

# **TUITION POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

## **Funding Options**

Scholarships or a sliding fee are available for income eligible families and are funded by the United Way of Freeborn County. Applications are included in the registration packet or can be obtained at the James Avenue site when funding is available.

## **Deposit and Registration Fee**

- **Registration Fee** - A non-refundable registration fee of \$25.00 per child will be collected annually.
- **Deposit** - A non-refundable deposit in the amount of contracted weekly rate for the child's age group is required for each child to hold a slot for all new enrollments. The slot can be held for up to 30 days. For expectant mothers, the slot can be held for up to 90 days from the child's date of birth. No slot is guaranteed without a deposit.

## **Contracts and Child Care Rates**

- By committing to a contract, you are guaranteed a slot for your child and, in turn, guaranteeing a payment for that slot to The Children's Center, regardless of actual attendance.
- Our contract is a legal and binding contract of exchange of money for services.
- Overages will be charged at the hourly contracted rate if you go over the contracted amount for School Aged during the school months only. School Age care is on a weekly, full time contract in the Summer months and will not be charged overages.
- Contract terminations will be allowed through a written request received two weeks prior to termination.
- All childcare rates will be clearly posted and communicated to parents. Rates are subject to change at any time upon a 30 day notice from The Children's Center.
- One of the Executive Directors must authorize any other arrangements or rates.

## **Daycare Assistance Programs**

- Assistance is provided for eligible families through the Department of Human Services (DHS).
- Assistance does not always cover the entire tuition cost, and the family will be responsible for the difference. Co-pays given by the Department of Human Services will be billed weekly.
- Registration fees may be covered through the Department of Human Services.

## **Billing and Payment**

- Parents will be billed weekly based on the age group of their child/ren for the current week of care. Any overage charges for school year, School Age contracts and vacation credits will appear on the following week's statement. Any overpayments will be applied to their account balance.
- Payment is due no later than Friday 12:00 Noon. Payment can be made at any site managed by The Children's Center. A late payment fee of \$10.00 will be added if payment is not received by Friday noon of the current week.
- Payment options available include check, cash, ACH, credit or debit card and online. (ACH debits are an automatic withdrawal out of a savings or checking account.) Credit card or debit cards payments will be charged a 3% finance fee.
- Additional charges may be incurred for special events, field trips, and special programs. Any charges for optional services incurred are due upon presentation of a statement from the Center.
- One of the Executive Directors must authorize any other billing and payment arrangement.

### **Past Due Accounts**

- Any account in which payment has not been received within 2 weeks will be considered a Past Due Account.
- All Past Due Accounts require a written Past Due Payment Agreement with The Children's Center.
- The Past Due Payment Agreement will include an 18% APR financing fee on all accounts that have fallen 30 days or more past due.
- One of the Executive Directors must authorize any other arrangements.
- The Children's Center reserves the right immediately to cease providing services under contract for any child enrolled under a Past Due Account. If your account is Past Due, your child may be denied access to the center.
- Violation of a Past Due Payment Agreement may result in cancellation of that agreement and submission of the Past Due Account to a collection agency under the Collection Policy, below.

### **Late Pick-up Fees**

- Late fees will be applied for children staying beyond the Center's closing time. A late fee of \$5.00 will be charged for each child picked up after 6:00pm at the James Avenue site and 5:30pm at the St. John's Site. An additional \$1.00 per minute will be charged for each child after 6:05pm at the James Avenue Site and 5:35pm at the St. John's Site.
- Consistent late pick-ups after center closing time can result in termination of childcare contract.

### **Vacation Credit**

- Since The Children's Center is financially committed on a daily basis to care for your child, refunds and/or credits are not given for absenteeism. We are a professionally staffed facility and we guarantee your family a daily service. Thus, we expect payment regardless of absenteeism.
- Every family will receive 5 days of vacation credit to use from January to the end of December every year. Contact the office for the specific number of vacation days available. Vacation credit is prorated for those who enroll or terminate after the Session begins. Families who terminate after using unearned vacation credit will be billed for that time. There will be no refund for unused vacation credits.
- You can request a vacation day by contacting the office. All vacation day requests must be made by 5:00pm Friday of the week you wish to have them applied. It is your responsibility to notify your child's teacher when your child is going to be absent.
- Any other arrangements or exceptions must be authorized by one of the Executive Directors.
- No tuition credit is given when the center is closed the following dates, however vacation credits can be used: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, a day each fall that The Children's Center is closed for a teacher prep day which is based on the Albert Lea School District 241 school schedule and 1 Floating Holiday that will be determined each year, in January.

### **Non-Sufficient Funds/Returned Check/ACH Charge**

- There will be a \$25.00 fee charged for all checks or ACH debits returned, dishonored or unpaid for any reason.

### **Collection Policy**

- The Center is financially committed on a monthly basis to care for children; therefore, we have implemented the following collection policy. The Center will refer to a Collection Agency or Small Claims Court any account which has fallen more than 30 days past due unless a Past Due Payment Agreement for that account has been approved by one of the Executive Directors and followed without violation by the debtor. All charges for collection fees, attorney fees, court costs, or any other expense involved in the collection of these charges may be borne by the parent.