



# **Parent Handbook**

**2025/2026**

## *A word from EEC*

EEC is the agency that oversees the early childhood education and care and after school services for families in Massachusetts. As the agency that licenses child care, EEC has quality standards for all licensed programs to ensure high educational value, as well as health and safety. Having a license means that I have demonstrated that I meet the standards outlined in EEC regulations.

To obtain your own copy of EEC Family Child Care Regulations, you may download them from the EEC web site at:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/enforcement-standards-and-definitions-for-licensure-or-approval-0/download>

For information about my regulatory compliance history, you may contact our local EEC regional office, whose contact information is as follows:

Department of EEC  
10 Austin Street, Worcester, MA  
Phone number: 508 798 5180

## ***Plan for Meeting potential Emergencies***

EEC regulations require that I have a plan for meeting potential emergencies that may occur either during child care hours or at any time if they affect the operation of the program.

In the event of an evacuation emergency, I will contact the local authorities to determine whether or not to evacuate the program, or to remain sheltered at the program.

The escape routes from each floor of the licensed child care space are as follows:

*First Floor: Main front door, Backyard door*

In the event that a child goes missing from the program, I will do the following:

*Call 911 & Call Parents*

Should program need to be evacuated in the case of a fire, natural disaster, loss of power, heat or hot water, or any emergency situation, we will meet at an alternate location. The designated meeting place(s) outside of the program for emergencies are:

*Outside the house at mail box or Indo-American shop at the end of Henley road.*

Should the whole neighborhood need to be evacuated in the case of a fire, natural disaster, loss of power, heat or hot water, or any emergency, we will meet at an alternate location. The designated meeting place(s) outside of the program for emergencies will be:

**Acton Memorial Library**  
**486 Main St, Acton, MA 01720**

If the program needs to be evacuated, I will notify all parents, as well as the appropriate authorities (fire, police, etc.):

*I will use cell phone to inform appropriate authorities, then I will inform parents and when the children are picked up I will inform EEC.*

I will ensure that no child has been left at the program after an evacuation by:

*Performing head count and verify count with attendance record*

## ***Enrollment/Capacity***

My current licensed capacity is 10 which is posted on my license. At any one time, I can only care for the number of children that I've been licensed for, which may include my own children depending on their ages. In addition, EEC regulations state that I cannot care for more than three(3) under two(2) without an assistant, with one of those children being at least 15 months old and walking assisted. If you have concerns or questions about the number of children in my care, please feel free to discuss them with me.

## ***Use of Assistants***

As a child care assistant they will assist and help the provider for the smooth running and implementation of the day to day activities both short and long term curriculum objectives of the program. They will help prepare all the materials needed for the day's activity

## ***Hours of Operation***



I offer full time care from Monday to Friday.

Aster Care - 1 7:30AM to 5:30PM

Aster Care-2 9:00AM to 5:00PM

## ***Sign In / Out***



State law requires that all the families sign in and out their child each day. I use the app called Daily connect for your convenience, located by the door. This gives me a written record of their attendance & hours.

## *Absences*



If your child is going to be absent for any reason, please inform me in advance so that I can plan my staff and activities accordingly.

## *Clothing / Attire*



Children should arrive dressed for play. We like to have fun! Having fun involves outdoor play and lots of messy activities, so make sure that your child is dressed appropriately. Clothing should be comfortable and seasonally appropriate for outdoor play. Make sure to include hats, mittens, boots and coats for cold weather.

## *Personal Belongings*



I prefer that children do not bring toys from home unless it is something that can be shared with the entire group (i.e. books, videos, etc.). Little ones have a difficult time sharing with others, and it is even harder with their own special toys. If toys are brought, please note that they may be put away, if they are the cause of disagreements among the children. Exceptions to this policy will be that a child may bring a favorite sleepy toy for nap time only, and toys may be brought for show and tell activities. I am not responsible for any loss or breakage of personal items. All personal items must be clearly marked with the child's name.

## ***Supplies***



Parents must supply the following items to be kept in their cubby:

Diapers, pull ups, powders/ointments, bottles, saline drops/gel and nasal syringe and a complete change of clothes (replace when soiled), sunscreen & bug spray.

All personal belongings should be marked with your child's name. Eating utensils, cups and dishes will be supplied. If any of these items are brought, they must be marked with your child's name, to avoid mix-ups with other children.

Donations help us keep costs down, so if you have any of the following items on hand and are willing to donate them, it would be greatly appreciated. This is not mandatory.

- Dress up clothing, costumes, jewelry, hats, etc.
- Paper of any kind, brown, white, colored, waxed, foil, etc.
- Crayons, water color paints, or any misc. art supplies, such as fabric scraps, glitter, pipe cleaners, paper plates, etc.
- IDEAS! We welcome any ideas that you may have for fun activities or crafts!!!

## ***Meals***



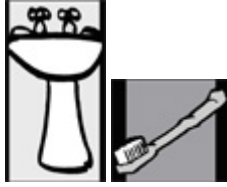
Aster 1 will provide morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack at no extra cost.

Aster 2 will provide morning snack, and afternoon snack at no extra cost. Parents should send lunch from home. Food can be refrigerated and microwaved at school by the teachers.

If your child has allergies, I must be notified of this in writing. **I will need to have a physician's written instructions describing any foods the child is not permitted to eat.**

All eating patterns will be communicated to the parents on the app Daily connect.

## ***Cleanliness / Hygiene***



I do my best to maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene standards. Children's hands are washed before and after meals and after toileting. I use paper towels for drying hands, so children do not have to use the same towel. If parents provide a toothbrush and toothpaste, teeth will be brushed as well. All employees are required to wash their hands frequently and also use antibacterial gel.

Infants sleep in separate pack and plays, with clean sheets used only by them. Beginning at toddler age, washable nap mats are used. Each child has a separate nap mat; with a sheet and a blanket that are washed weekly (unless soiled, then they are washed as often as necessary) and mats are wiped with disinfectant after every use.

Children use separate cups, plates, bowls and eating utensils that have been thoroughly washed. High chair trays, etc. are disinfected after each use. I disinfect toilet seats and clean potty chairs between each use.

## ***Fire Drills***



I am required by state law to do 1 fire drill per month. I vary the time of day to help the staff and children prepare to evacuate the building quickly and safely and meeting at emergency meeting area.

Emergency meeting area will be one of the following:

- At the mail box outside the house
- Indo-American Shop at the end of Henley Road.

## ***Toilet Training***



When you feel your child is ready for toilet teaching, I ask that you begin this teaching at home during a weekend or vacation. I will follow through and encourage your child while in my care. The child must be showing signs of readiness. When a child is ready, the process should go pretty quickly. The child must be kept in pull-ups at all times. Putting a child in diapers part time, and training pants part time, can be confusing and delay the training process. Please keep in mind that the activity level here can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at your home. Therefore, I will continue to use diapers or pull-ups until your child can and will announce that he/she must use the bathroom (not just at home, but here, as well) and can control his/her bladder and bowels for a few minutes beyond that announcement.

Parents need to supply training pants with plastic pants or pull-ups, plus a couple of extra changes of clothing each day (don't forget the socks!).

During toilet training, I ask that the child be dressed in "user friendly" clothing, as much as possible. The best items are shorts and pants with elastic waists, or dresses. Try to avoid really tight clothing, pants with snaps and zippers, and overalls. These are difficult for children to remove "in a hurry".

## ***Nap / Quiet Time***



There will be a designated nap/rest time each day. All children must nap, rest, read or play quietly during this period. Rest time gives children a much needed break during the day. Without rest time, some children are argumentative in the afternoon, short-tempered with others, and not real happy when they go home in the evening.

Infants nap at varying times and their schedules will be accommodated. Somewhere between 12 and 18 months, children usually drop down to one nap per day. At this time, I will attempt to put them on the scheduled nap/rest period.



## ***Parental Involvement***



There will be times and ways you can get involved in your child's daycare experience. You are welcomed and encouraged to participate in any or all of these. Some examples of ways to be involved include:

- Helping your child prepare for "Show and Tell"
- Helping to provide treats or other items for our parties

## ***Activities / Curriculum***



Main objective is to have fun, improve social skills, and encourage creative expression. I will utilize a variety of activities to accomplish this goal. Free play, reading, arts and crafts, music/singing, dancing, dramatic play/pretend, puzzles, and are just some of the activities we will be doing.

Music helps to develop young brains and will play a strong role in day-to-day activities. We may have special music activities and may also play music during other activities, for example, during arts and crafts or meal times. Some of the music we will be using may include, classical, children's songs (by a variety of artists), foreign language tapes and others.

Television will only be used on Very hot, Rainy and Snow days. Age Appropriate Curriculum will be used to teach children of all ages.

## ***Daycare Rules***



There are certain daycare rules that all children will be taught and expected to follow. This is for the safety and well-being of everyone. Hitting, pushing, biting, grabbing, kicking, spitting, or pinching other children/ infants/adults will NOT be allowed. No standing or climbing on chairs or tables. There will be no use of obscene, derogatory or disrespectful language. Please support me in the enforcement of these rules, in order to create a better environment for all.

No smoking is permitted on the premises as per state law; this included parents and staff.

## *Reporting Requirements*



As a Family child care provider I am a mandated reporters to the Department of Human Services if I feel a child is being abused or neglected. Always be sure to let me know when you drop your child off if he/she has any unexplained cuts or bruises. All children that come to daycare with injuries have them logged into the child's file.

If you ever feel that “Aster Care” is not operating in a safe manner, please bring the matter to my attention.



Indoor play: I provide a variety of age-appropriate toys for indoor play. Toys may be rotated or placed temporarily out of use so that the children do not become bored. Younger children have less-developed organizational skills and can get easily frustrated or upset when there are too many toys to choose from. It is also more difficult for them to help with clean up when there are toys everywhere, because it is so overwhelming to them. For this reason, during free play times, each child may select one or two things at a time to play with. They will be shown how to put those things away before selecting something else.

Outdoor play: We will be playing outdoors every day that weather permits. Please make sure that your child is appropriately dressed) for outdoor play at all times. Our activities will include walks, playground, water play (sprinkler in summer), and others. We do not go outside when the temperature is below 20 degrees (including wind chill), or above 90 degrees (including heat index). We are mandated by state law to take the children outside. Parents who feel that their child is not well enough to participate in outdoor activities must keep them out of daycare until they are able to participate in all activities.

## ***Discipline***



I maintain a positive discipline policy, which focuses on prevention, redirection, love, consistency and firmness. The children are explained the rules of the day care frequently, so they are all familiar with the rules. Please keep in mind that there WILL be disagreements between children. Young children have a hard time expressing their feelings. Sometimes they hit, throw toys, bite, etc. I will try to prevent problems, redirect when appropriate, discuss inappropriate behavior, encourage making amends when offense involves another person, and sometimes withdraw privileges based on the principle of "natural consequences". An example might be where a child is misusing a toy then he/she will not be allowed to play with the toy for a period of time. The use of time outs will be rare except when a brief cooling off period is needed. Sometimes when children are fighting or throwing toys, we will put the toy in a short time out, and then bring it back into circulation a little later. This seems to work better than giving the child a time out.

Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will there be any spanking, physical abuse, verbal abuse, name calling or isolation used. Neither food nor sleep will ever be withheld from children as a means of punishment. If a discipline problem arises that does not respond to the above mentioned techniques, I will hold a conference with the parents. Together, we will try to find a solution. You may be called to remove your child if his/her behavior prevents us from being able to properly care for the other children. If the problem continues, other arrangements for the care of the child will have to be made, for the safety and well-being of all.

## ***Illness***



"Aster Care" is a "well-child care facility". At no time do we provide sick childcare. The following illness policies will be strictly enforced, for the health, well-being and safety of all concerned.

**Sick Child Policy:** Under no circumstances may a parent bring a sick child to daycare, if the child shows any signs of illness, or is unable to participate in the normal routine and regular day care program. Sick children will expose all children and staff members who they come in contact with. These people can in turn expose the other children. Sick children want care from their parents in the comfort of their own homes. If other children become ill due to exposure to your sick child, either because he/she was returned to day care before full recovery or because he/she was not picked up promptly upon notice of becoming ill, other parents will be unnecessarily inconvenienced. Because this is disruptive to other children and their families, your cooperation on this issue is extremely important.

Every effort is taken to reduce the spread of illness by encouraging hand washing and other sanitary practices. **If your child is unable to participate in the normal activities of the daycare (including being able to play outside), then your child MUST stay home.**

Children will be visually screened when they arrive in the morning. In the event a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up, the parent(s) will be called and are expected to come pick the child up within one hour (60 minutes). If the parent(s) cannot be reached, or have not arrived within an hour, the emergency contact person will be called and asked to come pick the child up.

For the benefit of my staff and other children in my care, a sick child will not be permitted to return to care for 24 hours after condition has returned to normal. The child may return 24 - 48 hours (depending upon the illness) after they have received the first dose of an antibiotic. If a child receives an antibiotic for an ear infection, he/she may return to day care immediately if he/she has been free of other symptoms mentioned for at least 24 hours. If you aren't sure about whether or not to bring your child to care, please call me to discuss it. Allergy related symptoms, and non-communicable illnesses do not require exclusion if you have a note from your doctor.

**Symptoms requiring removal of child from day care:**

- Fever: Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100°F or higher taken under the arm, 101°F taken orally, or 102°F taken rectally. For children 4 months or younger, the lower rectal temperature of 101°F is considered a fever threshold; (a child needs to be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to daycare, that means the child is fever free without the aid of Tylenol®, or any other fever reducing substance.)
- Fever AND sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion.
- Diarrhea: runny, watery, bloody stools, or 2 or more loose stools within last 4 hours.
- Vomiting: 2 or more times in a 24 hour period. Note: please do not bring your child if they have vomited in the night.
- Breathing trouble, sore throat, swollen glands, loss of voice, hacking or continuous coughing.
- Runny nose (other than clear), draining eyes or ears.
- Frequent scratching of body or scalp, lice, rash, or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases, including ringworm.
- Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without hurting the health, safety or well-being of the other children in our care.

Just a note: Many times the child care may get blamed for the illness of a child, meaning that I have "allowed" sick children to come here. Parents may not stop to think that when sick children are brought to the day care, my staff is also at risk of exposure. How would you feel if another parent brought their sick child and exposed your child? I STRESS this again -- if you are not sure whether or not it is okay to bring your child, please call ahead to ask me. I will require a doctor's decision as to whether or not the child is contagious. I appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

## *Medications*



Parents will provide any medications needed by the child, including over-the-counter and prescription medicine. Written authorization is needed for me or my staff to administer ANY medication, prescription or over-the-counter.

**NOTE: All medicines must be in their original container with pharmacist's or manufacturer's label, child's name, dosage instructions, current date, name of medication, and times to be administered clearly written.**

## *Medical Emergencies*



Minor bumps and scratches are inevitable, but I will make every effort to keep the children safe through supervision and childproofing. Minor injuries will receive appropriate first aid, and if an emergency injury or illness occurs, you will be contacted as soon as possible. If necessary, your child will be taken to the nearest hospital where you will be asked to meet us. If you are not going to be at your usual place of employment, or at home, please make sure that we have a number where you can be reached.

Parents are responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation, if required.

## *Termination Policies*



We reserve the right to terminate a child for the following reasons (but not limited to):

- Failure to pay
- Routinely late picking up your child
- Failure to complete the required forms
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Failure of child to adjust to the center after a reasonable amount of time
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property
- Our inability to meet the child's needs
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations
- Serious illness of child

I appreciate as much advance notice as possible when terminating, and will give the same courtesy in return. Parents are required to give one month written notice when they decide to terminate child care. One month should be paid in full, regardless of whether or not the child is in attendance.

## *Holidays / Vacations*



Aster Care will be closed on the following days, but if one of these holiday falls on a weekend, then I will be closed either Friday or Monday.

- New Year's Day
- MLK Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Diwali (Date varies)
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- Christmas (7 working days)
- One Professional Development Day (Childcare Training)

### *Note:*

\*Aster Care 1 & Aster Care 2 will be closed for two weeks in July or August, and you are not expected to pay for this time. I will notify you in advance once the exact dates are finalized.

## *Revisions to Handbook and Contract*

There will be a yearly revision to this handbook and the accompanying contract. All families will sign a new contract each year. I reserve the right to make changes in rates and policies if necessary. You will be notified, in writing, of any changes that may occur. Every attempt will be made to give at least one month notice of changes.

By signing this, you are documenting that we are in agreement about the hours your child will receive care, and the rates you will be paying for that care. You are also stating that you understand my policies regarding late fees, termination, and any other issues documented above.

Child's name:

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Parent Signature

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Date Signed