



# STEM Child Care

2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK



*“Developing a lifelong passion  
for learning and education”*

## ***Family Handbook***



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# 1

## Introduction

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### 1.1 Welcome

Thank you for choosing STEM Child Care (“STEM”)! Our goal is to provide enriching programs for children from six weeks to thirteen years of age in a loving, stimulating, clean, and secure learning environment. As parents and educators, we recognize that each child’s success relies upon unified support from both teachers and family. For that reason, our mission is to create a family-oriented environment that allows children, parents, and teachers to work together to encourage growth and development. Our facility focuses on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) learning to facilitate academic success coupled with cognitive and behavioral development. Our focus on establishing solid academic foundations through a STEM-oriented curriculum helps your child develop valuable life and career skills, including effective communication, collaboration, and problem solving.

This Family Handbook is designed to provide you with an overview of our Policies and Procedures. Please read through carefully, and then sign the “Enrollment Agreement” within the Registration Packet in order to indicate that you have read these policies and agree to adhere to them.

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### 1.2 Philosophies and Goals

STEM Child Care is an organization focused on shaping minds through engaging lesson plans, thoughtful activities, and playful learning experiences. Not merely a daycare center, our institution promotes an interactive scholastic environment, intended to help your children thrive as they discover themselves as well as the joys of learning.

Our experiential learning approach will enable your child to develop into a creative thinker and confident learner with the necessary skills to succeed both academically and socially. Our philosophy and curriculum are inspired by STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. We believe that all young people should be prepared to think deeply and creatively so that they have the chance to become the innovators, educators, researchers, and leaders who can solve the most pressing challenges facing our nation and our world, both today and tomorrow.

With STEM at the heart of our teaching, your child benefits from materials and experiences that encourage them to become critical thinkers and active problem solvers. Subject matter is learned

through investigation, structured play, and deliberate instruction. In this way, your child gains knowledge and understanding through action, communication, and collaboration while learning to become an effective team player.

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### **1.3 Non-Discriminatory Policy**

In providing services to children and their families, STEM Child Care does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, disability, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, national origin, or sexual orientation.

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### **1.4 Staff Qualifications**

STEM Child Care teachers and teacher assistants are carefully screened and selected based on their extensive experience and education in the fields of Early Childhood Development and STEM Education. We are committed to selecting teachers and staff members who demonstrate high levels of maturity, enthusiasm, compassion, and creativity. All teachers are background screened prior to working at our Center, and we select only the best available staff that are capable of upholding the highest standards.

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### **1.5 Hours and Holidays**

STEM Child Care is open from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM, Monday through Friday. Our School Calendar with observed holidays, and subsequently our closure dates, are available on the final pages of this Handbook.

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### **1.6 Visitors at the Center**

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with Management and are allowed in the child care facility only at the discretion of Management. An employee of STEM Child Care will also accompany visitors within the facility at all times. All visitors of the Center, including parents visiting for the day, must sign the Visitor Log with their time-in and time-out, address, reason for visit, and must also present identification at the time of visit. The visitor log can be found at the front desk.

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### **1.7 Handbook Policy Changes**

Our Family Handbook is subject to change without notice. A copy of the most recent version is always available for parents to review at school. Please keep in mind that tuition is also subject to change without notice; therefore, the quoted rates at the time of registration may not be the same rates at the time of enrollment.

# 2

## Enrollment

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### 2.1 Enrolling at STEM

Enrollment at STEM Child Care is open to children from six weeks through 13 years of age. Initial enrollment is contingent upon space availability and receipt of the completed Enrollment Packet, which includes the signed Enrollment Packet, non-refundable Registration Fee, and non-refundable 1-month tuition deposit.

Each child's file must be complete before their first day at the Center, and it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that every form is filled out in its entirety. Immunization records must be received prior to the child's initial start date, and the health assessment must also be received within the first 10 days of the child's start date in order to continue care.

Continued enrollment at STEM is contingent upon the parent and child's adherence to the policies and procedures outlined in this Handbook, along with timely payment of all fees and tuition. Parents are required to notify STEM immediately if any of the information collected at the time of enrollment has changed. Failure to do so may result in the child(ren) being disenrolled from STEM as well as forfeiture of any deposit.

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### 2.2 Enrollment Process

Parents interested in enrolling their child(ren) should contact Management to arrange a tour of our facilities. There is a \$200 non-refundable Registration Fee to secure a child's position in our programs. If a family is enrolling more than one child, the Registration Fee per family is \$350. Prospective families must also submit a non-refundable deposit (one month's tuition) along with their non-refundable registration fee. This upfront, non-refundable deposit will cover a family's last month of tuition at STEM due to graduation or withdrawal. We require at least 30 business days' notice of withdrawal to ensure enough time to apply your non-refundable deposit to your final month of tuition. Under no circumstances will the non-refundable deposit be refunded due to lack of adequate notice of withdrawal. For example, if a family pays their tuition bill on the 1st of January for the month of January, then requests to withdraw from our program at the end of January, they will have two options: 1) forfeit their tuition deposit or 2) use their tuition deposit for the month of February.

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### 2.3 Classroom Placement

Each child is initially placed in a classroom according to age appropriateness. As the year progresses, however, he or she may be moved to another classroom based on individual needs, the teacher's evaluation, administrative observations, the parent's permission, and age progression. If a child's development is outside the age limits of his / her current classroom, a doctor's note is required to move the child to a different classroom. This doctor's note must clarify the reason why the child will need to be with children other than his / her own age group.

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### 2.4 Tuition Fees

Tuition adjustments are made on an annual basis and are subject to change at any time. Parents will be notified of pricing changes and our current rates can always be obtained from the Director. Our tuition rates include our educational curriculum, enrichment programs and activities, a nutritious breakfast and lunch, as well as morning and afternoon snacks.

The tuition rate that is charged is based on the student's age as of the 1st of the month (monthly billing) or their age on the Monday that a bill is due (weekly billing).

| PROGRAM                                     | ANNUAL REGISTR-<br>ATION | 5-DAY                | 4-DAY   | 3-DAY   | 2-DAY   | DAILY<br>RATE |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------------|
| INFANT<br>6 weeks to 12 months              | \$200                    | \$2,300<br>(\$1,840) | \$2,200 | \$1,985 | \$1,725 | \$200         |
| YOUNG TODDLER<br>12 months to 2 years old   | \$200                    | \$2,200<br>(\$1,760) | \$2,060 | \$1,875 | \$1,630 | \$200         |
| TODDLER<br>2 to 3 years old                 | \$200                    | \$2,060<br>(\$1,648) | \$1,915 | \$1,755 | \$1,565 | \$200         |
| PRESCHOOL<br>3 years old and toilet trained | \$200                    | \$1,925<br>(\$1,540) | \$1,790 | \$1,655 | \$1,460 | \$200         |
| PRE-KINDERGARTEN<br>4 to 5 years old        | \$200                    | \$1,820<br>(\$1,456) | \$1,715 | \$1,590 | \$1,395 | \$200         |
| KINDERGARTEN<br>5 to 6 years old            | \$200                    | \$1,715<br>(\$1,372) | \$1,630 | \$1,520 | \$1,325 | \$200         |

Enrolling in tuition auto-pay is a requirement that applies to all families. By choosing to set up autopay for your child's account, you can enjoy the convenience it offers. If a family prefers not to use enroll in autopay, a small 5% penalty will be applied to your account for the additional administrative efforts involved in manually collecting payments. This penalty can be avoided by simply setting up autopay.

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## **2.5 Transitions**

STEM Child Care is carefully organized and staffed in a way that minimizes the number of transitions our children experience. Because we recognize the importance of the bonds established with teachers and peers, our institution makes every effort to maintain continuity in terms of relationships between the teaching staff and children, as well as among groups of children.

Prior to a transition, Management will discuss the process with you. Transitions typically occur over a 3 to 4 week period, with the child visiting their new classroom for a 1 to 2 hour period during the first week, a 4.5 hour period the second week (including lunch and nap time), and for a full day in the third week. Our goal is to facilitate a smooth transition for each child. Teachers from both classrooms will meet and exchange information about the child in order to aid in his/her transition. Additionally, you may also schedule a meet and greet with your child's new teachers to be sure everyone is aware of any thoughts or concerns. Once the child has successfully completed full days in their new classroom, he or she will start being dropped off and picked up in their new classroom.

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## **2.6 Orientation**

We offer a meet and greet with the parents and teachers prior to your child starting at STEM Child Care. This provides everyone with an opportunity to discuss needs, goals, and start to feel comfortable with each other. During the first few weeks, your child will be adjusting to a new place and many new faces, and we would like to make this adjustment period as easy as possible for both the children and their families. We welcome any suggestions for easing your child into the program, and this information should be discussed with both Management and teachers.

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## 2.7 Schedule Changes

Parents who wish to change their child's days of enrollment at STEM Child Care must submit a request at least 30 days before the proposed change. Management will notify parents if the new schedule is available, and a schedule change will not be considered final until we have written confirmation of the change and the updated tuition has been paid. If the requested schedule is not available, parents may choose to continue with the current schedule until the requested schedule becomes available. Families may not reduce the number of scheduled days prior to or upon notice of withdrawal from our programs and will be subject to a 30 business days' notice of withdrawal payment calculated based on the original number of scheduled days that their child(ren) attended.

STEM Child Care does not allow children to come to school on unscheduled days without prior approval by Management, as switching days leads to possible over enrollment. We have established daily maximum capacities for the safety and well-being of all the children. Furthermore, there are no make-up days or refunds for holidays, emergencies, closures, or absences.

If you are enrolled in a part-time schedule and would like to temporarily add additional days of care, please notify Management at least 30 days in advance of the specific days you would like to add to your schedule. If available, we will honor your request and issue an updated invoice that reflects your added days at the daily drop-in tuition rate (\$200 per day).

# 3

## Financial Policy

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### 3.1 Registration Fee & 1-Month Deposit

There is a \$200 non-refundable Registration Fee to cover administrative costs and to secure a child's position in the program. This registration fee is an annual fee that covers the cost of materials and supplies for all classrooms, and the annual registration fee of \$200 (or \$350 per family) is due each year in your enrollment month.

STEM Child Care must also receive a non-refundable deposit of one month's tuition along with the registration fee. This deposit secures your child's spot in our program at the start date communicated by our Admissions Coordinator. We have a long waitlist of families looking to enroll at STEM and changes to start dates may or may not be accommodated at the sole discretion of management. This upfront, non-refundable deposit will be applied to a family's last month of tuition at STEM and will never be applied to your first month of tuition. If a family has put down a deposit and no longer wishes to enroll, they will forfeit their deposit and their spot will be given to the next family on our waitlist.

We require at least 30 business days' notice of withdrawal to ensure enough time to apply your non-refundable deposit to your final month of tuition. Under no circumstances will the non-refundable deposit be refunded due to lack of adequate notice of withdrawal. For example, if a family pays their tuition bill on the 1st of January for the month of January, then requests to withdraw from our program at the end of January, they will have two options: 1) forfeit their tuition deposit or 2) use their tuition deposit for the month of February.

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### 3.2 Payment Policy

All parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a Fee Agreement prior to the enrollment of their child in STEM Child Care and are responsible for all subsequent payments.

All payments must be made by check, money order, credit card, or cash. There will be a \$50 fee charged for tuition checks that are returned by the bank. Returned tuition checks will not be re-deposited; parents will be responsible for re-issuing a second check. If, in the future, the bank returns a parent's check, then cash, certified check, or money order is required for all subsequent tuition payments. If payments are made by credit card, there is a 3% processing fee added to the amount. There is no credit provided for scheduled school holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather, or acts of God.

For CCAP clients, all required parental fees and payments are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month.

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### **3.3 Late Fee Policy**

All tuition payments are due before care is provided. A late charge of \$30 will be assessed and added to your account if your payment is not received on the respective due date. An additional \$20 fee will be added for each day that the account is not paid in full. If payment is not received within 7 days of the due date (without prior approval from Management of a payment arrangement), this will result in a voided contract and your scholar's immediate dismissal from STEM Child Care. Enrolling in tuition auto-pay is a requirement that applies to all families. By choosing to set up autopay for your child's account, you can enjoy the convenience it offers. If a family prefers not to use enroll in autopay, a small 5% penalty will be applied to your account for the additional administrative efforts involved in manually collecting payments. This penalty can be avoided by simply setting up autopay.

For CCAP clients, if a parental share fee is not received within 30 days of the due date (without prior approval from Management of a payment arrangement), this will result in a voided contract and we reserve the right to deny care or dismiss any student with unpaid status. A letter, email, or phone call will be made to your caseworker to notify them of your unpaid status.

Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the Program. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at STEM Child Care. However, if you anticipate having difficulty paying on time, please discuss the matter with Management immediately so that arrangements can be made. You will be notified by Management if your alternative payment arrangements have been approved.

Any accounts that are 30 days past due may be referred to a collection agency. Any fees incurred by collection will be passed on to the debtor.

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### **3.4 Late Pick-Up Policy**

Stringent late fees must be paid at the time of the late pick-up to the staff member who has voluntarily stayed with your child beyond 6:30 PM closing time. Families are charged a late fee of \$20 for the first 20 minutes (until 6:50 PM) and then \$1 per minute thereafter, per child, until pick up time. The late fee is due at the time of late pick-up. All measurements of time are based on the STEM Child Care clock located in the office. If a child has not been picked up one hour after the Center's closing time and Management is unable to contact either parent or anyone listed on the emergency contact form, local law enforcement and Child Protective Services will be notified.

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### **3.5 Sibling Discount**

STEM Child Care offers a sibling discount when enrolled during the same school year as full-time enrollments. Tuition rates are discounted 20% for the oldest child of the family and are only applicable when tuition payments are made on time. The full tuition rate, plus any additional late fees, will be charged when tuition payments are late (as stated in the Late Fee Policy – Section 3.3).

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### **3.6 Extra Day Policy**

If you have a part-time schedule and require an extra day of care, you must make a request to Management. If space is available, Management will notify you and you will be required to pay the daily rate for your child's age (please see Tuition Fees – Section 2.4 – for daily rates). If you are consistently in need of extra days, please talk to Management about making a permanent schedule change.

# 4

## General Information

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### 4.1 Confidentiality of Children's Records

In order to ensure the confidentiality of your child and family's information, there is a Confidentiality Policy in the Employee Handbook that is reviewed upon hire. STEM Child Care complies with the Department of Early Education and Care's regulations regarding the confidentiality and distribution of children's records, and all staff members are required to read, sign, and adhere to all guidelines stipulated in the Employee Handbook concerning the Confidentiality Policy.

The information contained within a child's records remains confidential and will not be released to anyone without the written consent of the parents. Parents may have access to the records of their child, and a copy will be made at no charge. We also maintain a written log in each child's record to indicate any persons to whom information has been released. The child's parents may add information or comments to their child's record at any time and may also request the deletion or amendment of any information contained within the child's records.

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### 4.2 Safety and Security Plan

STEM Child Care conducts random fire and emergency evacuation drills in the event of fires, tornadoes, and other potentially hazardous situations. Parents, staff, and children will not be notified of drill dates or times, since this is the most effective way to assess the efficacy of the emergency evacuation plans. During an emergency drill or real emergency situation, parents may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and the children have been returned to the building before signing their child into or out of the program. Parents are free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe zone outside of the building until the drill is finished.

**Flood:** In case of a flood, children will be evacuated to higher ground. If the children would be safer at another site, the children will be taken there once we have consulted the proper authorities for their advice. All parents will be notified by posting a sign on the door as well as contacting them by telephone and email once all the children and staff members have reached a safe place adjacent to the school.

**Tornado:** In case of tornado, the children will be guided to the most secure area in the classroom. The children will be escorted to the innermost corner of their respective classrooms and then mats or mattresses will be placed on top of the children. The children will sit on the floor with their

heads between their knees and cover their heads with soft objects for protection. Teachers will take roll-call using their attendance sheet. All parents will be notified by posting a sign on the door as well as contacting them by telephone and email once all the children and staff members are safe.

**Severe Weather:** In case of severe weather, the staff will monitor the weather to judge what the appropriate course of action will be to ensure the safety of the children. When this determination has been made to protect the children, all parents will be notified by posting a sign on the door (if possible) and by contacting them via telephone and email.

**Fire:** In the event of a fire, Management will monitor the situation to judge what the appropriate course of action will be. The fire department will be notified, and the children will be evacuated using the route stipulated by the emergency evacuation plan. When a determination has been made for the protection of the children, all parents will be notified by posting a sign on the door (if possible) and by contacting them by telephone and email.

**Lockdown:** In the event of a lockdown, administrative staff will be responsible for locking the front door and completing a safety check. Each individual classroom is responsible for closing their curtains and locking their door(s). Once the safety check is completed, a head count will be conducted for each classroom and parents will be notified of the lockdown. No parents will be permitted to drop-off or pick-up their child during the lockdown.

**Evacuation:** In the event of a real fire or emergency situation, Management will inform each classroom teacher that the school will be closing. Teachers will account for all of the children using their attendance roster and we will use the emergency cards to reach parents or emergency contact persons, who will be notified by phone of the situation. Children must be picked up within 45 minutes of receiving the call.

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### 4.3 Supervision of Children

All staff are responsible for the constant supervision of the children assigned to their care. This includes conducting regular headcounts any time a group moves from one area to another. The classroom teaching staff will be aware of where the children are at all times and remain in close proximity at all times to ensure they are able to intervene quickly if/when necessary. Our classroom teaching staff do not engage in any activities or tasks that could divert their attention from the supervision of the children at any time, and carefully supervise the children by sight and sound at all times—including when the children are sleeping or when a child walks from one adjoining room to another.

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### 4.4 Missing Child Procedure

In the event of a missing child, the staff will immediately notify Management and perform a complete campus check and search of the surrounding area. Parents will also be notified immediately, along with the proper authorities if there is need for further investigation.

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#### **4.5 Arrival Procedures**

Upon arrival at the Center, the parent and/or guardian accompanying the child must sign in on the sign-in sheet located in the front lobby. The child will then be escorted to his or her designated classroom by the parent. At arrival, parents are also required to follow the Medication Policy if a child must receive medication during the course of the day and notify Management with instructions in the form of a letter as well as verbally discuss these directions with Management. These special instructions include but are not limited to: early pick-up, alternative pick-up person, health issues over the previous night that require observation, and any general issues or concerns which the child care providers should be aware of in order to best attend to the needs of your child throughout the day.

In order to ensure proper learning and that your child does not miss out on the daily curriculum, we require all children to be present no later than 9:00 AM. Parents are required to inform Management by 8:30 AM if their child will not be attending the program on a scheduled day, as this will allow Management to more effectively maintain appropriate student-to-teacher ratios as well as enable the classroom teacher to plan for the day.

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#### **4.6 Pick-Up and Closing Procedures**

Parents or other authorized adults are required to sign their child out of care on the sign-in/sign-out sheet located in the front lobby. STEM Child Care will only release children to other authorized adults after receiving written permission from the parent. All authorized adults are required to present photo identification before the child can be released. A photocopy of the ID is also taken and stapled to the family's emergency contact card. Once a parent or authorized person signs their child out, the parent/authorized person is then solely responsible for supervision of their child while on the premises.

If any unauthorized individual attempts to sign out a child, the parents will be called immediately to provide verification prior to release. This individual will be required to remain at the front desk with a staff member until the issue is resolved. If we are unable to reach the parents or they say that the individual is not authorized to pick up the child, that person will be asked to leave the premises immediately. If the individual harasses, threatens, or causes harm in any way to anyone affiliated with the Center, the police will be called to escort them off the premises and they will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law by STEM Child Care.

Before each teacher can leave their classroom at the end of their shift, they are required to take attendance for any children who are still present. The closing teachers are not permitted to leave the classroom until all of the children in their classroom have been picked up. Prior to closing the Center and leaving for the night, a final walk through is completed to ensure that all children, parents, and staff have left the building and that all doors have been closed and locked.

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#### **4.7 Absences Policy**

Please contact STEM Child Care by calling, emailing, or messaging through Brightwheel as early as possible on a day that your child will be absent or if your arrival will be delayed so that we may make appropriate arrangements to better plan for the day. Please alert Management if your child will be absent due to health reasons. If the prolonged absence of a child is due to a serious illness and/or extended hospitalization, Management will make every effort to work with the family and make appropriate arrangements for tuition payments. With the exception of absences due to hospitalization with documentation provided, there will be no refunds or makeup days for any absences.

In order to maintain your child's continued enrollment at STEM, families are responsible for making timely tuition payments by their due date. If you are not able to make a payment on time, please talk to Management prior to the due date to make alternative payment arrangements.

By enrolling your scholar at STEM Child Care, you agree to give us 30 business days' written notice of your child's withdrawal from our school. If re-enrollment at a later date is desired, your family must submit an updated enrollment packet, registration fee, and 1-month non-refundable deposit.

For CCAP families, your scholar is permitted 3 absences per calendar month. If your scholar is absent more than three times in a calendar month, you are responsible for paying STEM Child Care the corresponding CCAP daily rate for each additional absence. If this fee is not received within 7 days of your scholar's unexcused absences (and no alternative payment arrangements have been made), your child will be subject to immediate dismissal from our program.

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#### **4.8 Babysitting**

STEM Child Care does not permit any of its employees or staff members to negotiate babysitting services with parents or families during their personal time (non-working hours). Please note that if your family's babysitter will be bringing your child(ren) into school or bringing your child(ren) home from school, this individual must also be included on the child(ren)'s authorized pick-up list. STEM is not responsible for any action or agreements made outside or off the Center's property.

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#### **4.9 Birthdays / Special Days**

We would be delighted to celebrate your child's birthday or another special event at STEM Child Care. Parents are welcome to bring in a special snack for the day if it is store bought with the ingredients listed and is nut-free (see Food Policy – Section 5.13). We also invite you to join us for the party! However, we feel that a more casual, low-key approach works best in group care, so please leave party favors, balloons, etc. at home.

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#### 4.10 Policy on Transporting Children

Center vans and/or employee's insured vehicles are used to transport children on an as-needed basis. All passengers must have fastened their seat belts before the van is in motion, and there is no smoking, eating, or drinking in the vehicle. In the event that children need to be transported, a copy of their medical authorization form and emergency card will be carried by the driver.

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#### 4.11 Field Trips

STEM Child Care may supplement students' in-class curriculum with off-premises field trips. Parents are required to provide written permission for their child to attend each field trip. Before each field trip, parents will be notified of all pertinent trip information, including the destination, date, time, reason for trip, cost, and mode of transportation. A permission slip will also be sent home to be filled out, signed, and returned to the teacher prior to the date of the field trip. In order for your child to attend the trip, the field trip permission slip must be filled out completely and all trip costs must be paid in advance. STEM Child Care provides staff supervision for all field trips.

If your child arrives late to the Center and their class has already left for the field trip, your child will be placed in an alternative, age-appropriate class—provided there is enough space available in the classroom. If that class is at capacity and cannot accept another child, you will be asked to either take your child to the field trip site or home with you. If you decide to take your child to the field trip site, you are required to sign in on the attendance sheet with their teacher.

##### **Field Trip Procedures:**

- Parents must sign a field trip authorization form for each individual trip, which includes the date, location, activity, time out of Center, and time of arrival back at the Center.
- At all times, the staff will possess the names of all children on the field trip, emergency information, and a first aid kit.
- Each child will have their own seat on the bus or van. If the trip is conducted using a Center's van, each child must have their own seat belt and no more than 15 passengers will be transported at a time.
- Roll call will be taken before leaving the Center and again before leaving the field trip area.
- No child will be left unsupervised or unescorted at any time.
- No child can be released from a field trip location at any time. Pick-up may only be done at the Center's location, once the children have returned from the field trip.

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#### 4.12 Photography

Management reserves the right to photograph the children for curriculum purposes with parental consent, which is provided in the Enrollment Packet. Pictures may be placed on STEM Child Care's website, publication materials, and/or Facebook page. Please inform Management and do not initial next to the release statement in your child's Enrollment Packet if you do not wish for your child to be photographed in these instances.

##### **Image Release Agreement:**

In order for STEM to use any photos in which your child may appear, permission must be provided by signature next to the Image Release statement upon enrollment.

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#### **4.13 Withdrawal and Dismissal**

When withdrawing a child for any reason, thirty (30) business days' written notice is required to initiate the process. If the proper notice is given, the upfront deposit paid at registration will cover the last month of tuition. Under no circumstances will any portion of the non-refundable deposit be refunded to a family upon withdrawal.

Families may not reduce the number of scheduled days that their child(ren) attend prior to or upon notice of withdrawal from our programs and will be subject to a withdrawal payment calculated based on the original number of scheduled days attended each week.

STEM Child Care reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the address provided in the child's file within one week of dismissal, and any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. Any balances remaining after the 30-day period after dismissal will be referred to a collection agency or a claim will be filed with the Douglas County Small Claims Court.

If a member of your household tests positive for any contagious disease, including COVID-19, you are required to report this illness to STEM Child Care immediately and begin a quarantine process. If you choose not to quarantine and instead bring your child to school, you risk exposing our entire community (our scholars, their families, and our staff members) to a contagious and potentially life-threatening disease. If it is determined that you knowingly caused an exposure risk to our community, your scholar will be subject to immediate dismissal from our programs.

At the time of a withdrawal or dismissal, Management or designee will assist the parent in gathering their child's belongings, and parents are required to leave the Center's property immediately in a calm and respectful fashion. STEM Child Care will be forced to request assistance from local law enforcement should any parent become disruptive or uncooperative while gathering student belongings upon dismissal.

A withdrawn or dismissed child and his/her parents are required to call to request an appointment with Management if they wish to return to the Center's property following a dismissal. All appointments are made at the discretion of Management and are not a right of the dismissed or withdrawn child or parent.

Following a withdrawal or dismissal, any parent or child who harasses, threatens, or causes harm to anyone affiliated with the agency through calling, writing, or any other means, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law by STEM Child Care.

# 5

## Program Policy and Procedures

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### 5.1 Curriculum

Our warm, caring teachers establish a bond with your children by providing nurturing classroom environments, stimulating activities with educational toys, and captivating learning experiences using regular assessments to ensure that your child reaches critical developmental milestones. We instill a passion for learning through play with a purpose, which keeps children engaged as they explore new concepts.

At STEM Child Care, we believe that our children deserve an environment that challenges them, guides them, and encourages them to explore their world in a manner that makes learning fun while building their interpersonal skills. Understanding the world around them is one of the strongest predictors of young children's ability to later learn science, engineering, and mathematics. Unfortunately, research suggests that infants, toddlers, and preschoolers do not receive adequate exposure or opportunities to learn these concepts before entering school. For this reason, STEM Child Care focuses on helping your children gain STEM skills and knowledge by engaging their natural curiosity as well as their need to explore and make sense of the world. We support STEM learning by providing learning materials, joining our students in their exploration, and connecting these learning experiences to things that the children have done or experienced before.

With the support of our early childhood development professionals, STEM Child Care fosters self-confidence and an enthusiasm for learning that is sure to encourage your child's independence as well as the acquisition of necessary social skills in a fun environment. Our student-centered learning environment integrates the academic expectations of both local and state curriculums to ensure that our students transition effortlessly to grade school.

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### 5.2 Behavior Management

We believe that keeping children actively engaged decreases the frequency of behavior problems in the classroom. Our teachers only use positive guidance and redirection when necessary for behavioral management. By setting clear and understandable limitations, we can foster each child's ability to become self-disciplined, and this is our ultimate goal. We encourage staff to try to ignore negative behavior whenever possible and instead reinforce appropriate behaviors. In doing so, our hope is that this draws the child into the group and avoids the need for frequent discipline.

It is our goal to cultivate positive relationships between all children, staff, and family members by promoting effective communication and building rapport for all parties involved. Our staff creates a socially and emotionally respectful environment by implementing a method known as Sanford Harmony, which is a social-emotional program used to increase positive interactions within the classroom environment. By using this program, our teachers can encourage positive behavior, pro-social peer interaction, and overall social and emotional competence in the children through the use of five units (focusing on Diversity and Inclusion, Empathy and Critical Thinking, Communication, Problem Solving, and Peer Relationships).

When these methods do not work, your child will first be spoken to and removed from the situation. We feel that too much discipline (i.e. repeatedly correcting a child for every little thing) can destroy their spirit. By instead teaching each child that every choice invokes a direct consequence, the children will start to learn that they are responsible for their own actions and that negative choices will result in negative consequences. STEM Child Care prohibits corporal punishment of any kind as well as severe punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse. If a behavioral problem arises, we will make every attempt to remedy the situation. However, outside referrals may be suggested if our staff is not adequately equipped to handle the behavior.

We will continue to work with the child, family, and any specialists involved until the behavioral issue is resolved or until we feel that we are no longer capable of providing the type of care needed for the child. The dismissal of a child for behavioral problems will be at the sole discretion of the STEM Child Care staff.

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### **5.3 Special Needs Policy**

STEM Child Care will make every effort to provide appropriate accommodations to all children with special needs. The Center requires all children with special needs to provide a doctor's note with instructions regarding the manner of care necessary before admission can be granted. Once this medical information has been provided, the Center can produce an individualized assessment in order to gain a better understanding of the child's needs. All information provided to STEM Child Care about a child's condition(s) will remain confidential. The Center will usually employ universal health and safety standards to care for children with special needs, but if additional care becomes needed, the parent will be responsible for meeting with Management before admission to develop a plan for their care. It is STEM Child Care's goal, however, to provide a safe and nurturing environment for all children who are being served; therefore, at the discretion of Management, STEM may dismiss any child whose activities or behavior are deemed detrimental to the other children or to the Center itself.

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### **5.4 Biting Policy**

STEM Child Care recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through 2 ½ year old classrooms. Parents with children in these classrooms should be understanding if their child is bitten or bites another child. The staff empathizes with parents' concerns about this behavior and understands that parents can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember that this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations that may provoke or elicit

this behavior so that it can be prevented going forward. The staff will not punish or harshly discipline children for biting behavior and will instead redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Parents are expected to work with staff by helping to identify methods and strategies that will effectively curb this behavior.

Parents will be notified with an Incident/Accident Report when a biting incident occurred during the day. The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident, as this information is considered to be confidential and cannot be disclosed. It is recommended that any child involved in a biting incident be seen by their family physician if parents are concerned about the spread of communicable diseases potentially resulting from the biting incident.

If biting behaviors reoccur within a particular student, Management may follow up in one of the following ways on an individualized basis:

- Developing an Individual Behavior Modification Plan between the parents and Management
- Sending the child home for a specified duration of time, determined by Management
- Dismissing the student from the Center

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## **5.5 Referral Plan and Procedures**

STEM Child Care is committed to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development of each child. Teachers observe children's behavior on a daily basis and also prepare formal progress reports at least twice per year. If a child seems to experience difficulty with any area of development, an initial assessment will be prepared by all of the teachers who have come in contact with the child. The staff will start to record written observations of the difficulty or behavior by documenting how, when, and where the behavior occurs, as well as the efforts that the staff has made to assist or accommodate the child's individual needs.

If a particular behavior requires immediate attention or if a child continues to have difficulty, then the teachers will bring their concerns and written observations to the attention of Management. We will arrange a conference with the parents in order to share the teachers' observations and to discuss any behaviors that the parents have witnessed at home. Together, the parents, teachers, and Management will devise a plan of action. If necessary, a follow-up meeting will be arranged.

At the follow-up meeting, if the behavior or concern has not yet improved, it will be determined if a specialist should be consulted to provide additional insight on the issue. We will also offer parents a list of referral resources in the community for social, mental health, educational, and medical services. If it is determined that the child does have special needs, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) will be developed so that we can effectively accommodate the child's needs.

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## **5.6 Schedule and Daily Rhythms**

The daily schedule for children is offered as a guide and framework for the organization of daily activities for the children. The daily routines for children may vary based upon the age of your child, and adjustments to the schedule are made when your child enrolls in the Toddler and

Preschool Programs. You may notice that your child's schedule changes to align with the group as he/she gets older; some common changes you might notice in your child's behavior after enrollment into group care may include altered sleep/wake patterns or changes in appetite.

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## 5.7 Inclement and Excessively Hot Weather

The children will not participate in outdoor programs or activities in extremely windy, cold, or excessively hot weather. This will be at the discretion of Management. All children should come to school dressed in appropriate clothing for the weather conditions on that day. If children are unable to go outside, we will provide motor activities indoors instead.

STEM Child Care may close due to heavy snowfall or unsafe road conditions. No credits will be issued for such days. We will notify parents of school closure by submitting a report to 9News and issuing a notice through Brightwheel (our classroom management and communication app).

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## 5.8 Supplies

**Infant Program (3 to 18 months):** Diapers, wipes, three (3) sets of extra clothing, pacifier (or waiver), sunscreen, and diaper rash cream. Blankets are not allowed for naps until the child reaches one year of age, so please bring appropriate attire for sleeping times (see Sleeping Section 5.20 regarding specific supplies and policies).

**Toddler Program (1.5 to 3 years):** Diapers or pull ups, three (3) sets of clothes, sippy cup or water bottle, blanket, sheet, diaper rash cream, and sunscreen.

**Preschool Program (3 to 6 years):** Water bottle, blanket, sheet, two (2) sets of clothes (in case of accidents or spills), and sunscreen.

### Toilet Training

Our approach for toilet training revolves around positive reinforcement and encouragement. Children are not pushed or shamed into using the toilet. We find that most children no longer require the use of diapers and begin using the toilet regularly by ages 2 ½ to 3. While your child is toilet training, you must provide:

- Disposable diapers / Pull ups / Extra underwear
- Moist wipes
- 3-5 extra changes of clothing

### Pacifiers

All infants are required to sleep with a pacifier (without anything attached to it) unless a waiver is signed by the parent to indicate that we should not give a pacifier to their child.

### Diapers and Wipes

Parents must provide disposable/reusable diapers and moist wipes for children who are not toilet trained as yet. Wet or soiled clothes must be taken home at the end of the day to be washed. STEM Child Care will be responsible for changing all soiled clothing immediately, putting the soiled clothing in a plastic bag, and disinfecting the child after each change.

### **Extra Clothing**

Each child must have a complete change of clothes in their designated cubby in case of emergencies. Please remember to label all clothing and to update your child's extra clothing as the weather changes and as the child grows.

### **Resting Supplies**

Parents must provide a sheet and blanket for daily rest periods. These items will be returned to the parent every Friday to be washed over the weekend. Please bring them back in for Monday. We will provide mid-week cleanings as we see fit.

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## **5.9 Appropriate Dress**

Upon arrival at the Center, each child must be dressed and wearing shoes. Please consider your child's comfort when dressing him or her for the day and avoid sending them in expensive clothes. Even when wearing paint smocks for their creative projects, the children will get dirty. In addition, please dress your child appropriately for the weather; the early morning and late afternoon hours might be cool, so make sure that your child has a sweater or light jacket at the Center for these times.

During the winter months, your child should be dressed in appropriate winter clothing, including hats, coats, boots, mittens, or jackets. Please send your child to school with sturdy shoes; closed, hard-soled shoes or "tennis" shoes are most suitable. Finally, please label everything with your child's name.

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## **5.10 Accessories and Jewelry**

Children's accessories and jewelry are extremely attractive to young children's eyes, fingers, and mouths. We ask for parents' cooperation in maintaining a safe environment for the children when choosing the accessories that their children wear to the Center. Small objects such as barrettes and earrings can pose serious choking hazards, while necklaces can be strangulation hazards. For these reasons, we do not allow the following types of jewelry:

- Dangly earrings (small pierced studs are permitted)
  - Necklaces of any kind
  - Bracelets with beads or charms (rubber, cloth, or thread bracelets are permitted as long as they do not include attachments or charms)
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## **5.11 Sunscreen**

You are required to provide your preferred sunscreen (full-spectrum UVA/UVB 30 SPF or greater) for your child's outdoor time. Please label it with your child's first and last name. If the sunscreen provided becomes expired or is used completely, you will be notified via Brightwheel to replenish it. If your child runs out of sunscreen, you expressly give permission for STEM to apply Rocky Mountain Sunscreen SPF 50 ([www.rmsunscreen.com](http://www.rmsunscreen.com)) to your child, prior to their outdoor activities. If children are outside for more than one hour, sunscreen will be reapplied every two hours.

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## **5.12 Belongings from Home**

Oftentimes, items brought from home can become damaged or misplaced. For this reason, children are not permitted to bring toys or books from home, except on special “share days” (the teacher will inform you of these special days). Guns, swords, or any other toy weapons are not permitted in the Center. Children are also not allowed to bring money with them to school.

All supplies that we are requesting parents bring in for everyday use should be labeled with their child’s name and can be found in “Supplies” (Section 5.8). Each child will be assigned a cubby space where their items will be stored.

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## **5.13 Comfort Items**

If it will help your child feel more at home during nap time, we welcome comfort items such as a favorite pacifier, doll, stuffed animal, or items that can contribute to our daily activities. These items would need to be small enough to fit within each child’s personal cubby space. In addition, please be sure to label all items provided for the classroom with your child’s name.

A full list of supplies for each Program can be found in Section 5.8. If you have any further questions about what to bring in, please speak directly to your child’s teacher.

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## **5.14 Toileting and Diapering**

Children are not required to be toilet trained by a certain age, and we believe that a child should only begin toilet training when he or she is physically and psychologically ready. Both parents and teachers should be vigilant of readiness signs and discuss an individualized plan to approach toilet training. We will continue the toileting process at the Center once it has been started at home. We believe, however, that if this process is to be a positive learning experience, the children must be ready to participate willingly; as a result, the Center cannot and will not force a child to use the toilet. Children in diapers are changed every two hours as well as on an as-needed basis.

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## **5.15 Food Policy**

Healthy minds require healthy bodies. We believe that proper nutrition is a crucial aspect of a constructive learning environment and that meal times are also a part of the children’s overall learning experience. We embrace family-style dining and ensure that the children practice proper hand washing and table manners. In our family-style dining, all food is placed on the table in serving bowls, with milk in small pitchers, and we encourage the children to serve themselves or do so with help from their teacher. Each teacher sits at the table with the children to enjoy a relaxed meal together over quiet conversation.

Meals are served based on the following schedule:

- Breakfast: 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM
- Lunch: 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM
- Snack: 2:30 PM to 3:30 PM

Our menu includes wholesome meals and satisfying snacks that meet federal and state guidelines established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Snacks typically consist of a healthy starch such as veggie chips and Goldfish along with fruit or cheese. For the Infant Program, STEM Child Care provides Kirkland milk-based formula, however families are welcome to provide breast milk supplies or any preferred formula. If your child is breast fed, we can store one week's supply of milk for your child (two days' worth in the refrigerator and three days' worth in the freezer). Please label all formula and breast milk with your child's name and the date received. Breast milk will be discarded after being at room temperature for one hour.

STEM Child Care is a **nut-free** facility. Due to the extreme nature of allergic reactions to peanuts and products containing nuts affecting some children, STEM prohibits peanuts and/or food containing any nut products on our property or at STEM sponsored events. Because exposure to peanuts can result in an anaphylactic reaction for those suffering from peanut allergies, we cannot allow any nut products on the premises, as an allergic child could have a reaction by merely smelling peanuts on someone's breath or by touching peanut oil residue left on a countertop. We appreciate your understanding and help in making sure that our learning environment is a safe space for all students.

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## 5.16 Feeding

Prior to enrollment, you will be providing the Center with specific information about your child's feeding needs when filling out the Enrollment Packet. STEM Child Care makes every effort to provide your child with a wholesome, low sugar menu and to introduce your child to a variety of food tastes and textures. Infants will be fed according to their own schedule, and all children six months and younger will be held while they are being fed. No bottles will be propped. As the children grow and begin eating table foods, their eating habits and needs will change and their eating times will be adjusted toward the group schedule.

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## 5.17 Breast Milk and Formula

Parents must provide their own breast milk or formula for their infants each day. Breast milk will be discarded after being at room temperature for one hour.

Our goal is to offer a superior level of customer service and nurturing care for all of our families and their little ones. We prioritize health, safety, and nutrition among our most precious scholars by ensuring that we adhere to your little one's individualized schedule. Please review our procedures concerning bottle feeding for both breast-fed and formula-fed babies below:

1. All bottles are to be premade with your child's formula or breastmilk. Please fill the bottles according to the feeding schedule you provided to us.
2. Please be sure to send enough pre-filled bottles for your child so that we can adhere to their daily schedule while at school and ensure that we have enough formula or breastmilk for the entire day.
3. Bottles need to have the nipple already in place and caps placed on top for sanitary purposes.

4. Every bottle must be labeled with the following information:
    - A. Name: Your child's full first name and last name.
    - B. Contents: either Formula or Breastmilk. PLEASE NOTE: If it is breastmilk, the label must also have the date the breastmilk was expressed.
    - C. Date: Indicating when the formula or breastmilk was placed into the bottle.
    - D. Volume: Number of ounces in the bottle.
  5. Please send all bottles and baby food containers (no glass containers are permitted) in preferably a soft-sided cooler or tote bag. We have ample storage in our new refrigerators for the Infant Nursery.
  6. All rinsed, used bottles will be placed back into your bag at the end of each day, and will be sent home for cleaning and sanitizing.
  7. Any (filled) bottles will also be returned home with your child as the center cannot store any unused formula or breastmilk.
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### **5.18 Bottles and Sippy Cups**

We understand that the selection of bottles is a personal choice based upon both the parent and child's preferences. We ask that you provide the Center with three (3) complete bottles, including rings, nipples, and disposable bags if necessary for your child's exclusive use. As children's abilities develop further, we will transition to sippy cups. Parents are responsible for providing sippy cups once this transition has occurred.

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### **5.19 Solid Foods**

Parents must notify us of all known allergies prior to starting care with us and notify us any time that a new allergy is discovered. All families have access to our menus in advance and unless we are specifically told that a student is not to have a particular type of food, parents give us permission to serve students the food on our menus.

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### **5.20 Finger Foods**

As children's pincer grasp develops (i.e. picking up items using their thumb and forefinger), they will be ready to eat finger foods. Once the children become familiarized with eating finger foods, we will start to offer them lunches that may be provided by the parent or the Center. The food provided by the Center will be appropriate for young children (such as cooked carrots as opposed to raw ones) and will be cut so that they do not exceed  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch for infants and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch for toddlers.

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### **5.21 Milk**

Once a child reaches one year of age, the teachers (in conjunction with parents) will begin to transition the child from formula to whole milk. Only whole milk will be offered to children between the ages of 12 months and 24 months, unless otherwise directed by a physician. For children who are still consuming breast milk, the transition to whole milk will be discussed and planned in collaboration with the family. Parents are required to provide the milk, labeled with the child's full name and date opened.

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### **5.22 Sleeping**

Since infants have individualized schedules, the infant classroom schedules are flexible to meet the children's sleep needs. We will gather information from you about your child's sleeping habits using the Enrollment Packet so that we are aware of them at the time of registration. All sleeping infants are physically observed at least every ten minutes by a teacher or staff member.

Due to the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), the American Academy of Pediatrics highly recommends that infants are placed on their backs to sleep. Colorado State Licensing Regulations require all homes and Centers to place infants on their backs to sleep, unless there is a physician's order and healthcare plan in place for an alternate sleeping position. All STEM Child Care teachers and employees working with infants have received training regarding the importance of infants sleeping on their backs to reduce the risk of harm or SIDS.

The Center will provide sheets for children and we are responsible for ensuring that they are washed once per day. Due to Colorado State Licensing Regulations, any soft bedding, including swaddling clothes and blankets are not allowed in the crib. Please provide appropriate sleep wear or sleep sacks for your child's use during nap times. If your child requires being swaddled during nap times, STEM Child Care requires a physician's order stating the swaddle requirements as well as the appropriate age range in which the swaddling should remain in effect.

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### **5.23 Digital Media**

Your child may view and/or listen to developmentally appropriate videos and digital media for educational purposes in alignment with our curriculum and instructional goals. Screen time, which includes television, recorded media, computer, tablet, cell phones, video games, and other media devices, is prohibited for children less than two (2) years of age. All children will be provided with a developmentally appropriate activity if they lose interest in the media activity.

STEM Child Care's policy regarding the use of television and video viewing states that total exposure to digital media should be limited to high-quality programming that is viewed with an adult who can help our scholars apply what they are learning to the world around them.

For children of all ages, digital media must not be used during meal or snack times, during nap or rest times, or while in bed. When offered, digital media must be free of advertising as well as brand placement, violence, or inappropriate sounds.

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#### **5.24 Shoe-Free Environment**

As infants are commonly on the floor, STEM Child Care wishes to provide a clean and safe environment within the infant classrooms. We practice a “shoe-free” policy in the infant classrooms and ask that adults entering the room please remove their shoes.

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#### **5.25 Program Evaluation**

STEM conducts a semi-annual Satisfaction Survey to obtain feedback from enrolled families. The survey is anonymous and serves as a way for families to provide the Center with their comments, compliments, ideas, and suggestions to help benefit the quality of the programs offered.

# 6

## Health Care Policy

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### 6.1 Health Care in Group Settings

Due to the nature of group care, the children are exposed to new and different situations on a daily basis, and one common result of the group care setting is exposure to a number of illnesses. **It is common for children to frequently get ill in group care.** It is possible you will see that a runny nose lasts a long time or that you are visiting the doctor on a regular basis. Children at these young ages have not yet built up their natural antibodies for fending off viruses and bacteria that they may be exposed to. Because young children's immune systems have not matured as yet, it is expected that they are less resilient to illness.

We make every effort to reduce the presence of germs within the classroom setting by washing hands and toys frequently, removing and sanitizing toys that have been mouthed, washing sheets daily, thoroughly cleaning each night (including mopping, vacuuming, sanitizing changing areas, sinks, fountains, etc.), and removing trash twice per day.

The children will go outside every day, weather permitting. In the colder months, fresh air facilitates good health rather than promoting illness; germs are more likely related to children getting ill than being exposed to the cold air. In addition, fresh air has fewer germs than indoor air, and we find that outdoor exercise increases the children's general fitness and increases their resistance to infection. Contracting a cold or flu is more common during the winter months since germs are spread easily when people are spending more time in closed, heated rooms; for this reason, we can help encourage good health in the children using outdoor experiences. The infant class will also have opportunities to go outside on their respective playgrounds along with going on walks and buggy rides. However, we must take weather conditions such as rain, snow, temperature, and wind chill into account when deciding if, when, and how long we will venture outside.

#### **Infants and Toddlers:**

Certain health considerations specific to infants and toddlers require further discussion than the general illness and healthcare policy stated in this Family Handbook. These include immunizations and diarrhea.

Immunizations occur on a regular basis during the first year of a child's life. We understand that sometimes there may be side effects resulting from these immunizations, including pain and/or mild fever. If a doctor's note has been provided, we can administer over-the-counter pain relievers brought in by the parent after your child has been immunized, but only if these medications specifically indicate use in the relief of side effects due to immunization.

Because infants and young children are susceptible to dehydration from diarrhea, we take this symptom very seriously. If your child has had an unusually loose bowel movement (one that is different from usual), the teachers will contact you to recommend that your child is examined by his or her physician. If your child is taking antibiotics, diarrhea can be a common side effect. When your doctor prescribes an antibiotic, please request a note stating that diarrhea may be a potential side effect as well as any recommendations for treating it. Diarrhea as a side effect of antibiotics also puts your child at risk of dehydration, so we will closely monitor your child's condition and might contact you if pick-up is required. Furthermore, for health reasons, episodes of diarrhea that cannot be contained using a diaper will necessitate parent pick-up of the child.

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## 6.2 Immunizations

We do not accept children with an immunization exemption for any reason, even if this exemption is prescribed by a physician. If you prefer to follow a delayed immunization schedule, it must be within the approved window of vaccination established by the Colorado Public Health Department and we must have a signed doctor's note explaining this alternative schedule.

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## 6.3 Physical Examinations and Medical Forms

The State of Colorado requires parents to provide STEM Child Care with current immunization records as well as current physical/wellbeing exam reports for children at the following age intervals:

- 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 15 or 18 months, 2 years, then yearly after that.

All medical records must be updated at these time intervals. Consent forms for authorization of medical treatment, emergency transportation, and child release must be signed annually by parents and kept within each child's file. **For your child's safety, please notify our office immediately if there are changes to any telephone numbers or addresses listed on your consent forms.**

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## 6.4 Medical Policy

To safeguard the wellbeing of all children and staff at the program, each child must be brought to school in good health. A teacher will conduct a brief inspection of your child every day to check for signs of illness upon arrival. If your child becomes sick while at school, we will contact you immediately to pick up the child. Children with fever, contagious diseases, or other communicable health problems will be isolated and kept away from the other children. In the event that your child has a chronic but non-contagious condition, we must receive a note for our records from your physician that explains the condition. After a health-related absence, your child must be symptom-free for 72 hours before they can return to school. Alternatively, we must have a physician's note after the child has been examined, stating that his or her condition is not contagious and that the child may safely return to school.

Management works closely with a Pediatric Health Care Consultant to establish medical policies and to resolve medical issues affecting the children and staff at the Center. Mildly ill children may be permitted to attend STEM on their regularly scheduled days. For the protection of ALL children and staff, however, parents will be notified if their child becomes too ill to remain at the Center and will be asked to pick up the sick child immediately. If the parent is unable to pick up their child within an hour, the parent will be responsible for arranging pick-up for their child by someone on their approved list of emergency contacts.

Below is a list of criteria regarding signs or symptoms of illness that determine whether a child is permitted to attend the Center at the time of morning drop-off:

- If a child has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, he or she will be required to stay home until fever-free for 48 hours without the use of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil).
- A child on antibiotics must be excluded from attending the Center from the time of their diagnosis with illness until 24 hours after the first dosage.
- If a child has already been brought into the Center but starts to exhibit symptoms requiring exclusion from regular activities, the child will be kept in a quiet, isolated area on a resting mat until he or she can be taken home. All mats and sheets will be cleaned after the child has left the Center.

We do not have separate or secluded facilities for the long-term care of a sick child, so parents are asked to be aware of this and plan for potential or impending illness. If a child becomes sick while at the Center, a staff member will contact the parents to ask that the child be taken home and, perhaps, to see a doctor if we feel that the illness may become worse or contagious. Some common conditions that will require us to send your child home are listed below:

1. **Temperature:** A child will be sent home if he/she has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher. The child must be fever-free without the use of acetaminophen or ibuprofen, and his/her activity level and appetite should also be back to normal before returning to school. In the case of highly contagious illness associated with fever (including the flu), the timeframe of your child's return to the Center may be extended to ensure the wellness of all children at STEM Child Care.
2. **Diarrhea:** A child experiencing more than three instances of diarrhea (watery stools) will be sent home with their parents. Diarrhea is typically caused by viral infections, but in some cases bacteria and parasites (Giardia) could be the cause. If your child has an allergy or condition that regularly causes diarrhea, please alert the staff during orientation. Your child must be diarrhea-free for at least 24 hours before returning to the Center. In cases of highly contagious stomach and intestinal illnesses (such as Norovirus), your child's return to the Center may be prolonged to ensure the health and wellness of all children at STEM Child Care.
3. **Vomiting:** Any child who is vomiting will be sent home and should remain at home until the vomiting has stopped. Most vomiting is the result of infection; because stomach viruses are highly contagious, they can spread through the Center quickly. The child must not have vomited for at least 24 hours before returning to the Center. In cases of highly contagious stomach and intestinal illnesses (such as Norovirus), the timeline of your child's return to the Center may be extended to ensure the health and wellness of all children at STEM Child Care.
4. **Impetigo:** This skin infection is characterized by crusted sores that can appear anywhere on the body, but usually affects the facial area first. Children afflicted with this condition must be on antibiotics for at least 24 hours and all lesions should be dry and healed before returning to the Center.

5. **Conjunctivitis:** This is a contagious infection of the eye, distinguished by redness, tearing, a yellow discharge from the eyes, or eyelashes stuck together. Children experiencing this condition must be on antibiotics for at least 24 hours before they can return to the Center.
6. **Strep Throat:** This illness is characterized by swollen neck glands and a high temperature, along with a sore throat. Strep Throat requires antibiotics, and your child should not return to the Center until he/she has been on medication for 24 hours.
7. **Scarlet Fever:** This presents as Strep Throat with a rash that is red with a sandpaper feeling. Your physician should be consulted regarding when your child can safely return to the Center.
8. **Chicken Pox:** Children may attend the Center once they have returned to good health after exposure or during the incubation period (11-20 days after contact). Your physician is the best person to consult regarding your child's contagiousness during the course of this illness. Please notify the Center if you suspect that your child has been exposed to Chicken Pox so that we may issue a Health Alert and notify the other families.
9. **Ear Infections (Otitis Media):** Ear infections in children are extremely common. Children must have been on their prescribed antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to the Center.
10. **Respiratory Infections:** These illnesses are also common and usually caused by viruses. We ask that your child remain at home until he/she is feeling better, and if fever is associated with the infection, the child must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen or ibuprofen before returning to the Center.
11. **Head Lice:** This is characterized by a very itchy scalp and nits (white eggs) that resemble dandruff but are not easily removed from the hair. Children may return to school after they have had at least one head lice treatment.
12. **Scabies:** Scabies (caused by mites) presents as an itchy rash between the fingers, on wrists, underarms, at the belt line, and, in infants, on the head, neck, palms, and soles. Children may return to the Center after one Scabies treatment.
13. **Hand-foot-mouth disease:** This illness is caused by a viral infection and characterized by small ulcers in the mouth, blisters on the hands and feet, and sometimes also near the genitalia and buttocks. The child is considered contagious until the fever is gone (usually within 3-4 days) and must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen or ibuprofen before returning to the Center.
14. **COVID-19:** This illness is characterized by fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. If a member of your household tests positive for COVID-19, please notify STEM Child Care immediately and begin a 14-day quarantine to minimize the risk of exposing others.

If your child is ill with a contagious disease (such as Chicken Pox or COVID-19), parents are required to let the staff know so that we may issue a Health Alert to notify other families at the Center. In the case of highly contagious illnesses, the timeframe for your child's return to the Center may be extended to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children at the Center.

If a member of your household tests positive for any contagious disease, including COVID-19, you are required to report this illness to STEM Child Care immediately and begin a quarantine process. If you choose not to quarantine and instead bring your child to school, you risk exposing our entire community (our scholars, their families, and our staff members) to a contagious and potentially life-threatening disease. If it is determined that you knowingly caused an exposure risk to our community, your scholar will be subject to immediate dismissal from our programs.

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## 6.5 Reportable Communicable Disease

If your child has contracted a reportable communicable disease, such as hepatitis, measles, mumps, meningitis, diphtheria, rubella, salmonella, tuberculosis, giardia, shigella, or COVID-19, STEM Child Care is required to report this illness to the local Health Department and post a Health Alert at the front desk.

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/communicable-disease-manual>

All parents are required to report if their child has been exposed to a communicable disease outside of the Center. At the discretion of Management, the child also be excluded from activities at the Center for a period of time specified by the child's physician or by the local health department.

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## 6.6 Administration and Storage of Medications

According to Colorado Law and Nurse Practice Act Section 12-38-132, C.R.S., all medicines must have a practitioner's written order. All medications must also be brought in by the parent or guardian; children are never allowed to possess or carry any medications themselves while on campus. The doctor or practitioner's written order must be current, in the original container from the pharmacy, and include the child's name, practitioner's name, pharmacy name, telephone number, signature, date authorized, expiration date, name of medication, dosage amount, time of day given, length of time to be administered, reason for medication, as well as any special instructions or potential side effects. If more than one medication is to be administered by our staff, each medication needs to have separate instructions written by the physician.

All childcare staff hired by Management to give medication must have completed a 4-hour Department of Social Services approved medication administration training and also have current first aid and universal precautions training. STEM Child Care's licensed health consultant will perform routine inspections of all staff members involved in administering medications as well as provide additional training for medications.

All medications will remain in an appropriate secured location, both locked and inaccessible to the children. Refrigerated medications are also stored in a secure designated area away from food. If a medication is expired or left over, the parents will be asked to remove and dispose properly of the medication; if parents do not dispose of this medication or cannot be reached, Management will dispose of it within seven days. All discarded medicine will be logged with the date, time, and reason for disposal.

A written medication log is kept for each child, containing the following information: child's name, name of medication, dosage amount, time given, special instructions, and the name or initials of the person who administered the medication. If the medication was not given, a note will be made along with a reason for the missed dose.

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## **6.7 Inhaler and Epinephrine Storage and Usage**

Sadly, inhaler use is considered an everyday occurrence for asthmatic children. For this reason, children with asthma will not be viewed as “ill” and will only need to report to the nurse if the inhaler proves ineffective at resolving shortness of breath or if the child has forgotten the inhaler.

A physician’s statement will be kept in our records for each child with an epinephrine auto injector (Epi-Pen). In the event that a child has a reaction, a staff member with medication administration training will administer the Epi-Pen.

Management will ensure that all inhalers and Epi-Pens are stored in a safe location within close proximity to the children in need of these medications. At the same time, the children’s classroom teachers will be notified of the storage locations and are provided with the means to access them. These medicines will be kept out of the children’s reach but in an easily accessible location in the case of an emergency.

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## **6.8 Injury or Accident**

Should your child be involved in an incident or accident during the course of a school day, a staff member will complete an Incident / Accident Report. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pick-up, and parents or individuals designated to act “in loco parentis” are required to sign any Incident / Accident Report at the time of pick-up on that day. However, if you feel that it is necessary to have an in-depth discussion regarding the details of the incident, it is more appropriate to schedule this meeting at a later date since the classroom teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom before they are picked up.

A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or on the next day during nap/rest time if the parents are unable to meet at the Center during the course of the school day. If a person other than the parent or an individual approved to act “in loco parentis” picks up the child that day, a person or person designated to act “in loco parentis” must sign the Incident / Accident Report and return a copy to Management within 24 hours. Failure to sign and return this Report within 24 hours will result in your child being excluded from the Program until the Report has been signed and returned.

If a more serious injury occurs, we will notify the parent immediately and, if necessary, follow the instructions indicated on the child’s Emergency Card. Unless otherwise requested, we would also call the local paramedics.

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## **6.9 Emergency First Aid Procedures**

All staff members are required to have current training in First Aid, CPR, and Standard Precautions. In the case of minor injury, the staff will administer simple first aid and notify the parent in writing about the nature of the injury as well as treatment at the time of pick-up. Depending on the severity of the emergency, the Center will contact parents or authorized persons, the child’s doctor, and call 911 if necessary. Transportation to the preferred hospital

listed on the child's medical authorization form will be made either by ambulance or police if time sensitive, or if parents are not readily available. If immediate transportation is necessary, Management or designee will take and accompany the child to the hospital.

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#### **6.10 Smoking, Drug, and Alcohol Use**

We will not tolerate the presence of any child, parent, or individual on our premises that has engaged in smoking, drug, or alcohol use. Any person visibly under the influence at the time of arrival or pick-up will be asked to leave immediately and risks their child being unenrolled or dismissed from the Program.

Parents and faculty members are not permitted to use tobacco products of any kind while on company premises, including the sidewalks and parking lot, to protect all students from second-hand and third-hand smoke.

# Communication, Participation, and Rights

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## 7.1 Parent Participation

Parents are welcome to spend time in the classroom, visit for lunch, or share any of their talents with the children. Parents are always welcome with no notice required but may want to notify the teachers in advance so that the child and group can be prepared for their visit. If your child is having difficulties with separation, please discuss with your child's classroom teacher any strategies that would make parting easier.

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## 7.2 Parent / Teacher Conferences

Although teachers are always available to speak with parents informally, STEM Child Care sets aside time twice per year to hold formal Parent / Teacher Conferences. Teachers are responsible for completing developmental progress reports for each child and will use these opportunities to update you on your child's behavior, progress, and development during their time at the Center. Additional conference times can also be arranged at your convenience. Please note that conferences may be mandatory for parents if deemed necessary by the teacher or Management.

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## 7.3 Newsletter and Parent Resources

To keep parents informed about the Center's activities, curriculum themes, upcoming events, reminders, and general announcements, STEM publishes a monthly newsletter. We urge you to read it carefully, as the newsletter serves as an effective way to stay in the loop about the latest happenings at school.

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## 7.4 Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse

Under the Child Protective Services Act, we are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. Under this law, the staff at STEM Child Care are considered mandated reporters. The staff are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks or conditions prior to filing a report. Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect; for

this reason, STEM Child Care takes this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to Child Protective Services.

The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interests of all children. As mandated reporters, the staff of STEM cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services that are determined to be unfounded, provided that the report was made “in good faith.” Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child’s body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing—related to size, cleanliness, or season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints, such as car seats or seat belts
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Not providing appropriate meals, including a drink for your child
- Leaving a child unattended for any period of time
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Sending a sick child to school over-medicated to hide symptoms, which would generally require the child to be kept at home until symptoms have subsided
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

STEM Child Care makes every effort to provide a safe, nurturing, and healthy environment for children. The telephone number to report child abuse is: 1-844-CO-4-KIDS and 1-844-264-5437.

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## **7.5 Inspection Authority**

The State of Colorado, Department of Social Services has the right to enter and inspect our Center at any time, for any reason, with or without advance notice. They possess the authority to interview children and staff and may inspect records without prior consent. The Department also has the authority to observe the physical condition of any child and may have a licensed, medical professional physically examine that child.

We recommend discussing any concerns or complaints with Management of STEM Child Care, and we will make every effort to resolve any issues to your satisfaction. If you feel, however, that your complaint has not been resolved, then you may contact the Social Services Department. All complaints regarding child care are filed at:

State of Colorado Department of Social Services  
Office of Child Care Services  
1575 Sherman Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Denver, CO 80203-1714  
(303) 866-5958



| STEM CHILD CARE    |    |    |    |    |    |    |              |    |    |    |    |    |    |               |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|--------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 2024 Calendar Year |    |    |    |    |    |    |              |    |    |    |    |    |    |               |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| January '24        |    |    |    |    |    |    | February '24 |    |    |    |    |    |    | March '24     |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Su                 | M  | Tu | W  | Th | F  | S  | Su           | M  | Tu | W  | Th | F  | S  | Su            | M  | Tu | W  | Th | F  | S  |
|                    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |              |    |    |    | 1  | 2  | 3  |               |    |    |    |    | 1  | 2  |
| 7                  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 4            | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 3             | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  |
| 14                 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 11           | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 10            | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 21                 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 18           | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 17            | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 28                 | 29 | 30 | 31 |    |    |    | 25           | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |    |    | 24            | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
|                    |    |    |    |    |    |    |              |    |    |    |    |    |    | 31            |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| April '24          |    |    |    |    |    |    | May '24      |    |    |    |    |    |    | June '24      |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Su                 | M  | Tu | W  | Th | F  | S  | Su           | M  | Tu | W  | Th | F  | S  | Su            | M  | Tu | W  | Th | F  | S  |
|                    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |              |    |    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  |               |    |    |    |    |    | 1  |
| 7                  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 5            | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 2             | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  |
| 14                 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 12           | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 9             | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 21                 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 19           | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 16            | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 28                 | 29 | 30 |    |    |    |    | 26           | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |    | 23            | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
|                    |    |    |    |    |    |    |              |    |    |    |    |    |    | 30            |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| July '24           |    |    |    |    |    |    | August '24   |    |    |    |    |    |    | September '24 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Su                 | M  | Tu | W  | Th | F  | S  | Su           | M  | Tu | W  | Th | F  | S  | Su            | M  | Tu | W  | Th | F  | S  |
|                    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |              |    |    |    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 1             | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
| 7                  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 4            | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 8             | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 14                 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 11           | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 15            | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 21                 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 18           | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 22            | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 28                 | 29 | 30 | 31 |    |    |    | 25           | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 29            | 30 |    |    |    |    |    |
|                    |    |    |    |    |    |    |              |    |    |    |    |    |    |               |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| October '24        |    |    |    |    |    |    | November '24 |    |    |    |    |    |    | December '24  |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Su                 | M  | Tu | W  | Th | F  | S  | Su           | M  | Tu | W  | Th | F  | S  | Su            | M  | Tu | W  | Th | F  | S  |
|                    |    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |              |    |    |    |    | 1  | 2  | 1             | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
| 6                  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 3            | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 8             | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 13                 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 10           | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 15            | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 20                 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 17           | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 22            | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 27                 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |    |    | 24           | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 29            | 30 | 31 |    |    |    |    |
|                    |    |    |    |    |    |    |              |    |    |    |    |    |    |               |    |    |    |    |    |    |

- Holiday Closure
- Parent-Teacher Conferences (School Open)
- Professional In-Service Training Day (School Closed)



**STEM**  
**Child Care**

[www.stemchildcare.com](http://www.stemchildcare.com)