



small characters

**Parent Handbook  
School Age Program  
& Preschool**

# Small Characters Policies and Procedures

---

## **1. Purpose and Philosophy:**

Small Characters, Big Dreams— Providing a quality child care to children who dream big and want to show their unique character.

The purpose of Small Characters Preschool is to provide a high-quality early childhood education to young children from 3 to 6 years of age. At Small Characters, we believe in delivering a high quality early childhood education that positively addresses all areas of development, provides ongoing opportunities for play and the learning that occurs during play, allows our children to grow and learn at the rate that is appropriate for their individual needs, fosters positive relationships between staff, children, and families, and that is inclusive of the varying needs and differences of our children. Our ultimate goal is to create an environment that our children enjoy coming to and that allows them to be curious, to openly explore, and to learn the skills that they will need to be successful in both their current and future experiences and environments.

## **2. Ages of Children Accepted:**

Small Characters offers care for Preschool children ages 3-6 years and School Age children ages 5-13 years. Preschool children need to have strong independent toileting skills which means they are able to let the staff know that they need to use the bathroom. We will be providing before and after care to children that attend elementary schools in the Green Mountain area that fit within a specific driving range. The schools that are readily available and are currently served are Devinny Elementary, Dunstan Middle School, Golden View Classical Academy, Hutchinson Elementary, Kendrick Lakes Elementary and Rooney Ranch Elementary, but others are welcome with a necessary number of enrollments from the school. Families will need to provide all necessary paperwork and registration fees in order to start care.

## **3. Services offered for Special Needs Children in Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act:**

Small Characters does not have any specific or specialized services for children with special needs, but we will gladly do what we can to assist in any situation. It is our goal to make the atmosphere of our facility and experience of every child unique, comfortable, accepting, inclusive and fun.

## **4. Hours of Operation:**

The School Age center will be open from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm Monday through Friday. The Preschool Center will be open from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday.

The Before and After School Program will run from mid-August through December and January through May. Winter Camp, Spring Camp and Summer Camp are run based on when the children do not have school. We realize that each year is different with the breaks, so we will work with the schools to determine when our Winter Camp, Spring Camp and Summer Camp will operate. If the children do not have school, then we will be open to take care of them. Our Preschool program will run year-round.

We offer a Full-Day Preschool Program option in which parents/legal guardians can drop-off and pick-up their child anytime between 6:30 am and 6:00 pm, and a Half Day Preschool Program option in which parents/legal guardians can drop-off their child at 6:30 am and pick-up their child at 11:30 am.

We will be closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving and the Day after Thanksgiving and Christmas.

## **5. Severe Weather and Snow Day Policy:**

In the case of severe weather outside, we will provide activities and games for the children inside our facility. A variety of play activities will be made available to allow for appropriate and adequate movement in the designated play environment. In cases of emergency weather situations, there will be procedures in place that will be taught to the children and staff and will be practiced each month. In cases of severe hot weather we will be sure to monitor outdoor temperatures and child activity. We will provide shade and water breaks. We will bring the children inside if the heat becomes excessive.

## Small Characters Policies and Procedures

---

Small Characters will judge snow days separate from the school district. We will base our judgment off of the staff's ability to get into the center dependent of the snow. If we can get there, we will be open for you. On snowy days in which the school district has declared a snow day, we will change the voicemail at the center so that it explains our plan for each individual snow day. If the district has a snow day, please call the center to see if we are open or not (School Age Center 720-924-6327 and Preschool Center 303-233-0553). Refunds will not be given to families who are unable to make it as long as the center is open. If we decide to close for the day, then refunds will be given only by request. The parent or guardian will need to email or call in order to request the refund.

### **6. Registration Procedure:**

Families will need to complete the Enrollment Paperwork with necessary information and pay the initial Registration fee of \$75 for one child (this will include a t-shirt and water bottle) or \$100 per family (this will include 2 t-shirts and 2 water bottles). We will need to be provided with a Physician's Report for children 6 years and younger in the Preschool program and an Immunization Record for each child being enrolled. It is mandatory that we are made aware of any information on allergies and medications before a child is allowed to be in the program. We do this to make sure all the children in our care are safe at all times. All paperwork and registration fee must be received 24 hours before the child starts attending any Small Characters Program.

### Summer Camp Registration:

Parents/legal guardians will be asked to select the weeks and days their child(ren) will attend Summer Camp. There will be a \$20.00 deposit for each week of care. The deposit will come off the monthly tuition. **Deposits are non-refundable!**

There will be a \$30.00 change fee to remove days for a specific week when you turn in your monthly calendar. Added days to your monthly calendar will be charged at the drop in rate and will be subject to availability.

### **7. Fee Schedule:**

Please give us a call and we can break down the prices for you!

The parents/legal guardians will be provided a monthly calendar, so they can choose what days they need care for the month. On the calendar, parents/legal guardians will check which day(s) they need care for and will indicate if their child will be coming for Before School Care, After School Care, Before/After School Care, ½ Day Kindergarten, Full Day Preschool or Half Day Preschool. Please note that at the time of enrollment, parents/legal guardians must choose whether they want their Preschool child to attend Full Day Preschool or Half Preschool on the days that their child comes to the center. Depending on how many children are enrolled in the program, parents/legal guardians may or may not be able to change their choice. For example, if a child is enrolled as attending Full Day and parents/legal guardians wants to switch them to attend Half Day, this will depend on whether or not the program has any Half Day slots available at that time. The bottom of the calendar will have the prices/fees and both parents/legal guardians and staff will have the ability to total the amount owed for the month. Parents/legal guardians must pay at the time they turn in the calendar by credit card, cash, or check. Small Characters does not issue credits for missed days. We can also store your credit card on file.

Small Characters accepts the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Parents/legal guardians will be expected to clock in and out their child each day they attend the program. Our CCAP families will fill out the monthly calendar just like our other families and they will be held responsible for the days they sign up for. If they sign up for a day and their child does not come in, there will be a fee associated with the missed day.

### **8a. Procedures for Identifying where children are at all times:**

We will run our child care center according to the Colorado State Licensing Rules and Regulations. For the Before and After program we'll always have a ratio of 1 staff to 15 children at the center and 1 staff to 10 children on field trips. Preschool will have a 1 staff to 10 children at the center and 1 staff to 8 children on a field trip. The children will always be within sight and sound of a staff member. All the daily rules for the program will be posted and reviewed so that children are fully aware of expectations and the rules in the program. We will use an accountability chart to show where the children are at all times. Staff will do a head count several times throughout the day

# Small Characters Policies and Procedures

---

including before and after every transition from one environment to another (i.e. from the playground to the center, etc.).

For the Before and After school program when we are picking children up from school, by law we will need to call 911 if we cannot find a child within 5 minutes of normal pick up times after school. So, we ask that parents/legal guardians please stay in communication with Small Characters staff when their child is not at school so that we all know the children are safe at all times. Our number one goal is to keep the children safe and we need the parents help to know that the children are safe when not in our programs.

For anyone who is picking up a child, including parents/legal guardians, we will need proof of identification that you are an authorized person to pick up the child and we will match that with our paperwork. All of these steps are taken for the children's safety and protection.

## **8b. Procedure for Ensuring that All Children are Picked Up Before Staff Leave for the Day:**

Before leaving for the day, the closing staff must walk through the entire building and check that there are no children still in the building. Every room must be checked, as well as any spots that children may hide.

When each child is picked-up, staff must ensure that the child is signed-out at the time that the child is picked-up. If the adult picking up the child forgets to sign them out, the staff may sign the child out by writing their initials, the time that the child left, and 'per' whomever picked up the child (i.e. 4:30 pm, DK, per mom). Before leaving, closing staff must look at the sign-in/out sheets and check that all children have been signed out. If there are any children who have not been signed out or accounted for after doing the walk-through and checking sign-in/out sheets, staff must immediately call 911, and then notify the parents and the director.

## **9. Disciplinary Policy:**

Our philosophy for discipline all comes down to communication and understanding. We feel that every child should understand the reasons for discipline and the proper way to act in the situation(s) that they struggle with. At Small Characters, we feel that prevention is one of the most important components of addressing undesired behaviors. We value doing what we can to prevent undesired behaviors (i.e. set up of the environment, recognizing and predicting what might trigger an undesired response, etc.) so that we can promote as many positive experiences as possible. We also understand that addressing a child when they are angry or experiencing heightened emotions is not effective, so we strive to teach social-emotional skills at times when the children are calm and attentive.

When addressing a child's challenging behavior, we will follow this sequence

1. The staff will attempt to redirect the behavior. (i.e. asking for a child to use safe hands rather than hitting).
2. If the action continues, the child will be taken away from the activity they are participating in and will be asked to "take a break" for a specific amount of time that is age appropriate for that child. Before allowing the child to return to their activity, staff will discuss with the child the reasons he/she was removed from the activity and make suggestions on how to act appropriately. The child will be allowed to return to the group when ready.

The disciplinary action taken for a behavioral incident will be determined by the action and by the child's actions throughout the day before the incident. Communication is the most important thing when it comes to discipline because that is how understanding happens. There will be communication between the child, staff members, and the appropriate parents/guardians of the children involved.

If a child is demonstrating challenging behaviors routinely, we will have the option to create a Behavior Plan for the child. Behavior plans will be considered when a child continually shows difficulty with a specific behavior, action, or activity. If a Behavior Plan is determined to be necessary, staff will meet with the child's parents/legal guardians to develop a plan that looks closely at why a behavior is happening and we will generate positive strategies that we all think may improve the behavior. Behavior Plans will be typed out and signed by the parents/legal guardians, the staff member, and the child (if able to). Understanding is essential to growth for the child, staff and parents/legal guardians.

# Small Characters Policies and Procedures

---

Our program does have a Strike Policy where each child has a specific number of chances to show improvement in their behavior. If a child demonstrates a behavior that significantly affects their safety or the safety of others, strikes may be implemented.

- Strike One – The child will be suspended from the center for ½ of the day – either on the day of the incident or on the next day that they attend the program following the incident depending on the time of the incident.
- Strike Two – The child will be suspended from the program for a full day – either on the day of the incident or the next day that they attend the program following the incident depending on the time of the incident.
- Strike Three – Expulsion. The child will no longer be allowed to attend our programs.

If at any time a child is demonstrating a challenging behavior that is significantly jeopardizing their safety or the safety of others and we are unable to calm them down or redirect their behavior(s), we will call parents/legal guardians to come pick up their child at that time.

Please note, if a positive behavior support plan has been put in place, the child will be given 30 days (starting with the day the plan was created) for the plan, and any subsequent revisions, to be attempted. After that time, staff and parents/legal guardians will meet again to discuss effectiveness and next steps. This meeting can occur sooner than 30 days after the start of the plan if needed. Staff reserves the right to call parents/legal guardians and send the student home at any point, and for an unlimited amount of times, if they are concerned about the safety of the child, the other students, or the staff.

Suspending or expelling a child is something that we do not take lightly, as research shows that if a child is suspended/expelled in preschool, they are more likely to be suspended/expelled as they grow older. We will do everything that we can to meet the needs of each child and we actively work to teach our children appropriate social-emotional skills and to guide them through various challenging behaviors. With that said, it is our responsibility to keep all of the children in our care safe. If we have attempted a behavior plan and given 3 strikes, the child will no longer be allowed to attend our programs.

## **10. Procedure on Guidance, Positive Instruction and Supporting Positive Behavior:**

At Small Characters, we firmly believe in the power of positive relationships. This includes relationships between the children, relationships between the children and staff and relationships between staff and families. To cultivate positive relationships between the children, we will encourage open discussions of similarities and differences and we will actively assist the children in positively working through conflicts or uncertainties with one another. We will also model and teach social-emotional skills when the children are calm and ready to learn. To cultivate positive relationships between the staff and children, we will create a welcoming environment for each child by individually acknowledging each child as they enter/exit the program and consciously initiating and maintaining positive interactions with the children. To cultivate positive relationships between staff and families, we will provide frequent and open communication to each family about their child, welcome family volunteers and we encourage families to come to us with anything that they would like to discuss as well.

We will create and maintain a socially and emotionally respectful environment by addressing social and emotional needs and conflicts as they arise, providing models of positive social-emotional skills and strategies (when the children are calm and ready to learn), talking about feelings, and developing/directly teaching positive program wide strategies, with the children, that they can use in various social-emotional scenarios. At Small Characters, we believe in modeling and directly teaching strategies that support positive behavior, pro-social peer interaction, and overall social and emotional competence to our children. We also believe in incorporating our children and their needs into the decisions that we make when choosing strategies to model/teach. We will address behaviors, peer interactions, and social and emotional competence/development as individual situations arise, and we will also specifically talk about social and emotional components directly during both large and small group interaction.

It is our goal at Small Characters to help our children learn how to regulate their emotions, (both the good and the bad) and to help our children learn appropriate social/emotional strategies that they can use themselves and with their peers during times of over-excitement or conflict.

# Small Characters Policies and Procedures

---

A mental health consultant or other specialist may be contacted as needed, however it should be notified that they will not be contacted without staff first meeting with parents/legal guardians and gaining written permission.

## **11. Policy on Illness, Accidents, and Injuries:**

### Illness:

With illnesses constantly being spread in child care and school settings, we ask for your help in keeping control of the spread of illness. If your child is sick or not feeling well, please let us know. If we know that a child is not feeling well, then we can take precautions to keep the illness contained and stop it from spreading. We encourage you to keep your child at home when they are sick and let us know if they are staying home. If your child is not feeling well while at the center, we can make accommodations for them. We will have a specific area that is used strictly for sick children, so that the illness stays in one area. Sick children will be supplied a mat with a sheet and blanket in the area. We will strive to make sure hands are washed and the areas are disinfected when needed. We all need to do our best to keep sickness from spreading throughout the child care center. If your child becomes ill during the day, we will contact you to pick up your child. Children are not allowed to attend the center for at least 24 hours if the following occurs:

- The child just began taking an antibiotic for a contagious illness within 24 hours
- The child has had an elevated temperature of 100° or above within the last 24 hours
- The child has had more than one episode of vomiting within the last 24 hours
- The child has acute diarrhea

We will also take the following symptoms in to consideration when determining whether or not to exclude a child from program activities or send a child home from the center:

- The child is not feeling well enough to participate in usual activities
- The child requires more care than the staff at the center are able to provide
- The child is ill with a potentially contagious illness, and exclusion is recommended by the State or Local Public Health Agency, Health Care Provider or guidelines for Child Care Providers, School Nurses and other Personal in regard to infectious diseases in a child care/school setting
- The child has signs or symptoms of a possible severe illness (i.e. trouble breathing)
- In cases in which unvaccinated children are exposed to a vaccine preventable disease (such as measles, mumps, rubella and pertussis), the State or Local Public Health Agency will be consulted in order to determine if exclusion of unvaccinated children is necessary

If we determine that a child should be excluded from program activities or sent home from the center based on these symptoms, we will call parents/legal guardians to come get the child. The child will be allowed to return once symptoms have subsided or once a Health Care Provider states that the child is free of a communicable illness. The child also needs to be able to participate in routine activities before returning to the center/regular program activities.

### Accidents:

For accidents/incidents that occur at the center, the staff that witnesses the accident will either verbally inform the parents/legal guardians of the accident/incident or document the accident/incident on the Accident/Incident form and the parents/legal guardians will be asked to read and sign the accident/incident report. It is important for us to have documentation of accident/incident and it is essential for us to communicate with the parents/legal guardians and the other families involved whenever an accident happens. Accidents happen, but we will be there at all times to make sure the children are taken care of and safe.

### Bathroom Accidents:

Preschool children need to have strong independent toileting skills before they can attend our program, which means they are able to let the staff know that they need to use the bathroom. Small Characters reserves the right to ask a family to leave the program if their child demonstrates that they are not fully potty trained and/or if the staff are unable to meet the toileting needs of the child while maintaining staff-child ratio as well as the safety and needs of the other children in the program. We understand that children will have bathroom accidents and we ask that the children in the Preschool program have a change of clothes that can be left at the center that includes a shirt, a pair of pants, socks, underwear and shoes. We will do our best to have extra clothes at the center, but there are times we

## Small Characters Policies and Procedures

---

run out of clothes. For the School Age children, if your child is prone to accidents please provide a change of clothes for your child. We will do our best to have extra clothes at the School Age Center too. If we do not have extra clothes at the center, we will call parents/legal guardians for a change of clothes, it will be expected that someone bring a in a change of clothes for your child.

### Injuries:

Typically, injuries will be taken care of by the staff at hand. Each staff member will be trained in CPR, First Aid, and Standard Precautions. These are all necessary trainings so that injuries and accidents are dealt with in the proper way. The Small Characters staff will take the initial actions in the event of any injury and then the proper people will be notified. The parents/legal guardians will be notified after any incident or injury (this may occur at the time or at pick-up, depending on the severity of the injury), but 911 will only be called for emergency situations such as breathing issues or broken bones. In most cases, the parents/legal guardians will be called first to find out the desired next steps, but in issues that require immediate action EMT will be called.

### **12. Procedure for handling Lost Children and Other Emergencies:**

#### Lost Children:

Lost children will be immediately reported to the Police. In any situation where a child cannot be found within 5 minutes of being searched, 911 will be called and then we will call the parents/legal guardians. At that point, we will do anything and everything to help the police with anything they need.

#### Other Emergency Procedures:

##### **Lock-Down:**

1. Lock and close all doors and windows and close all the blinds
2. Have staff member call and notify the police on the situation
3. Bring all children to a location away from windows
4. Email all parents/legal guardians to let them know the situation and to explain the steps that are going to be taken and about pick up and further communication
5. Provide activities for the children while the lock down takes place and keep them safe

##### **Fire:**

1. Organize the children and count to make sure all children are accounted for and with the group
2. Follow the proper pathway to get out of the building safely

##### **Tornado:**

1. Move all the children and staff into a room that is far away from windows and in the middle of the building
2. Have the children sit single file along the wall on their knees with their heads covered

##### **Gas Leak/Lock-Out or Shelter in Place:**

In the situation of a gas leak or lock out, the School Age children will be transported to the Green Mountain Recreation Center (13198 W. Green Mountain Dr. Lakewood, CO. 80227 303-987-7830). The program will be held at the recreation center until the building is tested and fixed correctly and safely. In the situation of a gas leak or lock out, the Preschool children will be transported to Charles E. Whitlock Recreation Center (1555 Dover St. Lakewood, CO. 80215 303-987-4800). The program will be held at the Recreation Center until the building is tested and fixed correctly and safely. The Fire Department and Police will be contacted as soon as possible in order to make sure the building is safe for a return. When the building is deemed safe and fixed, the children will be transported back to the building. All parents/legal guardians will be contacted by telephone or by email to clarify where the children were moved and at what time they will be back in the building.

##### **Active Shooter:**

In a situation of an active shooter on premises or an individual actively engaging in killing or attempting to kill, we would first attempt to call 911 and do everything we can to get the staff and children away from the individual. We will make every possible attempt to move everyone into a room that is safe from the shooter. We will be implementing the ALICE plan with our children as follows:

## Small Characters Policies and Procedures

---

### ALICE

“ALICE” is an acronym for 5 steps you can utilize in order to increase your chances of surviving a surprise attack by an Active Shooter. It is important to remember that the “ALICE” response does not follow a set of actions that you “shall, must, will” do when confronted with an Active Shooter. Your survival and the survival of the children are paramount in this situation. Deal with known information and don’t worry about unknowns. You may use only 1 or 2 parts of the response plan or you may have to utilize all 5. In this type of incident, your perception is the reality and you will be deciding what the appropriate action is for you to take.

- 1) **A**lert– Can be anything.
  - Gunfire
  - Witness
  - PA Announcement
  - Phone Alert
- 2) **L**ockdown– This is a semi-secure starting point from which to make survival decisions. IF you decide to not evacuate, barricade to secure the room.
  - Lock the door using all securing mechanisms
  - Cover any windows in the door if possible
  - Tie down the door, if possible, using belts, purse straps, shoe laces, zip ties etc.
  - Barricade the door with anything available (desks, chairs, rolling cabinets, etc.)
  - Look for alternate escape routes (windows, other doors)
  - Call 911
  - Move out of the doorway in case gunfire comes through it
  - Move children to the safest location in the room
  - Silence or place cell phones on vibrate
  - Once secured, do not open the door for anyone. Police will enter the room when the situation is over
  - Gather weapons (coffee cups, chairs, books, pens, etc.) and mentally prepare to defend yourself or others
  - Put yourself in position to surprise the active shooter should they enter the room.
- 3) **I**nform– Using any means necessary to pass on real time information.
  - Given in plain language
  - Can be derived from 911 calls, video surveillance, etc.
  - Who, what, where, when and how information
  - Can be used by police in the area or who may come into it to make common sense decisions
  - Can be given by “Flash Alerts”, PA Announcements or Police Radio speakers
  - Information is a two-way street, if you have information share it with the police dispatch or the office
- 4) **C**ounter– This is the use of simple, proactive techniques should you be confronted by the Active Shooter.
  - Anything can be a distraction device
  - Throw things at the shooters head to disrupt their aim
  - Give children the command to act (disruption tactics) or move
  - Create as much noise as possible
  - Attack in a group (swarm) if possible
  - Grab the shooters limbs and head and take them to the ground and hold them there
  - Fight dirty- bite, kick, scratch, gouge eyes, etc.
  - Run around the room and create chaos
  - If you have control of the shooter call 911 and tell the police where you are and listen to their commands when officers arrive on scene
  - Commit to your actions, this is the last resort
- 5) **E**vacuate– Remove yourself and the children from the danger zone as quickly as possible.
  - Decide if you can safely evacuate
  - Assist children in moving to secure rally points away from the building
  - Run in a zigzag pattern as fast as you can if alone
  - Do not stop running until you are far away from the area

## Small Characters Policies and Procedures

---

- Bring something to throw with you in case you would encounter the Active Shooter
- Consider the distance to the ground if you go out a window, 3 floors up is considered the survivable drop zone
- Break out windows and attempt to quickly clear glass from the frame
- Consider using belts, clothing or other items as an improvised rope to shorten the distance you would fall
- Hang by your hands from the window ledge to shorten your drop
- Attempt to drop into shrubs, mulch or grass to lessen the chance of injury
- Do not attempt to drive from the area
- Once at the rally point move children to most secure position possible and account for all the children in your care

Obviously, the safety of the children and staff is paramount. So, the situation and reaction will be based on the reality and we will use this baseline to ensure safety.

### Emergency Accommodation for Children with Disabilities:

For emergency situations, we will create an emergency plan as needed for children with disabilities who may need extra or individual assistance during an emergency situation. For example, a plan may be created to ensure that there is a dedicated staff member to help give one-on-one attention to a child with a disability. In the case of a physical disability, a staff member may be allocated to be in charge of retrieving the necessary equipment to help the child move properly. In a situation with a child with an emotional or mental disability, a staff member may be designated to do what is necessary to calm the child down and get them away from the emergency situation. Each plan will be dependent on the individual needs of the child. We will go over our emergency plans on a consistent basis so that all of the children will have the knowledge of what to do. Consistent training helps all children and staff in emergency situations.

### Reunification of Families:

In the event that staff and children evacuate the building, parents/legal guardians will need to pick their children up from Green Mountain Recreation Center (13198 W. Green Mountain Dr. Lakewood, Co. 80227 303-987-7830) for the School Age Children and Charles E. Whitlock Recreation Center (1555 Dover St. Lakewood, Co 80215 303-987-4800) for the Preschool Program. In the event of an evacuation, one staff member will be given the sole responsibility of contacting families and informing them that an evacuation took place. This staff member will give parents/legal guardians the location of the place that the children were evacuated to and pick-up instructions. Anyone picking up a child from an evacuation location MUST have their IDs, as IDs will be checked and compared to paperwork to ensure that individuals picking up the children are authorized to do so. If parents/legal guardians are familiar to the staff releasing the children, their IDs may not be checked, but it is also possible that a staff member or person unfamiliar with the children/families will be helping in the reunification of families, and anyone who is not familiar with the person picking up a child will check their ID.

### **13. Transporting:**

At Small Characters, we have two 29-passenger bus and three 15-passenger vans in which we transport the children from one location to another. Any time that we transport children, it will be in a van or bus belonging to Small Characters or by a chartered vehicle. At Small Characters preschool, we will primarily transport children only if we are going on an excursion/field trip or if we have an emergency in which transportation is deemed necessary. If there are other reasons for transportation, we will notify parents/legal guardians in advance. We strive to make sure the children are dropped off in time before school and picked up shortly after they are let out of school in the afternoon. We know that being on time is essential and that it is our responsibility to get them to school on time. We also understand that a short wait time, if any, is essential and necessary for after school as well. The vans or bus will be periodically checked and maintained so that they are operating as best and safely as they can. By law, each driver must be over 21 years of age and have proof of a great driving record.

## Small Characters Policies and Procedures

---

### **14. Field Trips, Television/Video Viewing and Special Activities:**

#### Field Trips:

All field trips will need to be approved by the parents/legal guardians of each child by initialing the Field Trip permission on the Parental Agreement. If we do not have a signed document signed by the parents/legal guardians, your child will not be able to participate on the field trips. There will be some field trips that will need an extra Liability Waiver signed by the parents/legal guardians and the parents/legal guardians will be notified of these extra forms. Each field trip will be planned ahead of time, and a full description will be available to the families about what the field trips entails. There will be a fee of \$10.00 per child per field trip that the child attends in addition to the cost of regular care for the day. For the School Age Program field trips will have a limit of the number of children that can go on the field trip. It will be based on when calendars are turned in until the field trip is full. Parents/legal guardians will have the option to choose to stay back from any of the field trips. There will be a group that stays back at the center for any child that is not signed up for the field trip. For the Preschool program parents/legal guardians will have the ability to opt their child out of any field trips or excursions, though they will need to find alternate care for their child during the time of the field trip. For some field trips, we may ask that at least one parent/legal guardians or caregiver comes with each child for safety purposes. For these instances, we will let families know prior to the field trip in which we will require a parent/legal guardians or caregiver to come with each child on a field trip. The parents/legal guardians and/or the child are responsible for bringing all necessary equipment, clothing, and food for each field trip and arriving to the center prior to the field trip time. We will not make a phone call for families that have not arrived by the time we leave for the field trip. Small Characters will not be held accountable for children being unprepared for the day.

When on a field trip, for the School Age Program, the staff to child ratio moves from 1-15 to 1-10 and for the Preschool program the staff to child ratio moves from 1-10 to 1-8. Attendance will be taken upon arrival and departure as well as at every transition in which the group moves from one location to another. Children will be split up into small groups and each staff member will have a group list and be responsible for attendance and supervision of their group.

#### Television:

There will be no television watching while the School Age children are in our programs. Although there is no television watching, we will have some days where we watch a movie during program. We will communicate these days with the parents/legal guardians to make sure we have approval for the movie and to watch the movie on that day. With the Preschool children occasionally, they may view short (5-10 minute) videos that have been determined to be age-appropriate and educationally beneficial, and parent permission will not be obtained for children to watch these videos. While at the Preschool Center, children will not watch more than 30 minutes of recorded media or videos per week.

#### Outside Time:

The School Age children will be provided time to play outside each day, weather permitting. The main atmosphere for outdoor activities will be surrounding parks and playgrounds. The areas will always be checked before the children are allowed to play and use the equipment or space. Small Characters will have planned games/activities and will also let the children create games and play with each other during specific free times. The play space in the building will be available as well. When the weather is nice outside the children will be able to play in the back-parking lot. Staff will put up caution signs on each side of the parking lot and teach the children to come to the table when a car comes into the area. The preschool children will be provided time to play outside each day, weather permitting and they will have a playground out back of the center to play on.

### **15. Children's Safety in a Vehicle:**

Any time a child is being transported in a Small Characters vehicle, each child will be required to wear a seat belt at all times in every vehicle. When children are being transported in a van, all children 7 years and younger will need to sit in a booster seat that will be provided by Small Characters. When children are being transported in the bus, booster seats are not used, but seat belts are required. Staff will assist the children with buckling their seat belts as needed and staff will check to ensure that each child's seat belt is properly fastened and adjusted. All children must stay seated with their seat belt fastened while the vehicle is moving and until the vehicle is completely parked.

## Small Characters Policies and Procedures

---

Parents/legal guardians need to initial on the Parental Agreement to give permission for Small Characters to transport their child. Staff will supervise children in the vehicle by using the rearview mirror, verbal check-ins, etc. If an additional staff (other than the driver) is riding in the bus/van, that staff member will be responsible for the supervision of the children riding in the vehicle. Staff will be trained on what to do in an emergency situation related to transportation (i.e. accidents, a vehicle breakdown, etc.) and in an emergency situation; staff will place the safety of the children as their first priority and will make decisions accordingly.

### **16. Procedure for Releasing Children from the Center:**

Colorado State Licensing provides the regulations for releasing children which states that we need to have each child signed out with a signature of the parents/legal guardians or authorized person picking up the child. When picking up a child, the parents/legal guardians or authorized person picking up the child must sign out the child with a signature and by writing the time that they picked up the child. In order to release a child to someone that is not their parents/legal guardians, we will need to have the authorized person's name and information on the child's enrollment paperwork. We have a section in the Enrollment Paperwork that is referred to as Authorized Person for Pick-up and Emergency Contacts that are for authorized persons to pick up a child. That is where you can list up to three contacts for your child. By listing someone as an Authorized Person for Pick-up or Emergency Contact, you will be authorizing that person to pick-up your child, including on an on-going basis, an occasional basis or on an emergency basis. Anyone listed as an Authorized Person Pick-up or Emergency Contact will also be authorized to pick up your child.

We understand that there are special circumstances when someone not listed on the paperwork needs to pick up your child, in that situation, we need an email or phone call from the parents/legal guardians that states the date, child's name, name of person who is picking up the child and also a statement that they are picking up your child or parents/legal guardians can fill out the Authorized Pick Up Form and return it to a staff member. Individuals who are authorized to pick up a child will need to provide a Photo ID. Staff will request to see a Photo ID for anyone who is unfamiliar to them. A person will be considered to be authorized to pick up your child if they are on your child's Enrollment Paperwork, you have filled out an Authorized Pick Up Form or we have an email or call with permission to pick up the child.

### **17. Late Pick Up:**

There will be a Late Charge for late pick-ups that are after 6:30 pm for the School Age Program and 6:00 pm for the Preschool Program without a phone call. We understand that things come up and surprises happen, so if we are informed that you are running a few minutes late, then we will not charge a late fee. If there is no phone call or attempt to notify the center, then there will be a \$10.00 late fee per child for every 15 minutes you are late. This fee must be paid at the time of pick up. If your child is consistently picked up after 6:30 pm/6:00 pm, we do reserve the right to begin charging the late fee, even if a phone call is made to notify us that the person picking up the child is running late.

For situations where there is no one to pick up the child from the center, even after all the authorized contacts/emergency contacts have been called and there is no response, we will have to call the police to report child neglect. We will call the police after 7:00 pm if we do not have a response from the parents/legal guardians or the authorized contacts/emergency contacts for the child.

### **18. Late Arrivals/Field Trip Late Arrival:**

The parents/legal guardians will be asked to communicate any late arrivals or absences for their child. If a child is sick and/or not attending the center that day, parents/legal guardians must call and inform the center that the child will not be attending.

On occasion, we will take field trips that are away from the center. Prior to a field trip, we will inform the parents/legal guardians of the field trip which will include the times of the field trip. If a child arrives after we have left, parents/legal guardians will have the option to bring the child to the location of the field trip or make other arrangements for the day. If there is a group back at the center the child may be able to stay if there is room.

---

## Small Characters Policies and Procedures

---

### **19. Administration Medicine and Sunscreen Policy:**

If you have health or medical concerns for your child, please let us know at the time of enrollment. For medications and medical concerns, we will have a Nurse Practitioner that we are able to consult with. The Nurse Practitioner is also able to train and delegate our staff to give medication such as inhalers, Epi-Pens and other medications as needed. There will be at least one staff member available at all hours of operation that has been trained and delegated to give medication.

In order for a medication to be given in our program, the parents/legal guardians will need to provide the medication in the original container **AND** the necessary paperwork that is filled out by the child's physician and signed properly. The forms will NOT be accepted if an assistant or other medical employee signs them. The child's physician must sign the forms himself or herself. If a child has health/medical needs that require medication(s), the child will not be allowed to attend the program until the center has the proper paperwork and the medication in the original container. If a child has a health care plan, the center must have a copy of the health care plan, and this health care plan must be authorized by the child's health care provider and parents/legal guardians. The health care plan must define the interventions needed to care for a child that has an identified health or developmental condition or concern. If a health care plan is developed for a child after they have already begun attending our program, we will meet with the child's parents/legal guardians and begin implementing the health care plan as soon as all necessary paperwork and medication is provided by the parents/legal guardians and signed by the physician.

Emergency medication will be stored in an area inaccessible to children at all times. Emergency medications will be stored in an area that is easily accessed by staff, but inaccessible to children. If a medication is expired or is left over, those medications will be given back to the parents/legal guardians. If the parents/legal guardians are not able to be reached, the left-over or expired medication will be properly disposed of.

#### Sunscreen Policy:

Small Characters will provide Rocky Mountain Sunscreen SPF 50 for the center. We ask that if parents/legal guardians would like to send their own sunscreen that it not be spray sunscreen and we ask the parents/legal guardians label the sunscreen with the child first and last name. There is a line on the Parental Agreement to give permission to apply Sunscreen that will need to be initialed to give Small Characters authorization to either apply or not apply sunscreen to your child. Please note that children over 4 years of age may apply sunscreen to themselves if they are under the direct supervision of a staff member. For children who are 4 years of age and younger, a staff member will apply sunscreen to the child. For the School Age children, we do our very best to supervise the children putting on sunscreen and help the children who need it. We apply sunscreen several times throughout the day and every hour when we are outside/at the pool. Sunscreen will be applied as directed by the manufacturer of the sunscreen being applied to the child.

### **20. Personal Belongings/Money:**

We will provide a locker for each child in the School Age program and cubbies for the Preschool children to put their belongings in while they are in our program. Although we have a specified area for personal belongings and will do everything in our power to keep watch, it is not our responsibility to take care of personal belongings that belong to the children. All belongings brought into the center will need to be taken care of by the child. We may encourage the children to keep personal items in their locker/cubby so that they do not get lost, but it is ultimately their responsibility to take care of their personal belongings. If there are any lost or stolen items, we will do everything possible to track these items down, but Small Characters will not be held liable for these items. It is up to the parents/legal guardians and child on what they are allowed to bring into the center. We do not encourage the children to bring money to the center, but if they do, they are responsible for their own money.

Our policy on playing with or bringing out personal belongings is based on the needs of each child, the behaviors of each child and the daily schedule. We will typically ask that the children keep their personal belongings in their locker/backpack/cubby unless they are given permission to bring a personal item out during a specific time of day. For example, when doing structure tasks, personal belongings may be distracting to some children and may not be allowed. However, for children who benefit from having an item during structured task, it may be allowed. Some children may gain comfort from a personal item during times of separation (i.e. at drop-off) and personal belongings

## Small Characters Policies and Procedures

---

may be allowed at this time for certain amount of time as decided by the staff and parents/legal guardians. Personal belongings may be allowed during unstructured times of the day, depending on if it is appropriate and if the child is able to use it appropriately. If children bring out personal items and share them with one child, they will need to share with all children. In the School Age program children may listen to music during homework time as long as it is in a playlist. Cell phones need to be in the child's locker all other times. If a child needs to text their parent/ legal guardian at a certain time of the day, please discuss this with a staff member. For the School Age children, electronic times will be from 6:30 to 7:30 am and 5:30 to 6:30 pm, but this time is subject to change by a staff member. Time can be added or taken away based on the children's behavior.

### **21. Meals, Snacks, and Drinking Procedures:**

For children attending the Before and After School Program, Small Characters will provide the children with an afternoon snack shortly after they are picked up from school. We strive to provide healthy and nutritional snacks that will energize the kids for the afternoon until dinner. On all No School Days and during Winter Camp, Spring Camp or Summer Camp, we do not provide any snacks or lunch. The parents/legal guardians are in charge of providing two snacks and a non-perishable lunch for their child for each full day of care. We will occasionally have cooking projects throughout the day, but it will in no way be enough for a snack and will not be on a consistent basis. Drinking water will be available for the children to drink at all times throughout the day. We ask that the children bring a water bottle each day or bring one that can stay at the center. If parents/legal guardians forget to provide a lunch and/or a snack for their child, we will have extra food on hand at the center for an additional cost.

At the Preschool program, for children attending the Full Day program Small Characters will provide Breakfast, Lunch and 2 snacks. For children attending the Half Day program we will provide Breakfast and a morning snack. For the Half Day children there will be an option to attend our Lunch Buddies program from 11:00 am – 12:00 pm at an additional fee. If your child is unable to eat the food served on a particular day, parents/legal guardians must provide a substitute meal. We will post a monthly menu so parents/legal guardians will know what is being served. Drinking water will be available for the children to drink at all times throughout the day. We ask that the children bring a water bottle each day or bring one that can stay at the center.

We are an **Allergy Aware** center, which means the food we serve will be tailored to certain allergies, but we do not ban food because of allergies.

### **22. Visitors:**

Visitors are always welcome. If the visitor is someone other than parents/legal guardians, they will have to make an appointment to visit the center. Parents/legal guardians and family will be allowed to visit by just signing in on the Visitor Log and this will also apply to any state employees, licensing or others that come for inspection. For all other visitors, we will need to be notified ahead of time of their visit (including the reason for their visit and the time/date they want to visit) if they want to be with the children.

Any visitor will be required to sign in on the Visitor Log for their visit. They will be required to sign the Visitor Log when they arrive and then again when they leave. Any visitor who is not familiar to the staff will be required to show their ID at their time of arrival.

At Small Characters Preschool, we feel that parents/legal guardians/caregivers volunteers are critical to building the connection between the center and the child's home that is so important to early childhood development. We love for family members/caregivers to volunteer in our program, and we will have a monthly sign-up sheet available beginning at the start of each month. We also understand that it can be very difficult for working families to volunteer in the program, so we welcome other things that will incorporate families/caregivers into our program (i.e. videos of parents/legal guardians describing/showing what they do for work, pictures of you and your child, items from home that represent parents/caregivers for the children to show, etc.).

### **23. Parent-Teacher Conferences:**

Parent teacher conferences for the Preschool program will happen three times per year – once in the Spring, once in the Summer, and once in the Fall. At these conferences, your child's behavior, progress, and development will be

## Small Characters Policies and Procedures

---

discussed. We will do our best to post sign-up sheets for conferences (with available dates and times listed) well in advance; to give you time to figure out what will work best for your schedule. Although we only have formal parent-teacher conferences three times a year, we highly value communication and it is our goal to remain in constant communication with you throughout the year about how your child is doing, how things are going at home, etc. If any significant celebrations or concerns come up before/after parent-teacher conferences, we will work out a time that works for the staff and family to meet together, and we will discuss them as they arise.

### **24. To File a Complaint:**

If you have a complaint, please talk directly to Andrew Harrison, the Owner/Director of Small Characters or Jennifer Miller Director of Small Characters Preschool. We truly believe that our child care center is for you and your child. We want to know what you want and what you need in a child care and we want to know if we are not meeting those needs/wants so that we can address any problems. All of your input and the input from your child is the most important aspect of our business and we appreciate your thoughts, good or bad. Without you all, Small Characters could not be open.

If you feel that you need to file a complaint here is the contact information to do so-  
The Colorado Department of Human Services  
Division of Child Care  
1575 Sherman Street  
Denver, Co. 80203  
303-866-5958 or 1-800-799-5876

### **24. Reporting Child Abuse:**

Child Abuse is a very serious situation that will not be taken lightly. If any staff member sees, hears, or notices any action or behavior that points towards abuse or negligence, the proper authorities will be contacted. This will include physical, mental, or verbal abuse toward the children. It is state law for a child care provider to report any sign of abuse or negligence. If you as a parents/legal guardians/caregiver suspect child abuse or neglect, you may call the Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-844-CO-4-KIDS or 1-844-264-5437.

### **25. Notification of Discontinuing Services:**

We know how important it is to find safe and reliable child care. Should we decide to close our doors here at Small Characters School Age and or Preschool Program, we guarantee a minimum 3-month advance notice to current families. Fingers crossed, we will be doing this forever, so hopefully this will not be an issue!

### **26. Policy for Withdrawing from Program:**

We ask kindly that you give us at least one week of written notice if you plan to withdraw from our program. We also ask that you notify us of your plans to withdraw even if it is less than one week in advance, as we understand that things come up and advance notice may not be possible. The written notice may be in the form of a written/typed note that is hand-delivered or mailed to us, or in the form of an email. Please include your name, your child's name, the date that you write the withdrawal notice, and the date that you wish to withdraw your child from the program. If you would like, you may also include the reason that you are withdrawing from the program.

Updated Spring 2020