

Family Handbook

SKIP·A·LONG
CHILDHOOD CENTERS

PART OF **S·A·L** COMMUNITY
SERVICES

Important Information

Contact Information

Davenport

Site Director: Jill Lyon, jill@skip-a-long.org

Family Service Provider: Julia Gog, juliag@skip-a-long.org

Milan

Site Director: Jessica Carlson, jessicac@skip-a-long.org

Family Service Provider: Deb Bond, debb@skip-a-long.org

Moline

Site Director: Mary Rosa-Gastaldo, mrosagastaldo@skip-a-long.org

Assistant Director: Laurie Schadler, lauries@skip-a-long.org

Family Service Provider: Elizabeth Watson, elizabethw@skip-a-long.org

Rock Island

Site Director: Pat Allison, pata@skip-a-long.org

Family Service Provider: Wanda Mumma, wandam@skip-a-long.org

Chief Executive Officer (CEO): Marcy Mendenhall, mmendenhall@salcommunityservices.org

Chief Program Officer (CPO): Debra Brownson, dbrownson@salcommunityservices.org

Chief Financial Officer (CFO): Robin Higdon-Fleming, rhigdonfleming@salcommunityservices.org

Websites

SAL Community Services: www.salcommunityservices.org

Skip-a-Long Childhood Centers: www.skip-a-long.org

Facebook

Skip-a-Long Childhood Centers: www.facebook.com/skipalongchildhoodcenters

Each center also has a Facebook Group for current families titled:

Skip-a-Long/Davenport

Skip-a-Long/Milan

Skip-a-Long/Moline

Skip-a-Long/Rock Island

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About Us

Welcome

Thank you for choosing Skip-a-Long Childhood Centers, for your family's early care and education needs. We know families need a high-quality program to help their children prepare for success in school, and we are pleased to be able to give your child that experience, support, and education.

Mission Statement

SAL Community Services strengthens children, families, and individuals to build and enhance thriving communities.

Vision Statement

To be recognized as the leading social service and early care and education agency.

Value Statement

Support, Advocacy, and Learning

Our Philosophy

We believe all children should be prepared to succeed when they enter kindergarten. That is why we provide an environment where children can learn and grow with our professional, trained staff. Our early care and education programs are nationally accredited and highly rated under ExceleRate Illinois and the Iowa Quality Rating System. We partner with the Illinois Department of Human Services and United Way of the Quad Cities Area to ensure that child care is affordable to all families.

Our History

Skip-a-Long Childhood Centers is part of SAL Community Services, a nonprofit agency that also manages four other programs to meet individual and family needs in the Quad Cities and Peoria areas: the Home Child Care Network – working with licensed home child care providers; Open Door Crisis Assistance – working with individuals and families experiencing crises and in need of assistance for basic needs; SAL Child Care Connection – the Peoria, IL area's child care resource and referral program; and Child Care Resource and Referral of Midwestern Illinois.

Skip-a-Long Childhood Centers was founded by concerned citizens in 1970 as a not-for-profit, community based organization. It housed its services in three successive locations prior to the construction of the Moline facility in 1990. The Rock Island Campus became a part of the agency in 1983. The Davenport Campus opened in August of 2003. Skip-a-Long brought on four locations served by Just Kids, Inc. in July 2015. As of 2015, Skip-a-Long Childhood Centers provides early care and education for over 1,300 children in the Quad Cities every day.

Our Structure

SAL Community Services is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity that is governed by a volunteer Board of
4/1/2023

Directors that is comprised of business and community leaders who share a vision for the children of the Quad Cities. The Board and Chief Executive Officer set policy for Skip-a-Long, while Parent Advisory Councils at each site, along with focus groups, are a regular means for parents/guardians to participate in helping to shape the programs for our children.

Each of our four child care centers (Moline, Milan, Rock Island, and Davenport) have a Director and Family Service Provider on staff.

Role of the Parent/Guardian

At Skip-a-Long, our practice is to recognize and appreciate a variety of cultural practices and beliefs. We have built many supports to make the centers places that are inclusive for the entire family. Families are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education and are welcome to visit and observe their children at any time during their child's day.

Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with State and Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parent/guardian status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior credible activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the responsible Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer> and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

Types of Care

Skip-a-Long offers the following types of care:

Full Time Only Care: All Skip-a-Long centers are Full Time Only centers. Full Time Only means five hours or

more per day and no less than four days per week in Illinois or no less than five days per week in Iowa. Families participating in IDHS Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) must be eligible for child care at least four (4) Full Time days per week Monday through Friday in order to be eligible to attend the center. Iowa DHS Child Care Assistance (CCA) must be eligible for child care at least five (5) Full Time days per week Monday through Friday in order to be eligible to attend the center. Families receiving CCAP or CCA will be charged based on their approval schedule, which may be eligible days or days actually attended – but they too must be a minimum of 4 full days in Illinois and 5 full days in Iowa (more than five hours per day).

Before & After School Care: For children aged 6-12 years old, less than five hours of service per day, includes breakfast before school, afternoon snack, and school transportation (except at Davenport)

Contact Information

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| For Accounting, contact: Business Office 3800 Avenue of the Cities STE 108 Moline, IL 61265 P: 309-764-3724 F: 309-764-3744 | Davenport Campus 3520 Crow Creek Road Davenport, IA 52807 P: 563-441-9998 F: 563-355-3267 | Milan Campus 1 1800 W 1 st Street Milan, IL 61264 P: 309-787-6303 F: 309-787-6375 | Milan Campus 2 110 20 th Ave W. Milan, IL 61264 P: 309-787-6303 F: 309-787-6375 |
| | Moline Campus 4800 60 th Street Moline, IL 61265 P: 309-764-8110 F: 309-764-8281 | Rock Island Campus 1609 4 th Street Rock Island, IL 6120 P: 309-788-0426 F: 309-788-8727 | |

Licensing & Quality

Licensing

Each campus is licensed by either the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services or the Iowa Department of Human Services. State licensing regulations stipulate the minimum standards for staffing, square footage, equipment, training, teacher-child ratios and more.

| Illinois | | | Iowa | | |
|---|-------|----------|------------------------------------|-------|----------|
| Age Category | Ratio | Max Size | Age Category | Ratio | Max Size |
| <i>Infants (6 weeks-14 months)</i> | 1:04 | 12 | <i>Infants (6 weeks-14 months)</i> | 1:04 | 12 |
| <i>Toddlers (15-23 months)</i> | 1:05 | 15 | <i>Toddlers (15-23 months)</i> | 1:04 | 12 |
| <i>Two years</i> | 1:08 | 16 | <i>Two years</i> | 1:07 | 18 |
| <i>Three years</i> | 1:10 | 20 | <i>Three years</i> | 1:10 | 24 |
| <i>Four years</i> | 1:10 | 20 | <i>Four years</i> | 1:12 | 24 |
| <i>Five years</i> | 1:10 | 20 | <i>Five years - Ten years</i> | 1:15 | 24 |
| <i>School-Age (Kindergarten-12 years)</i> | 1:20 | 30 | <i>Ten years and older</i> | 1:20 | N/A |

Quality Rating Systems

In Illinois, ExceleRate Illinois is the statewide quality system for child care. The set of standards for

ExceleRate are organized into four domains: 1) Teaching & Learning; 2) Family & Community Engagement; 3) Leadership & Management; and 4) Qualifications & Continuing Education. Child Care centers achieve Circles of Quality based on meeting the standards of each of the four domains. The Circles of Quality include: Licensed, Bronze, Silver, and Gold. For more information, visit www.exceleRateillinois.com.

Our Moline, Milan, and Rock Island centers are all Gold level Circle of Quality. The Gold Circle of Quality recognizes programs which have demonstrated quality on all standards, as validated by an independent assessor. Gold Circle programs meet or exceed specific quality benchmarks on learning environment, instructional quality, and all administrative standards; group size and ratios; qualifications; and professional development.

In Iowa, the Quality Rating System (QRS) is the statewide quality system for child care. It is a voluntary program that offers providers a way to improve the quality of care they provide. Rated programs must meet key indicators of quality in the areas of: professional development, health and safety, environment, family and community partnerships, and leadership and administration. Programs are rated on a scale of Level 1-Level 5, level 5 being the highest possible quality rating. For more information, visit www.dhs.iowa.gov/iqrs.

Our Davenport center is Level 4 on the Quality Rating System. Providers in Levels 3-5 have made significant steps in meeting key indicators of quality.

National Accreditation Credential (NAC)

The National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs offers early childhood leaders the opportunity to demonstrate and document quality performance using research-based criteria and evidence-based practices. The National Accreditation Commission provides a comprehensive, ongoing quality improvement system that recognizes the inherent diversity among programs through the self-study and award process. Over 1,300 early learning programs in 35 states, the District of Columbia and overseas participate, including university and college campus-based programs, private child care, faith-based preschools, Head Start, public PreK, corporate centers, DoD programs, employer-sponsored programs, and Montessori programs.

All early care and education centers are NAC accredited. NAC is a national accreditation that demonstrates excellence on early childhood standards of quality. NAC accreditation provides a higher level of quality than is required by licensing through the states of Illinois and Iowa.

Enrollment

Days & Hours of Operation

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Business Office M-F 8:00am-4:00pm | Davenport Campus M-F 7:00am-5:30pm | Milan Campus 1 & 2 M-F 6:30am-5:00pm |
| | Moline Campus M-F 7:00am-5:30pm | Rock Island Campus M-F 6:00am-5:30pm |

Scheduled Holidays: New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day following Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Tuition remains the same during these weeks. If a holiday falls on a weekend, we observe the closer Friday or Monday.

Closed for Staff Training: The Monday after Easter Skip-a-Long will close at noon/12:00 pm for staff

training. Children will be fed lunch and expected to be picked up at or before noon/12:00 pm.

Emergency Closings: In case of inclement weather, pandemic, flooding, heat or air conditioning problems, fire, gas leaks we will immediately notify all families via email, post on our Facebook pages, and notify local TV and news station.

Admission Policies

Any child aged six weeks through 12 years old is eligible for enrollment at our campuses. Children will be admitted regardless of ethnic or racial origin, nationality, religious affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and English language proficiency. Every accommodation will be made for children with disabilities.

Admission is based on availability of child care slots within the appropriate age grouping.

Enrollment Procedure

Children who meet eligibility requirements under the admission policies can begin the enrollment process. An interpreter will be available if needed.

Prior to or at the Time of Enrollment Orientation

1. Meet with the Family Service Provider or Site Director.
2. Tour the center and classroom areas during hours of operation.
3. Receive a copy of the Family Handbook.
4. Tour the classroom.
5. Tour the playground.
6. Review the location of payment box or online payment procedures and parent/guardian mailbox.
7. Review sign in/sign out procedures.
8. Review the location of restrooms.
9. Complete Enrollment Paperwork
 - a. Complete Ages & Stages Questionnaire.
 - b. Complete, sign and date the Enrollment Application.
 - c. Complete the Child Care Assistance Program Application (if applicable).
 - d. Provide income verification (if applicable).
 - e. Provide documentation of residency (if applicable).
 - f. Complete the Food Program Form.
 - g. Sign van rules and policies (if applicable).
 - h. Consent for application of sunscreen.
 - i. Consent for health care treatment and emergency first aid.
 - j. Information regarding formal religious instructions (if applicable).
 - k. Consent for media release.
 - l. Sign and Date Confidentiality Agreement – Parents /Guardians.
 - m. Authorize the exchange of information for community-based services (if applicable).
 - n. Sign and date fee agreement.
 - o. Complete Emergency Contact card (update every six months thereafter).
 - p. Receive a unique PIN code.
 - q. Sign an infant formula waiver (if applicable).
 - r. Sign Verification of Receipt of Family Handbook.
 - s. Complete health form and have signed by Primary Care Provider.

- t. Complete record of immunizations on physical form OR religious exemption form.
 - Including TB Test (Illinois Campuses Only)
 - Lead Screen (or physician note saying it's unnecessary) [Illinois Campuses Only]
- u. Share your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP) (if applicable).
- v. Complete Regional Office of Education (ROE) packet for Preschool For All (PFA) (if applicable)

Upon Enrollment

10. Provide a certified copy of the child's birth certificate or other reliable proof of identity and age. (Illinois Campuses Only)

Sign in/Sign out Procedure

Skip-a-Long's buildings feature a secure, touch-screen entrance designed for the safety of the children. Upon enrollment, each parent/guardian is given a unique PIN code. When entered, this code unlocks the door and tracks your child's attendance. Parents and authorized guardians must use their code to sign in upon arrival and sign out upon departure. In addition, parents and authorized guardians will be required to manually sign your child in/out in your child's classroom. This attendance information is necessary for billing, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and in emergency situations.

Parents/Guardians are also responsible for accompanying their children into the classroom. Your child enjoys the day with us, but awaits your return at the end of the day—for this reason; we ask that you turn off your cell phone while you are in the facility so your attention may be devoted to your family. Parents/Guardians are responsible for the safety and well-being of their children any time in which you are together at the center.

Please share information with your child's teachers pertinent to the day upon arrival. Examples may include, how your child slept the previous night, your child's mood, any activities coming up that your child may be looking forward to, etc. Teachers will ask for additional information so that they may best support your child transitioning to school. Upon pick-up, teachers will verbally share information about your child's day, for instance, what your child ate, what your child's mood was like, what activities your child participated in, etc. You are encouraged to ask questions about your child's day.

For the safety of your child, our staff will not release a child to any person, whether related or unrelated to the child, who has not been authorized by the parent/guardian to receive the child. Authorized persons not known to the staff shall be required to provide an acceptable photo ID and must be 18 or older unless prior authorization has been made. We also will not release a child to any adult who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

We ask that parents/guardians park in the specified parking spots at all sites when dropping off and picking up children. Parking in the yellow "No Parking" areas disrupts the daily bus service. Remember that we are mandatory reporters and required to call Child Welfare if a child is left unattended in a vehicle or traveling in a vehicle without proper safety equipment (car seats, seat belts). Do not leave your vehicles "running" in the parking lot and be sure to lock all valuables in your vehicles.

Attendance Policy

Attendance regulations include:

1. Families are expected to utilize their child care spot on each eligible day.
2. Children who do not maintain at least 80% monthly attendance may lose their program slot and/or tuition assistance.
3. Please call the center if your child will be absent or if you plan on arriving after 9:30am.
4. Two or more consecutive absent days may prompt a phone call from Skip-a-Long to check in with your family.

Adjustment Period

After six weeks, if the child is continuing to experience challenges adjusting to a new environment, the Director may request a parent/guardian meeting to identify any challenges and concerns and will create a plan to support the child's needs.

Vacation Policy

Skip-a-Long does not offer vacation days.

Meal & Food Policy

We prepare or cater-in breakfast, lunch, and snack for all children and staff to enjoy together. Weekly menus are posted in each classroom and online. All meals are served “family-style” in our classrooms, with child-friendly bowls and utensils. The Child Care Food Program stipulates nutritional content and that a child be served any meal or snack that coincides with the scheduled attendance hours at the facility.

All centers supply formula, baby food and/or cereal that follows the Child Care Food Program guidelines, daily until the infant is developmentally ready or is 12 months of age. Even if families choose to supply their own formula or breast milk, they must sign an Infant Feeding Preference. Water and formula can be offered to infants in cups as soon as the families and teachers decide together that a child is developmentally ready to

use a cup. Teaching staff do not offer solid foods to infants younger than four months, unless approved by the infant's doctor. Cow's milk is not offered to children younger than 12 months old. The program serves whole or reduced-fat cow's milk to children of ages 12 months to 24 months and reduced-fat cow's milk to children older than 24 months. We encourage nursing mothers to join us at the center to nurse your baby.

Due to choking hazards, children younger than three years old will not be served the following foods: hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas and hard pretzels; a spoonful of peanut butter; meat sticks, sees, chips, rice cakes, marshmallows or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole. Staff will cut foods into pieces no larger than ¼-inch square for infants and ½-inch square for toddler/twos.

Children enjoy celebrating their special day with their friends at the center/home; however, we need to remind you that food items brought to the center should be for special occasions only and be of sufficient

quantity for the entire class. In compliance with licensing standards, such food items MUST be commercially prepared and unopened and not contain peanuts due to possible peanut/nut sensitive allergies. No homemade items can be accepted according to licensing guidelines. In addition, if invitations to participate in an event outside of Skip-a-Long (i.e., birthday parties, playdates, etc.) are not intended for all children within your child's class, then invitations need to be delivered outside of Skip-a-Long so that children do not feel excluded.

Children with medical conditions, food allergies or religious beliefs that require special diets are accommodated. Your physician will be required to complete a form, which can be obtained from your Family Service Provider, detailing the food to avoid and what foods to supplement. However, we will not add probiotic, rice, medication, etc to a bottle and will not accept a doctor's note to circumvent this policy.

Discharge Policy

Skip-a-Long reserves the right to discharge families from our care for the following reasons:

- Non-payment or excessive late payment of tuition and fees
- Failure to meet requirements for care (physical exams, birth certificate, etc.)
- Failure to comply with the policies of Skip-a-Long
- Children with special needs that cannot be adequately met at Skip-a-Long
- Physical or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent/guardian

The Grievance Procedure, outlined in this handbook, allows families a formal process for addressing concerns. If resolution cannot be made, and in compliance with Skip-a-Long policies, then discharge will occur.

Withdrawing Your Child

We ask that families provide written notice two weeks in advance of your child's departure. Any remaining balance must be paid in full by the end of the month.

Refund Policy

Families who are no longer enrolled with Skip-a-Long and have a credit of \$5.00 or more on their account will receive a refund check in the mail within 60 days of the last date of attendance.

Open Door Policy

Skip-a-Long allows families' unlimited access to their children and to the teaching staff caring for their children during the center's hours of operation, unless parent/guardian contact is prohibited by court order. In the event that there is a court order, a copy of applicable portions of the court order will need to be included in the child's file. Talking with your child's teachers and having a daily schedule would allow for special visits to help with activities or projects as applicable. Staff will prohibit unrestricted access to persons not identified as parents/guardians or authorized pickups.

Court Orders

Court orders can be an unfortunate reality in a family's life. Skip-a-Long strives to be supportive to all parties during what can be a difficult process. Skip-a-Long requires that the most current court order be on file.

Changes in custody, parent/guardian time, visitation and other issues would warrant a court order. All court orders will be followed. In the event that court orders change custody arrangements, new emergency cards will need to be completed. If both parents/guardians continue to have full legal custody of a child or children, Skip-a-Long will not restrict access or adjust information until there is a legal and valid court order to do so.

Weapons Policy

Skip-a-Long has a “Zero Tolerance” policy regarding weapons brought into the center. A “weapon” means (1) possession, use, control or transfer of any gun, rifle, shotgun or firearm, (2) any

other object if used or attempted or intended to be used to cause bodily harm, including, but not limited to knives, brass knuckles, clubs, fireworks or (3) “look-a-likes” of any weapon as defined above. Items such as baseball bats, pipes, bottles, locks, sticks, pencils, and pens may be considered weapons if used or attempted to be used to cause bodily harm. Anyone who uses, possesses, controls, or transfers a weapon, or any object defined above will be asked to leave and not return. The Site Directors or designee shall notify the parent/guardian(s) of the child as well as the proper criminal justice or juvenile delinquency systems.

Fee & Payment Policy

Fees vary according to the program in which your child is enrolled, income, number of children enrolled and family size. Fees also depend on the type of fee program/fee assistance the family is qualified to receive and the availability of funds. See the Family Fee Agreement for further details.

1. Fees are assessed in advance for each month - your fee per day times the number of days eligible for that particular month.
2. Families will receive an invoice the first week of the month.
3. Monthly fees are due by the 15th of the month via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) only. Weekly fees are due by Friday the same week of service.
4. We will accept checks, money orders, credit cards, debit cards, or cash but we cannot make change. Monthly fees are only accepted as EFT or automatic payments.
5. Please request a receipt at the front office for any cash payments.
6. A credit will be posted on your statement if payment exceeds the amount owed.
7. Charges will be assessed on days the centers are closed for holidays.
8. Any adjustments to the current month's billing will appear on the following month's bill. Examples are full day charges for school-age children during the school year, and co-pay adjustments.

Payment Expectations

9. If choosing the weekly payment method, payment is due by Friday of the week of care.
10. If the family does not pay the week's payment by the following Friday (7 days late) at 12:00p, care will be terminated at 11:00am on the next Monday.
11. If families can pay the entire balance due in cash on Monday morning (10 days late) by 11:00am/at the time the child is dropped off, care will not be terminated.
12. Partial payment will not change the termination date. The total amount must be paid by the weekly deadline or care will be terminated (10 days late).
13. Late Pick-Up Fees: If a child is picked up after the scheduled closing time the family will be given one warning and then they will be charged \$1 per minute late. Weather or emergency situations will be considered in waiving the fee. Excessive abuse of the time limits or failure to pay the penalty may result in your child's dismissal. If children remain at the center for an hour over closing time, the police will be notified. Late fees are due the week they are assessed.
14. Returned Check Fee: If a check is returned as NSF, there will be a \$20 charge.
15. Emergency Closings: In the rare event of an emergency closure, families will still be responsible for

fees assessed that day, unless otherwise notified. This includes “Acts of Nature” that may require the center be closed for more than one day, for example: a health care crisis, gas leak or building maintenance, and other unforeseen situations.

Health Policies

Illinois Requirements for Enrolled Children-An Illinois Department of Public Health certificate of Child Health Examination (less than six months old) including immunizations, a TB skin test, and a lead screening (for children over one year of age) is required. These reports are valid for two years, except for school-age children who need a copy of the kindergarten and sixth grade exams. The TB test is to be repeated when the child begins elementary and secondary schools. Children ages one to six years old shall be screened for lead poisoning or risk assessment and have the proper documentation on file at the center.

Iowa Requirements for Enrolled Children-Each child is required to have a physical exam report including immunizations. These are valid for one year. The exam must occur within the 12 months prior to enrollment. School-age children need a statement of health submitted annually which is signed by their parent or legal guardian that certifies the child is free of communicable diseases and specifies any allergies, medications, or acute and chronic conditions.

Classroom pets or visiting animals must be in good health and have documentation from a veterinarian or animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and that the animal is suitable for contact with children. Program staff will make sure any child who is allergic to a type of animal is not exposed to that animal. Reptiles and birds are not allowed in the center because of the risk of salmonella infection.

Skip-a-Long will safeguard and protect your child and our employees from potential exposure to infection. In order to protect the health and safety of our environment, the agency will mandate the use of Universal Precautions. All blood and certain body fluids will be treated as if they are potentially infectious.

Tobacco-Free Environment

Skip-a-Long is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment. Smoking, secondhand and thirdhand smoke are known to cause serious lung diseases and other cancers for both individuals who smoke and individuals exposed to secondhand and thirdhand smoke. Secondhand smoke is defined as smoke inhaled involuntarily from tobacco being smoked by others. Thirdhand smoke is defined as residual nicotine and other chemicals left remaining on surfaces and clothing following an episode of smoking. Skip-a-Long recognizes the hazards caused by tobacco use and exposure to secondhand and thirdhand smoke. Compliance with all licensing bodies also dictates restrictions on smoking. As such, Skip-a-Long is committed to providing employees, volunteers, individuals, families and children a tobacco-free environment.

Employees, families, and visitors, on all Skip-a-Long premises, are prohibited from smoking or using tobacco, including cigars, cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, pipes, vaporizers or other method of smoking or using tobacco of any kind.

A Tobacco-Free Environment applies to:

- All areas of buildings occupied by Skip-a-Long employees.

- All Skip-a-Long-sponsored off-site events and meetings.
- All vehicles owned or leased by Skip-a-Long.
- All property owned and used by Skip-a-Long, including parking lots (smoking is further prohibited within 15 feet of any door or window that opens for ventilation),
- The prohibition extends to:
 - All visitors (customers, families and vendors) to Skip-a-Long premises.
 - All contractors and consultants and/or their employees working on Skip-a-Long premises.
 - All temporary employees.
 - All student interns.

This policy applies equally to all employees, customers, and visitors. If visitors or children smell of smoke, managers will approach them and their guardians to explain this policy.

Sickness Policy

Children shall be screened upon arrival daily for any obvious signs of illness such as a high fever, vomiting, diarrhea, persistent coughing or skin rashes. If symptoms of illness are present, the child care staff will determine whether they are able to care for the child safely. The staff will follow the guidelines of the Skip-a-Long Health Manual in determining whether a child should be admitted to the center, sent home, or removed at a time during the day.

Please be aware your physician cannot write a note circumventing our policies. We are in a position to provide programming for well children and keep those in attendance healthy. In addition, if children are in attendance they will need to go outside with their class. We do not have the staffing to provide for one child being left indoors and we do not want to have them join another class due health reasons.

If your child displays the following symptoms, he or she will need to be excluded from attending child care. The exclusion criteria is:

1. Fever - For an infant or child older than 2 months, a fever is a temperature that is above 101 degrees F by any method. For infants younger than 2 months of age a fever is a temperature above 100.4 degrees by any method.
2. Vomiting (with the exception of an infant who may vomit or spit up formula or breast milk)
3. Diarrhea – a watery stool that is not associated with changes in diet. In diapered children, this is a stool that is not contained in the diaper. For toilet-trained children, if the child is unable to make it to the toilet and soils clothing.
4. Displaying symptoms of a contagious disease
5. Symptoms that prevent the child from participating comfortably in activities
6. A need for care that is greater than the teachers can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children
7. An acute change in behavior: lethargy, lack of responsiveness, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or a quickly spreading rash

If your child displays any of these symptoms, we will contact you using the numbers you provided upon enrollment. If we are unable to reach you we will call the emergency contacts you have provided. You will have one hour to pick up your child.

If your child is excluded from child care, he or she may return when he or she:

1. Is fever free without fever reducing medications for 24 hours
2. Is not displaying any signs of vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours

Upon a child's return to the center, after being sent home with loose stools or vomiting, the child will be sent home if they have one episode of loose stools or vomiting.

All families will be alerted when a contagious illness or virus is circulating amongst the children. If your child has been sent home with a contagious virus, he or she must have a doctor's note before returning.

If a child is unable to participate in regular routines and/or activities for a reason that cannot be identified, parents/guardians will be notified and in some cases, parents/guardians may be asked to pick up their child.

Some common illnesses where exclusion is required:

- **Chickenpox (varicella):** until all lesions have dried or crusted (usually six days after onset of rash).
- **Coronavirus (COVID-19):** We will follow the current guidelines recommended by the Center for Disease and Control (CDC). Most recent updates will be available through the Center Director.
- **E.Coli, Shigella, Giardia, Campylobacter Infections:** stools must be formed and test results of two stool cultures obtained from stools produced twenty-four hours apart do not detect these organisms.
- **Impetigo:** exclude at the end of the day if blisters can be covered. Child can return after being seen by the doctor, after 24 hours on antibiotic, and blisters are covered.
- **Head lice:** child is to be sent home upon discovery of lice. Child may return after treatment and when they are nit free. Our policy is not in line with public school policies because very young children are in such very close proximity to each other and our rooms have a large variety of soft surfaces that must be treated prior to reopening the next day. Think about circle time and the hugging, and rolling and just general fun that occurs all the while making contact with clothing and hair. When it comes to treating our rooms we must strip all the cots, wash all the sheets, blankets and stuffed animals, spray cots, spray all carpet, spray pillows, wash dress up clothes, wash puppets, wash cloth books etc. What we can't wash we have to tie up in bags, date the bag and let it sit for two full weeks. In addition to treating all surfaces we also check everyone's head including the teachers. We will check heads over the course of ten days until we feel confident we have no more head lice. With that said we ask you to treat your child's hair, your family, your home and remove all nits before bringing your child back to school.
- **Hepatitis A Viral Infection:** until one week after onset of illness or jaundice if the child's symptoms are mild or as directed by the health department. Note: immunization status of child care contacts should be confirmed; within a fourteen-day period of exposure, incompletely immunized or unimmunized contacts from one through forty years of age should receive the hepatitis A vaccine as post exposure prophylaxis, unless contraindicated.
- **Hib Disease (haemophilus influenza):** child may return to the program with approval from your child's physician as long as mouth sores do not cause excessive drooling or fingers/hands to be in the mouth.
- **Influenza A or B:** until after the child is fever free for 24 hours and resolution of exclusion criteria.
- **Measles:** until four days after onset of rash
- **Meningitis (Viral or Bacterial):** child with bacterial meningitis may return after 24 hours of antibiotics and written permission from your child's physician. Child with viral meningitis may return when feeling better and physician's written permission.
- **Mumps:** until five days after onset of parotid gland swelling

- **Pertussis:** until five days of appropriate antibiotic treatment
- **Pink eye (Conjunctivitis):** may return after treatment has begun.
- **Pinworms:** child may return to the program the day after treatment begins as prescribed by the child's physician.
- **Pneumonia:** child may return with written permission of the physician and be fever free 24 hours prior to returning.
- **Ringworm:** child may return to the program the day after treatment begins as prescribed by the child's physician if the lesions are kept covered, or 48 hours after treatment begins.
- **Roseola:** child may return to the program when fever free for 24 hours.
- **Rotavirus:** child may return to the program when he/she is fever and diarrhea free for 24 hours.
- **Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV):** children may return once symptoms have resolved, and child meets other exclusion criteria.
- **Rubella:** until six days after the rash appears
- **Salmonella Serotype Typhi Infection:** in child younger than five years of age three negative stool cultures obtained with 24-hour intervals are required; children five years of age or older may return after a 24-hour period without a diarrheal stool.
- **Scabies:** until after treatment has been given
- **Streptococcal pharyngitis (strep throat or other streptococcal infection):** until twenty four hours after treatment has been started.

Some common illnesses where exclusion is NOT required:

- **Bed bugs:** child will not be excluded if a bed bug is found on them or in their belongings.
- **Fifth disease:** not unless the child meets other exclusion criteria such as a fever.
- **Hand Foot and Mouth:** not unless child meets other exclusion criteria such as fever. Can be excluded if they are drooling with mouth sores, even without a fever.
- **MRSA:** child may return with covered wound as long as the wound does not ooze or escape covering and must wound must be kept covered.
- **Otitis Media (ear infection):** not unless they meet other exclusion criteria.
- **Ringworm:** not unless child meets other exclusion criteria, treatment may be delayed until the end of the day. After treatment cover lesions if possible.
- **Thrush (Candidiasis):** not unless child meets other exclusion criteria.

Medication Policy

We are allowed to administer prescription medications to your child upon completion of a medication permission form if the printed age/weight requirement of each particular medicine is being met. Skip-a-Long will not administer the initial dosage of a medication. Non-prescription medications will only be administered to your child with doctor's permission and written doctor's note.

Prescription medications will be accepted ONLY in the original container. We cannot administer medications beyond their expiration date or if the prescription was for another family member. Prescription medication must be labeled with the full pharmacy label and given according to the doctor's directions. Over-the-counter (non-prescription) medication must be in such condition that the names of the medication and the directions for use are clearly readable. Instructions on the medication name, dosage, time and date medicine is to be given must be provided by your doctor. Consider requesting your doctor prescribe two times per day so you can administer medications at home.

Medicines requiring refrigeration will be kept in a designated, locked refrigerator, while all other medications will be kept in a locked medicine container in your child's room or in a locked box in the office. When doses are given, documentation is made that shows the name of the medication, the amount, time given, and the name of the person administering it. Medication is given only by designated staff trained in administration of medication.

When a child's medical needs require special care or accommodation, such care will be administered as required by a physician, subject to receipt of appropriate releases from the parent/guardian(s). Medical consultation by UnityPoint Health in Illinois and Scott County Health's Child Care Nurse Consultant in Iowa will be available to the staff as needed for the health and medical needs of the children served.

Parents/guardians may bring bug spray for their child during outside time. Parents/guardians will be asked to sign a form giving Skip-a-Long permission to apply sunscreen for outdoor play. The sunscreen will be supplied by Skip-a-Long unless a doctor's note is provided.

Vaccination Policy

In accordance with state licensing laws in Illinois and Iowa, Skip-a-Long requires vaccinations of the following illnesses as deemed age appropriate by a Primary Care Provider:

1. Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis (DTaP)
2. Polio (either IPV or OPV)
3. Haemophilus influenza type b (Hib)
4. Varicella (Chickenpox)
5. Combined Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR)

Families are required to complete a religious exemptions form if they do not vaccinate their children. Primary Care Provider notes are required if there is a medical reason for delaying a vaccination. An authorized notary is required for Iowa Campus families only.

Accident & Injury Policy

For accidents and injuries that occur while your child is in care at Skip-a-Long, an accident report is completed by the child's teacher and reviewed by either the Site Director or the Family Service Provider. The accident report details the events of the accident and/or injury and what, if any care was provided to the child. Parents/guardians are provided this accident report upon pick up the same day the accident and/or

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injury occurred. Any serious accident and/or injury will be immediately reported to the parent/guardian by phone. In event the parent/guardian cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be notified. Children will be transported via ambulance to the nearest hospital if necessary for a serious accident and/or injury.

FOR IOWA CENTER ONLY

Incident, Accident & Injury Policy

For incidents (including minor changes in health status or minor behavior concerns), accidents and injuries that occur while your child is in care at Davenport, Iowa Skip-a-Long, an accident/incident report is completed by the child's provider and reviewed by the Site Director, Family Service Provider or other designated supervisor. The accident/incident report details the events of the accident, incident and/or injury and what, if any care was provided to the child. Parents/guardians are provided this report upon pick up the same day the accident, incident and/or injury occurred. Any serious accident, incident and/or injury will be immediately reported to the parent/guardian by phone and the adult authorized to pick up will receive a complete written report prepared by the staff member who observed the incident. A copy of this report will be retained in the child's file. In the event the parent/guardian cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be notified. Children will be transported via ambulance to the nearest hospital if necessary for a serious accident and/or injury. Serious injuries as listed in Iowa Licensing Standards and Procedures 441 IAC 109.10 (10) will be reported to the Iowa Department of Human Services within 24 hours using the Healthy Child Care Iowa Child Care Injury/Incident Report Form.

Mandatory Reporter

Parents/guardians are not allowed to approach children other than their own with the intent to discipline. Parents/guardians are also not allowed to use corporal punishment, verbal abuse and/or removal of food as punishment while on the premises. All classroom staff are registered Mandatory Reporters per state licensing laws. This means that in the event of suspected child abuse or neglect, our staff are required by law to report this to Illinois Department of Children and Family Services or Iowa Department of Human Services. If authorized pickup individuals are suspected of being inebriated, the police will be called and the individual will be barred entry. Skip-a-Long staff do not determine whether or not abuse or neglect was founded; however, these suspected situations are reported. The Center Director will notify an affected family when we become aware of a report made of suspected child abuse or neglect. Questions during an open investigation will be directed to the appropriate state regulatory body.

Sex Offender Policy

Individuals required to register on the sex offender registry for a conviction involving a sex offense are prohibited from being on Skip-a-Long property, listed as authorized pickup, or attending any Skip-a-Long offsite activities where minors will be present.

Confidentiality Agreement

Skip-a-Long Childhood Centers is committed to protecting, maintaining privacy and restricting access to confidential information of children, parents/guardians, and their families. Confidential information may include, but is not limited to:

1. Enrollment Information, including: Name, Date of Birth, Address, Phone Number, Email Address, Social Security Number, Name of Employer/School, Work Hours, Marital Status, Date of Enrollment or other identifiable or private enrollment information;

2. Health Information, including: Physician/Dentist Name, Address, Phone Number, Hospital of Choice, Insurance Provider, Group Identification Number, any diagnoses of illness and/or allergies, medication, physical forms, immunization history or other identifiable information related to health information;
3. Financial Information, including: Tuition and copayment amounts, Method of payment, Bank Account Information, Balance and Payment History, any pay stub or wage verification information, eligible or attended days, Child Care Assistance Applications and Redeterminations or other identifiable or private financial information;
4. Screening and Assessment Information, including: Results from developmental screenings including Ages and Stages Questionnaires, Vision and Hearing Screenings and other developmental screenings performed by the parent/guardian of the enrolled child/children, classroom or office staff, or an independent party conducting the screening, Results from child assessments conducted ongoing in the classroom by teaching staff, Documentation that reflects observed behaviors in the classroom or any other identifiable or private information related to screenings and assessments; and
5. Media Information, including: Pictures, videos, audio clips and written documentation of enrolled children, parents/guardians and their families or other identifiable or private media information.

Confidential information will be disclosed under the following conditions:

1. With the expressed written permission of the legal parent/guardian;
2. If the individual(s) requesting the information has a legal right to that information;
3. If the organization is compelled to disclose through a court order, valid subpoena, or child abuse investigation;
4. In the event of litigation pursuant to requests for information; and
5. If an individual's life is in imminent danger.

Skip-a-Long Childhood Centers will maintain the privacy of your family's confidential information and in addition, the organization asks you to maintain the privacy of other enrolled children and their families if you happen upon any confidential information while enrolled. Families will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement upon enrollment.

Emergency Preparedness & Evacuation

Skip-a-Long has well-defined plans for fire, weather/disaster and emergency evacuations. Fire and tornado drills are held according to state licensing standards and NAC accreditation standards. Emergency Exit Plans are posted in each classroom and these are practiced with the drills that are held. Each center has a designated location in the event of an evacuation. Immobile children will be transported to the evacuation site. Attendance will be taken at the alternate location. Families will receive communication immediately if the center will be evacuated and where children can be picked up.

Toilet Teaching

A consistent toileting routine at school and at home is essential for successful potty training. Parents/Guardians and teachers must keep communication open and work together during this important developmental step in any child's life.

Children are ready for toilet teaching when they exhibit the following signs:

1. Can sit and walk easily
2. Can remove and pull on loose fitting pants and underwear
3. Can understand and follow simple instructions
4. Remains dry for several hours at a time, particularly overnight

5. Is aware when s/he has eliminated

Once the child is ready to begin toilet teaching, the following will occur:

1. The teaching team and family agrees the child is developmentally ready
2. The child is dressed appropriately (sweat pants, elastic waist pants or shorts – avoid one piece outfits, bib overalls, belts, and snap/button jeans)
3. Everyone involved is consistent
4. The child receives praise in the form of hugs, smiles, etc. instead of “bribes” such as food or stickers
5. The child receives positive attention and everyone understands that accidents will happen and minimize the focus on accidents

Upon beginning toilet teaching, the adults must consistently assist the child in the bathroom by removing/replacing diapers and clothing and helping with the child’s hygiene. Please bring extra changes of clothes during this time.

Transportation

Skip-a-Long provides transportation for school age children to and from school (at select campuses) as well as transportation for field trips and activities in the community during the child care day. All children aged 18 months and older, as well as some older infants can attend pre-arranged and age appropriate field trips. Skip-a-Long and Metro Bus provide transportation. Skip-a-Long also provides transportation using 15 passenger vans and buses. In order to safely transport children, Skip-a-Long has created the following guidelines:

1. No standing will be permitted. All children must be safely secured in his or her seat at all times the bus or van is in motion.
2. Each child must sit in his or her seat facing forward, no body parts may extend into the aisle.
3. Safety belts must be used by all passengers if available.
4. All parts of the child’s body must remain inside the bus. No arms or hands can be put outside the bus or van windows.
5. Nothing shall be held so it extends out of the window or in the aisle of the bus or van.
6. Nothing can be thrown outside the windows of the van or bus.
7. No eating, drinking or chewing gum is allowed on the bus or vans.
8. Talk quietly at all times, you may talk with your neighbor but use a quiet voice; you may not disturb other children on the bus. No shouting or yelling is allowed.
9. No obscene language or gestures will be tolerated.
10. No trash may be left behind in the vans or buses. Everything you came onto the vehicle with must leave with you.
11. No fighting on the vehicle or around the bus stop.
12. All children must board and exit the bus in a timely manner.
13. Children are not allowed to tamper with the vehicle or the equipment.
14. Children must be aware of their correct departure and pick up spot and ensure they exit the bus at the correct location.
15. All children who are required by state law to ride in a child safety seat must have one that is properly installed and they must be fastened in at all times the vehicle is in motion. If your child’s classroom will be attending a field trip and he or she requires the use of a car seat you will be notified and asked to bring a car seat to the building the morning of the trip. If you do not provide a car seat for us to use your child may not be able to attend the trip. This car seat must be fully functioning and working properly in order for your child to attend.

16. All riders must respect the driver. Children should leave the driver alone to concentrate on the road and should not distract him or her with inappropriate behavior.
17. All other classroom etiquette expectations must be followed on the buses.
18. Emergency contact information will be taken by staff for each trip.

Media Release

Skip-a-Long respects the confidentiality and right to privacy of all families. As such, families are prohibited from taking pictures of children other than their own while at Skip-a-Long, on a field trip or during special events. For families that consent, Skip-a-Long utilizes photos and videos of children for the purpose of promoting programs, services, and successes of the agency. Photos and videos are shared on the Skip-a-Long website, social networking sites, and printed promotional materials.

Pesticides

Skip-a-Long utilizes a licensed pest control company to provide safe and effective pest control for our facilities. Pest control is provided after operating hours when no children are present. The chemicals used are approved for a child care setting.

Grievance Procedure

The following is a process for a formal grievance procedure.

1. If complaints/issues cannot be resolved through an informal process, parents/guardians can submit in writing their complaint to the Site Director. Appropriate details, information and dates should be included, along with contact information. If your complaint is against the Site Director, submit your complaint to the Chief Program Officer. The Chief Program Officer can be reached at 309-429-5497.
2. The Site Director will acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint in writing within 5 business days.
3. The Site Director will determine the course of mediation depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint. At this time, additional staff may be notified, including but not limited to, the Director of Human Resources, the Chief Program Officer and the Chief Executive Officer.
4. Within 15 business days, the Site Director will provide next steps in writing to the parent/guardian. Next steps may include, but are not limited to, immediate resolution of the issue, request for a meeting to gather additional information, and justification of a course of action.
5. At this time the complaint can be resolved. If the parent/guardian is unsatisfied with the resolution, the parent/guardian can then notify the Site Director in writing that they are unsatisfied with the stated resolution.
6. The Site Director will then share relevant information with the Chief Program Officer and the Chief Program Officer will meet with the parent/guardian to determine an appropriate course of action. This process will occur within 15 business days of an unsatisfactory result.
7. The Chief Program Officer will consult with the Director of Human Resources and Chief Executive Officer as needed.
8. A final decision will be reached within 10 business days of a parent/guardian meeting with the Chief Program Officer.

Program

Creative Curriculum

Skip-a-Long embraces the Creative Curriculum at each campus for children beginning at six weeks of age. The Creative Curriculum is built on decades of research on child development and early education theory. Creative Curriculum details how to create learning environments, individualize for diverse learners, teach content areas, and integrate in-depth investigations of topics of interest to children. Research has demonstrated that children who experience Creative Curriculum have higher scores that are statistically significant compared to children who experience another curriculum. The content areas include:

1. Social-Emotional
2. Physical
3. Language
4. Cognitive
5. Literacy
6. Mathematics
7. Science and Technology
8. Social Studies
9. The Arts
10. English Language Acquisition (if applicable)

Child Screening and Assessment

Ages and Stages Questionnaires will be utilized to determine child development and growth. Age appropriate screenings will be utilized upon enrollment of the child, and with each transition to a new classroom. This information will be shared with your child's classroom teachers in order to accommodate any special needs or identify need for additional screening. Information will be shared in a confidential and sensitive manner. Resources and supports may be offered depending on screening results.

Teaching Strategies GOLD is the evidence-based assessment that aligns to the Creative Curriculum. This web-based assessment allows teachers to assess children on the content areas during the activities. Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment allows teachers to compare children's developmental progress to widely-held expectations for their age group. This information then informs lesson plans and activities in the classroom. All teachers have received training on the assessment tool.

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire is provided for all children to assess for developmental progressions and any potential developmental delays. Partnerships with the Black Hawk Area Special Education District in Illinois and the Area Education Association in Iowa afford Skip-a-Long connections to experts who can screen children. Parents/guardians are provided information on the screening results. Children for whom the screening identifies a developmental concern are referred for further evaluation. This process takes place collaboratively with parents/guardians upon enrollment, and every November and April while enrolled.

Teaching Staff

Skip-a-Long hires qualified teaching staff to provide early care and education to children. All teachers complete finger printing and background checks. Teachers are required by licensing and accreditation to have a minimum of 25 training hours annually on early childhood topics. In addition to this annual training, all teaching staff are current on CPR/First Aid, Universal Precautions, Mandatory Reporter, Fire Extinguisher Training, Shaken Baby Syndrome, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Training.

Daily Schedule

The daily schedule for each classroom includes time for family-style meals, small and large group time, nap or rest time, outdoor play, center-based play and arts or music. Center-based play includes learning centers with age appropriate toys. Children are given times throughout the day to select play areas such as dramatic play, building, music, reading and art.

Outdoor Time

Skip-a-Long makes it a priority to get children outside every day to enjoy fresh air and physical activity. Each classroom has regularly scheduled outdoor time totaling a minimum of one and a half to two hours per day. Children will not go outside if the temperature is above 90 degrees with the heat index (feels like) or below 20 degrees with the wind chill (feels like).

Special Events & Field Trips

During the year, our centers host several special events which are open to families to attend with their children. These include parent/guardian-teacher conferences, and various other events. One additional staff over ratio will be present on field trips. In addition, full first aid kits and emergency contact information are taken on all field trips. Children are expected to behave appropriately and with the same expectations as if present at the center. We welcome your participation and attendance at all of these programs, particularly in the role of a volunteer. All parents/guardians and extended relatives are invited to volunteer during the year. You may wish to spend time in your child's classroom, accompany us on a field trip or outing, join us for an occasional lunchtime, or contribute your special talent to help out on a center-wide project. Additional information will be provided for each unique experience.

Toys & Supplies

We know adjusting to a new play environment can be an anxious time for your child, so if he or she has a special item from home, please bring it along for the first few weeks. Toys can be brought in on a "Show and Tell" basis unless other arrangements with your child's teacher have been made (for example, a blanket or stuffed animal). Skip-a-Long is not responsible for lost or broken toys. Toys at the center are changed out every few months in order to maintain a variety of materials children can engage with.

We need a complete change of clothing (except shoes) for your child that can be left at the center in case of an accident. If your child is toilet training you child's teacher will send a letter home with detailed information and clothing requirements. Please mark each item with your child's name to prevent loss or mix-up. Please know that your child will spend the day playing both inside and outside and will likely get their clothes dirty. We use washable supplies whenever possible but are not responsible for any stained clothing.

Children should wear closed-toe tennis shoes for outdoor playtime. During the winter months we require that your child has boots and be dressed warmly enough to go outside for brief walks or play periods. Children are not to wear clothing with strings.

In addition to a change of clothes you will be responsible for the following:

1. Diapers (until the child is toilet trained)
2. Wipes (until the child is toilet trained)

Skip-a-Long will partner with you when your child is ready to start toilet teaching. We ask that you provide underwear and several changes of clothing to aid in the toilet learning development stage.

Understanding Diverse Needs of Children

Skip-a-Long values cultural diversity among children and families. The term *cultural diversity* refers to more than diversity in race and ethnicity. Culture encompasses the life experience and situation of each person in terms of factors such as:

- Socioeconomic Status
- Gender & Gender Identity
- Education
- Ability Level
- Perception of Time
- Response to Authority
- Language
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Lifestyle
- Communication Style
- Political Views
- Race & Ethnicity

Cultural biases are common and persist due to socialization, political preference, media influence and one's own cultural values and norms. To be able to effectively respond to this issue, Skip-a-Long believes it is important to be open and honest with one's own self and we educate staff to this end. It is important to identify our own patterns of behavior, expectations, assumptions and values. This self-awareness will assist teaching staff in recognizing types and style of interactions among people with different cultural backgrounds.

Skip-a-Long considers cultural assumptions and stereotypes, both positive and negative when interacting with children. Skip-a-Long views the child as a person-first and focuses on strengths to build the child up. Viewing each child through a lens of self-worth and dignity will be beneficial to the child's overall growth and development.

Transition Policy

Transitions can be tough for children – adapting to a new environment, new faces, and a new routine. Our Transition Policy is in place to help make those transitions a little easier for children, families, and staff.

Transitioning into Skip-a-Long

Prior to child's start date:

1. Parents/guardians and child tour the campus and meet with child's teachers
2. Review the daily schedule and routines of the classroom, assessment process, curriculum, and lesson plan
3. Discuss the child's dietary, religious, and cultural needs
4. Parents/guardians prepare family photos, lovies, blankets and other comforts to bring on the first day
5. Parents/guardians complete Ages & Stages Questionnaire prior to enrollment

On the child's first day:

1. Parents/guardians and child learn where the child's cubby and sleeping arrangements will be
2. Assign a primary caregiver who can act as the main point of contact with the family
3. Parents/guardians are encouraged to spend extra time at drop-off and pick-up times during the initial week or to stop by/call during the first week to check on their child

Within 30 days of the child's first day:

1. Teachers will check in with parents/guardians to ascertain any concerns and make adjustments as requested in the child's routine

Transitioning into a new classroom at Skip-a-Long

Prior to child's start date:

1. Parents/guardians and child tour the new classroom and meet with the child's new teachers
2. Review the daily schedule and routines of the classroom, curriculum, and lesson plan
3. Discuss the child's dietary, religious, and cultural needs
4. Teachers meets with new teacher to share assessments, likes & dislikes, and favorite toys

Prior to the child's last day:

1. Teachers and parents/guardians will prepare the child for the transition by talking to them and asking what their feelings are about moving to a new classroom

On the child's last day:

1. Teachers will encourage the child to say goodbye to friends in the classroom
2. Teachers will say goodbye to the child and share a favorite memory, classroom will celebrate promotion to the next room

Transitions to Community Services

Prior to child's start with community services, teachers will:

1. Communicate with parents/guardians and child regarding aligned with the community service
2. Communicate with the community service entity to establish points of contact
3. Have all necessary releases of information signed

During the child's involvement in community services, teachers will:

1. Communicate with parents/guardians and child to determine level of involvement necessary/requested
2. Communicate with community service entity to determine progress and any changes that need to be made

On the child's exit with community services, teachers will:

1. Seek guidance from parents/guardians and child on what aspects of the community service they would like to see continued or changed while enrolled in child care
2. Communicate with community service entity for closure

Transitioning into Kindergarten

Prior to child's first day, teachers will:

1. Ask parents/guardians and child about upcoming transition to school
2. Share information with parents/guardians on school round ups & unpack your backpack nights
3. Communicate with school district regarding child's likes/dislikes, upon request
3. Prepare the child for the transition by talking to them and asking what their feelings are about moving to Kindergarten

On the child's last day, teachers will:

1. Encourage the child to say goodbye to friends in the classroom
2. Say goodbye to the child and share a favorite memory

Following the transition, teachers will:

1. Respond to any concerns from parents/guardians
2. Communicate with school district to determine adjustment success, upon request

Guidance Policy

Children need to feel safe and connected in order to problem solve and self-regulate. In order to feel safe we provide children with consistent, responsive and nurturing teachers. Teachers strive to build positive relationships with each child by utilizing the four elements of building connection with children: eye contact, touch, presence, and playfulness.

Instead of just focusing on reducing challenging behavior, teachers focus on

1. Teaching children social, communication and emotional regulation skills.
2. Using environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support, and other teaching strategies to support children's appropriate behavior.

Here are a few examples of guidance prevention strategies:

1. Set clear, consistent and simple limits. "We walk inside". "Hands are washed before we eat".
2. Give easy to understand explanations for limits. "Sand stays in the box so it doesn't get in people's eyes". "When you put toys back on the shelf, others can find them".
3. Set limits in a positive way, rather than a negative way. "It's time to put the blocks away" instead of "Don't leave the blocks on the floor". "Turn the pages gently". Instead of "Don't be rough with the pages".
4. Always state your expectation, rather than ask. "It's time to clean up now". Instead of "Do you want to help clean up?" "It's your turn to wash". Instead of "Would you like to wash your hands now?"
5. Provide choices. "Do you want to put your pants on first or your shirt?" Instead of "Get dressed." "Would you like carrots or cucumbers with your sandwich?" Instead of "You need to eat your vegetables."

While we use all of these strategies and more we also use Conscious Discipline (www.consciousdiscipline.com) as the foundation that supports children's social and emotional development. The Conscious Discipline curriculum focuses on the following seven skills:

1. Anger management and gratification delay
2. Kindness, caring and helpfulness
3. Healthy boundaries and bully prevention
4. Impulse control and goal achievement
5. Emotional regulation and perspective taking
6. Cooperation and problem solving
7. Learning from mistakes

In the event that your child does not respond well to our guidance strategies and curriculum we will ask your permission to gather specific information on a Behavior Incident Report. This report will tell us when, possible motivation, with whom, what behavior etc. The teaching team, Director and Family Service Provider will analyze this report and begin outlining a Behavior Intervention Plan. Next we will ask to meet with you and finalize a Behavior Intervention Plan for both home and school. Implementation begins and a follow-up meeting with the teaching team, Director and Family Service Provider will take place.

Children may be referred for alternative forms of care for any of the following reasons:

1. The parents/guardians do not consent to the interventions in the Behavior

Intervention Plan

2. The parents/guardians do not follow up on referrals to community services
3. The Conscious Discipline Behavior Plan is followed, but the child does not progress or develops additional needs that are not able to be met at Skip-a-Long
4. Center Director determines alternate care is necessary

Alternative forms of care may include, but are not limited to:

1. Transfer to another campus
2. Transfer to a Home Child Care Network Provider
3. Referrals to appropriate outside agencies

If a child is referred for alternative forms of care, the following will take place:

1. Planned transition conference to be arranged by the Center Director with three days written notice. Teaching Staff, parents/guardians and management staff will participate in the conference. During the conference, staff will:
 - i. Review this policy
 - ii. Review specific events, steps and results which have led to this meeting
 - iii. Inform the family that our agency is no longer an appropriate place to meet the needs of the child
 - iv. Attempt to meet the families' needs by making referrals to other agencies, facilities, or homes
 - v. Conclude the conference with a five-day written transition notice
2. If parents/guardians choose not to participate in this process with the agency as outlined, we will send, by certified mail, a letter outlining the remaining steps to be followed and will move on to the next step of the policy

Skip-a-Long reserves the right to transition any child who demonstrates the inability to benefit from the type of care offered by our agency or whose presence is determined to be detrimental to other children and families we serve.

Biting Policy

As upsetting as it is, biting is not unusual toddler behavior, especially when toddlers are in groups. Toddlers bite for many reasons, most of which are related to the development of children at this age. When toddlers bite, the most effective way to get them to stop is an approach that combines observation, understanding, teaching, and environmental changes.

There are a number of reasons children may bite. They include:

Development

- Teething pain;
- Experimenting with the movement of their mouths as they learn to chew and swallow without choking;
- Feeling that others are too close because they don't yet have a good understanding of the space around them;
- Their developing autonomy – feeling a sense of independence and power; and
- Struggling to be understood as they learn to talk.

Expressing Feelings

- Feeling frustrated or angry;
- Anxious or tense about situations they don't understand; and
- Excited, even for happy reasons.

Environment

- Overstimulation and overcrowding;
- Inappropriate expectations, such as having to wait; and
- A schedule that doesn't meet their needs.

Responses to both the child who bit and the child who was bitten are required.

The child who was bitten needs:

- Comfort and care;
- Reassurance and recognition;
- Advice and support;
- First Aid techniques administered washing the area and applying a bandage if necessary, as well as applying a cold pack;
- An incident report; and
- Confidentiality.

The child who bites needs:

- A clear message of disapproval;
- An understanding how his or her biting affected the other child;
- Advice about what the child should do instead of biting ;
- Redirection or a resulting action that relates to the reason for the bite;
- Adults to look at the situation and environment;
- First Aid techniques administered including rinsing the mouth out with water due to possible blood/bodily fluids being transferred;
- An incident report; and
- Confidentiality.

Internal actions that we may wish to consider within the environment:

1. Self-study of room to see if activities and structure are positive and will facilitate interaction with low levels of stress/biting opportunities
2. Observation of room activities by objective outside person (Site Director, Family Service Provider, another trained staff, etc.)
3. If necessary, retraining of staff in biting intervention, redirection, handling, response, etc.
4. Regrouping of children/staff
5. Temporarily adding a staff member during high-activity periods to assist in intervention and allow staff to provide brief one-on-one attention
6. Other actions deemed necessary by the Site Director

Safe Sleep Policy

Safe sleep procedure aims to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) that could occur during all sleep. All child care programs who care for infants should follow these

required safe sleep practices.

Infants 12 months of age and younger are placed on their backs (supine position) for all sleep and infants under 4 months of age that roll will be gently rolled back to their backs during sleep. A signed doctor's waiver must be on file to alter sleep position.

Sleep environment for infants :

- Firm mattress
- One infant per crib
- No blankets
- No swaddling (sleep sacks are allowed)
- Tight fitting sheet
- Nothing else in crib
- Temperature in room 68-72 degrees

If an infant arrives asleep to the center the individual who has brought the child to the center needs to remove the child from the car seat and place the child on his/her back in the crib.

To minimize the risk of sudden infant death syndrome, children shall be placed on their backs when put down to sleep according to the following guidelines:

- Infants that can easily turn over from the back to stomach position shall be placed down to sleep on their backs, but allowed to adopt their preferred position while sleeping;
- Infants unable to roll from their stomachs to their backs and from their backs to their stomachs, when found face down, shall be placed on their backs;
- Sleeping in other places besides a crib is not allowed. For ex:
 - Sofa
 - Soft Mattress
 - Car seat
 - Swing

No positioning device that restricts movement within the child's bed shall be used without written instructions from the child's physician. Soft bedding, bumpers, pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys and other soft products shall not be used or stored in cribs.

Sleeping children will be supervised within sight and sound. During naptime, when non-sleeping children are allowed to get up, the room shall have reduced light but shall not be dark.

Family Rights & Responsibilities

Rights & Responsibilities

At Skip-a-Long, families have the rights to:

1. Be treated with dignity and respect
2. Be informed if you qualify for any type of assistance within 30 days of applying
3. Terminate child care with a two week notice
4. Access your child at all times while he or she is in care
5. Communicate concerns or questions with classroom staff and administrators
6. Confidentiality of payment history, medical information and other identifiable information through locked files and a 'need to know' practice of who sees this information for programming purposes.

At Skip-a-Long, families have the responsibility to:

1. Treat others with dignity and respect
2. Pay fees by the 15th of each month via EFT or weekly each Friday
3. Contact the center if your child is going to be absent or late upon arrival or pickup
4. Update your contact information if it changes
5. Maintain all requirements of care for your child (for example, updated physical exams and immunizations)

Communications

Skip-a-Long uses a variety of methods to communicate with families. Please share your complete contact information and be sure to share updates so that you may receive all of the information about Skip-a-Long and your child's care. Skip-a-Long utilizes a website, social media (Facebook), newsletters, emails, text messages and phone calls.

Parent Advisory Council

Each campus has a parent advisory council. The purpose of this council is to provide an opportunity for parents/guardians of children attending the campus to inform and participate in planning and implementing activities that benefit their children. Guidance and insight is frequently sought in order to ensure Skip-a-Long is aligned with the needs and goals of families. All families are welcome to volunteer with the Parent Advisory Council.

In order to comply with quality initiatives and provide the most effective relationship, parent advisory councils will meet at least quarterly, on-site with an agenda prepared. Staff representative(s) will be present to help facilitate the meetings. Minutes must be taken to document those in attendance, topics discussed and decisions made. Copies of these minutes should be given to Skip-a-Long staff for proper documentation of the meetings which will serve as paperwork/evidence needed for the quality initiatives benchmarks.

Open Door Program

Skip-a-Long is in partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services and Iowa Attorney General's Office Victims of Crime Assistance (VOCA) and offers this program to members of our community. Open Door serves as the link for customers to the local community for immediate referrals, for those individuals in crisis or in need of support. A crisis is defined as something that prohibits an individual from becoming self-sufficient and can vary from homelessness to pending eviction, hunger to advocacy, employment or clothing. The Open Door staff are trained in case management and linking individuals to the appropriate agency within IDHS or our community agencies.

Open Door Illinois
1609 4th Street, Building 2
Rock Island, IL 61201
Hours: M-F 8:30a-5p
Phone: 309-793-8201

Open Door Iowa
1221 Myrtle Street
Davenport, IA 52804
Hours: M-F 8:30a-5p
Phone: 563-265-5500

Home Child Care Network

Home Child Care Network was designed for families who need extended hours of child care (1st shift, 2nd shift, 3rd shift, weekends, or holidays), we offer a network of licensed in-home providers who are located throughout the Quad Cities and surrounding areas. The Home Child Care Network provides

parents/guardians with reliable, high-quality options for in-home providers, and can offer financial assistance to those who qualify through IDHS and the United Way.

Home Child Care Network
1 Montgomery Drive
Moline, IL 61265
Hours: M-F 8a-5p
Phone: 309-764-8192

Child Care Resource & Referral of Midwestern Illinois

Child Care Resource & Referral of Midwestern Illinois is part of a statewide network of child care resource and referral agencies funded by Illinois Department of Human Services. Families can receive assistance locating child care that is tailored to their needs, determining if families qualify for the child care assistance program (CCAP), which provides assistance paying for child care. In addition, training and consultation is provided to child care providers aimed at maintaining and improving quality and early care for children and families. Families served by Child Care Resource & Referral of Midwestern Illinois reside in Illinois counties of Henderson, Henry, Knox, McDonough, Mercer, Rock Island, and Warren.

Child Care Resource & Referral of Midwestern Illinois
3800 Avenue of the Cities
Moline, IL 61265
Hours: M-F 8a-5p
Phone: 309-205-3070
Fax: 309-517-6869

Child Care Resource & Referral of Southeast Iowa (Region 5)

Child Care Resource & Referral of Southeast Iowa (Region 5) is operated by Community Action of Eastern Iowa. Child care resource and referral agencies help parents/guardians find child care providers who meet the family's needs and providing the tools to identify quality child care. Resources are provided to child care providers with relation to marketing, training to support the child care business, obtaining professional growth, and improving the quality of care provided. Families served by Child Care Resource & Referral of Southeast Iowa (Region 5) reside in the following Iowa counties: Benton, Cedar, Clinton, Des Moines, Henry, Iowa, Jackson, Jefferson, Jones, Keokuk, Lee, Linn, Louisa, Muscatine, Scott, Tama, Van Buren and Washington.

Child Care Resource & Referral of Southeast Iowa (Region 5)
500 E 59th Street Davenport, IA 52807
Hours: 8a-4:30p (Tues open until 6p)
Phone: 563-324-323

Verification of Receipt of Family Handbook

Please complete this form and return to the center's office. This form indicates that you have received a copy of Skip-a-Long's Family Handbook.

I/we,

Print Name(s)

parent/guardian(s) of _____

Print Name(s) of Child(ren)

hereby verify that I/we have received, read, and will abide by all policies in the Skip-a-Long Family Handbook.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

