Parent Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Over the Rainbow Parent Handbook, updated 03/2025, and have been given the opportunity to read it and to ask questions about the policies therein. Furthermore, I agree to abide by the policies set forth.

Over the Rainbow reserves the right to alter, amend, or otherwise modify these guidelines, at its sole discretion, without prior notice.

_____ _____

Signature **Printed Name**

_____

Date