

Parent Handbook



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A WELCOME LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Parents:

My name is Alice Crouch and I am the owner of The Children's Nest Child Care Centers. We have seven schools: Temple Terrace, Hyde Park, Town and Country, Plant City, Brandon, Northdale and Lutz. I began in the child care industry by teaching in the classroom. In 1979, I felt there was a great need for quality child care in the Tampa area. That was when my company was founded. Today we have a combined enrollment of over 750 children.

Our primary purpose is to provide the highest quality of service to the children and families we serve. We've made a great effort to insure there is a balance of quality with affordability. We are not simply baby-sitters. We provide stimulating, developmentally-appropriate curriculum for all our younger preschool children along with fun, exciting activities for our older school-age children. We supply the tools and materials that stimulate self-confidence, a positive self-image and a life-long desire for learning.

The Children's Nest Child Care Centers, Inc. is locally owned and operated. I am actively involved in the daily operation of each school; if you have a problem, I will handle it quickly and to your satisfaction.

It is the Center's policy to comply with all applicable laws that provide equal opportunity for all families and persons, and we do not discriminate against anyone based on sex, religion, national origin, color, race, marital status, physical or mental disabilities or veteran status.

We take tremendous pride in our reputation as one of Tampa's finest child care facilities, and we work hard every day to keep it that way. Thank you for giving us a chance to serve you.

Alice Crouch, President

OPERATING PHILOSOPHY

Our centers are committed to the basic principles of early childhood education, namely the development of the whole child intellectually, emotionally, socially, and physically.

Every child needs a variety of activities, individual attention, love, acceptance and a chance to explore and learn about his/her environment. We have created developmentally-appropriate programs that focus on the PROCESS of learning. Children's Nest programs are intended to help children enjoy successful experiences. We encourage not just learning, but the love of learning. We accept children of all races, religions, nationalities, and backgrounds. This includes children with special needs, and we make accommodations when needed as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Daily communication is encouraged between Children's Nest staff and parents. We work together to strengthen each child's own cultural identity while instilling a respect for others who may be different.

As a partner with you in the education of your child, Children's Nest maintains an open door policy. We invite you and your child's family to visit the center at any time to see how your child and the class spend their day. For those parents interested in participating in your child's day there is always an opportunity to join or lead the class in an activity or even a story. In addition your teachers and I are always available to discuss your child's progress and look forward to partnering with you.

GOAL-CURRICULUM

It is our intention to help children to learn by focusing on:

- developing gross and fine motor skills,
- promoting growth cognitively as well as academically,
- offering training in social skills,
- monitoring physical growth and
- teaching morals that help instill integrity.

Our academic programs are taught on an age-appropriate and awareness level. We mix many different types of curricula that will help prepare children for more formal education later in life.

Each class has plans posted in their rooms and in the main lobby of each center. We use center-based activities which help children learn in a concrete way. Many concepts are taught by using stories, songs, flannel graphs, and role play. Organized play is a child's greatest learning tool. Every attempt is made to be sensitive to ethnic backgrounds and traditions on a day-to-day basis including multicultural holidays. We want to help your child become an enthusiastic learner, helping them to acquire knowledge and skills, as well as developing the disposition and inclination to use them.

Furthermore, the use of television is not a regular experience in our classrooms. We feel that a hands-on approach is more effective in the learning process.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Our center opens at 6:30 a.m. and closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. An additional fee will be charged for each child left after 6:00 p.m.. Parents will be charged a rate

of \$1.00 for each 1 minute period or any part therein. **This fee needs to be paid in cash to the staff member staying late.**

FEES

Children's Nest Child Care Centers has an annual registration/supply fee of \$100. This NON-REFUNDABLE fee is due upon enrollment and covers the cost of insurance and administration. All TUITION fees are payable in **advance** for the current week. **There is no reduction or discount in tuition for short weeks due to a holiday or absence from illness.** If payment is not received by 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, a late fee of \$20 will be assessed. If payment is not received by Thursday, we reserve the right to terminate childcare. Non-sufficient funds or closed-account check returns will be charged \$25. After the second returned check, you will be asked to pay in cash for a period of six months.

ENROLLMENT

We accept children 6 months to 12 years of age without bias to gender, race, color, creed, handicap or religion. Upon enrollment, parent and child will be given guided tour of our facility, and then parent/guardians will need to fill out our enrollment forms before the first day of attendance. You will be required to provide us with a current yellow DCF 3040 Medical History Form and a blue DCF 680 Shot Record for your child. Both DCF forms are available from your pediatrician. *Parents are responsible for keeping these forms updated periodically with proper notification from the Center's office.* **Be prepared to pay the registration fee and one week's tuition at time of enrollment.**

Children's Nest welcomes

PARENT REFERRAL PROGRAM

Any parent that refers another family to Children's Nest will receive a credit of one week's tuition on their account.

VOLUNTARY PRESCHOOL PROGRAM (VPK)*

Children's Nest will be participating in the 540 hour Hillsborough County Voluntary Preschool Program. Children eligible for this class must be 4 years old on or before September 1st. Classes will begin at 9:00 a.m. and end promptly at 12:00 noon for 180 days. A nutritious snack will be served during the morning but no lunch. Extended hours are available at an additional cost. The preschool program is sponsored by the Hillsborough County school system. You must sign up through the Early Childhood Coalition to participate in this program. Please see the Director for more information. (Our learning program continues throughout the entire day not just during the morning session.)

*Should the State of Florida lose funding for this program, parents will be responsible for the weekly tuition payment if they wish to remain in the special VPK class.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

First and foremost, we adhere to following law as written by The Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing Office:

1. *Child care facilities must ensure that age-appropriate, constructive disciplinary practices are used for children in their care.*
2. *Children shall not be subject to discipline which is sever, humiliating, or frightening*
3. *Discipline shall not be associated with food, rest, or bathroom privileges*
4. *Discipline shall not involve the denial of active play as a consequence of misbehavior*
5. *Spanking or any other form of physical corporal punishment is not permitted.*

In a broader sense, discipline at The Children's Nest defines the methods our staff uses to manage children's behavior.

This first step towards managing behaviors is setting realistic expectations of each age group. A toddler is not expected to behave and respond in the same manner as a pre-schooler. Our staff must be aware of what constitutes acceptable behaviors for whatever age group that they are teaching.

Next, how we set up and conduct our classrooms can help ensure that problems will be minimized. Children in a classroom must have appropriate and interesting things to do, enough time to engage in activities, and experiences that require no more adult involvement than is available. An orderly environment with well-defined spaces, appropriate materials, and a schedule geared to the needs of children will contribute greatly towards order and calm, help minimize conflicts, and greatly reduce the kinds of difficult behaviors we are trying to manage and avoid.

However, some measure of challenging behaviors is unavoidable and must be managed. **Our philosophy is to view unacceptable behavior as mistaken behavior instead of misbehavior.** Mistaken behavior suggests that children are learning to behave acceptably and therefore subject to making mistakes. Some approaches we use to deal with mistaken behavior, includes:

Logical Consequences: An example might be "Since you broke the crayons, you will need to leave the art area and find another place to play."

A Time and Place to Calm Down: Providing a safe space away from others can be a helpful way to help a child regain his/her composure. It is particularly effective when teachers help children learn to take themselves there when they are upset or need a quiet space. The key is that this is not punitive and it is self-regulated – the child determines when to return to the group.

Reinforcement: The phrase "catch them being good" is a way to encourage, reward, and provide positive social reinforcement to children for desired behavior.

Obviously, we must ensure the physical safety of everyone in our schools, so we cannot tolerate physically aggressive behaviors. If a child presents a danger to himself or others, we may need to use physical restraint which can be handled gently but firmly. Children will be held from behind to contain any flailing of arms and legs. They will be spoken to calmly and told that once the child re-gains control they will be let go. We might take an out-of-control child to an open space where their feelings can be worked out. Violent outbursts are usually short-lived, especially if we help children learn to control themselves.

However, if there is persistent behavior problem with a child, we will have a conference with the parents, teachers, and director regarding how as a group we can modify the behavior going forward. And if the continued behavior problem represents a danger to the staff or other children, we reserve the right to ask parents to withdraw their children from our School.

The following approaches are **never acceptable and never used:** spanking or physical punishment, name-calling, withholding of food, rest, or bathroom privileges, and the like.

We encourage you to speak with the School Director if you have any questions regarding our discipline policies or procedures.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

Child abuse and neglect is a serious problem which can have devastating effects on the abused or neglected child, the parents, and other loved ones. As a child care facility, we are mandated under Florida statues to report any and all suspected abuse.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES

On our enrollment form, there is a place for you to list the names of individuals who are authorized to pick up your child. This will be verified at time of pick up. We will NOT release your child until we have written or verbal confirmation from you. **Persons picking up your child MUST bring in photo identification. Access to classroom areas is limited to those having a purpose for being there. This is for the protection of children and staff.**

If there is a custodial dispute between divorced parents, we must have a copy of the official court documents on file. They must state the custody disposition and allowances.

Upon arriving and departing, your child MUST be signed in and out daily. A child must be left with a staff member upon arrival at the center and a staff member must be notified when a student is leaving. You will find a Communication Log on the table in the lobby for any special instructions or information we might need to know about your child. Staff will check this log regularly.

The safety of your child is Children's Nest first priority, therefore all Children's Nest facilities have limited access and only authorized people with a purpose to be there will be allowed. Parents and authorized personnel only will have codes assigned to them to gain access to our facilities. We ask that parents and other authorized personnel do not share their codes with others. Any individual who is not authorized for a code, but will be picking your child up will need to present photo identification at the office. Prior arrangements need to be made before your child will be released to them.

Furthermore, Children's Nest cares deeply about the safety of your children and your family. Our concern prevents us from releasing any children to any individual who is or appears to be intoxicated. We reserve the right to not release a child into this situation and will require another authorized person to pick up the child.

ILLNESS

Children's Nest cannot care for sick children. **Children must not be brought to the Center if they have:**

Diarrhea, vomiting, severe nasal excretions, undetermined rashes or spots, fever, headaches, upset stomachs, or other symptoms of illness.

Parents will be asked to pick up their child if:

They have two runny loose stools, develop a fever of 100 or more, are throwing up or show other signs or symptoms of illness.

Parents need to respond or arrange for pick up of a sick child in a reasonable amount of time or the next person on the emergency release will be called.

Children’s Nest and the County Health Department both require that a child be excluded from the center until 24 hours after the cessation of symptoms.

The Center will always inform parents if their child becomes exposed to any communicable diseases. The office usually has special handouts that help explain certain signs to look for when they are exposed. The Director’s office has a cozy area set up for the temporary care of ill children.

HEAD LICE

Head Lice is a constant problem in group care and in the public school system. If your child has live lice or nits attached to the hair shaft they must be removed from the center immediately. They should be treated with an approved treatment system. (See Director for more information.) All nits must be removed from hair before being allowed to return to the center.

MEDICATION

ONLY PRESCRIPTION AND OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATION WILL BE GIVEN BY THE CHILD CARE STAFF WITH WRITTEN ORDERS FROM YOUR CHILD’S PEDIATRICIAN. You must fill out a special medication form or sign the Medication Log which includes the name of the medication, dosage, and time / date the medication is to be given before we can administer any medication. Parent instructions must be consistent with the labeling on the medication or doctor’s note. Medication must be in the original container with the child’s name and directions for dispensing. Children’s Nest will not administer the initial dose of medication. Any unused or expired medication will be disposed of. ***We prefer to give medication only at the noon meal or when School Age children come into the center. All medications are given by trained staff.*** Medication must be left with a staff member or in the kitchen with the proper forms attached. All medications are stored in a locked location in the kitchen.

During enrollment parents list all allergies on their child’s enrollment form. This information is provided to teachers to post in each classroom and kitchen. If a child has an allergy that requires the use of an Epinephrine, teachers are trained on how to administer the drug.

TRANSITION INTO THE CLASSROOM

Children who have never been in group care can have a hard time initially adjusting to the transition from parent to teacher at first. Transition is never easy but it is necessary. It usually takes about 2 weeks for your child to build a bond or attachment to staff caring for them. We recommend you set up a good-bye routine that you stick to until this transition is made. Please talk to the staff about the ritual you want to set up, so we can be consistent. We want parents to feel comfortable about leaving their children.

When we transition a child from class to class, we communicate our intention to the parent to be certain we are all in agreement and understanding regarding the classroom change. We then begin a “visitor program” whereby the child will move up to the next class slowly, getting to know the staff, routine and other children. They might visit for a few mornings and then stay for a few lunch times. Each time they may return to their former class room and to

the level of comfort that makes them feel secure. Our first priority is the well being of the child.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES - ACCIDENTS - INSURANCE

In **medical emergencies**, we call you or those designated by you on the enrollment form first. If we are unable to reach you or your designated persons, we will call your child's physician and/or arrange for immediate emergency treatment to the nearest hospital or hospital of your preference. You are responsible for payment of all medical services rendered and not covered under our student health plan.

On our enrollment form we ask for your **insurance carrier**, the **policy number**, and the **name and telephone number of your primary physician/emergency care source**. It is important to report any information changes. We carry student accident insurance on each of our students. This is primary-type insurance. *It will pay first before your insurance*. You must bring **itemized** bills to the Director and she will submit them. The insurance only covers accidents to your child on the premises and on school field trips only.

For all injuries or incidents, you will be asked to sign a DCF Accident and Incident Report that tells you what happened and what was done for the accident or incident.

Children's Nest has a policy of verbal notification on ANY head injuries. We leave it to your discretion as to whether you should see your physician. If a child ever losses consciousness for any amount of time because of a head injury, 911 will be notified first.

CENTER CLOSINGS

The Director may choose to close the center in the event of hazardous weather, a loss in power, heat or water. Parents will be notified by phone if the center closes during regular school hours. Children's Nest Child Care Centers will close when the local county Board of Commissioner closes government offices and the public schools close for dangerous weather conditions. In the event schools close for emergency shelter preparation Children's Nest will remain open.

We do have a SHELTER IN PLACE Procedure for emergencies involving chemical or biological threats. See Director for special handout concerning this policy.

Should Children's Nest need to evacuate for bad weather, we would transport children to:

Alternate phone numbers:

HOLIDAYS

THE CENTER CLOSSES FOR THESE HOLIDAYS:

*New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day,
Thanksgiving Thursday and Friday, and Christmas Day*

Christmas Eve hours are generally shorter than regular hours, but can vary depending on the year. Please check with your school director.

THERE WILL BE NO REDUCTIONS OR DISCOUNTS IN TUITION FOR SHORT WEEKS DUE TO A HOLIDAY OR ABSENCES FROM ILLNESS.

If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, we will with proper notification to the parents close the center the Friday before the holiday and/or the Monday following the holiday.

VPK HOLIDAYS

VPK Holidays generally follow the public school calendar. See you director for a calendar for this school year.

For those attending the 3 hour class, if you wish to attend on one of these holidays it is an additional \$10 for the day.

See separate handout for Attendance Policies set forth by the Children's Board.

VACATION ALLOWANCE

We recognize that families take vacations, get sick, or have special events where you need to be away. Children's Nest Child Care Centers allows for a 2 WEEK VACATION ALLOWANCE per calendar year for each family. You must be enrolled at least six months to be eligible for this VACATION ALLOWANCE. No tuition is due for the 2 weeks you are away. ***After that, full tuition is due unless you choose to withdraw your child.***

You may separate the weeks if necessary but your child may not attend the center during their ALLOWANCE WEEKS. (We do not separate vacation time into a daily rate.)

It is important to notify the Director when you will be using your ALLOWANCE WEEKS.

In the event you choose to withdraw your child, another registration fee will be charged upon re-enrollment.

SECURITY TOYS - EXTRA TRINKETS

We know children sometimes need the security of a blanket or toy and we allow for that need. Please label all personal blankets with your child's name. We ask that you refrain from sending toys, books, little cars, trinkets, expensive jewelry, anything of great value, etc., to the center. It can be very difficult for a child when these items are lost, misplaced or broken.

Children's Nest Child Care Centers will not be financially responsible in the event that any of these items are lost or broken.

CLOTHING

Children should wear comfortable play clothes. ONLY CLOSE-TOED SHOES WILL BE ALLOWED.

No open-toed or backless sandals are allowed. All clothes such as jackets, sweaters, hats, etc., need to be clearly marked with your child's name.

It is important to bring in a COMPLETE change of clothes for your child. Children under the age

of 2 1/2 may need several changes per day. Please make sure these extra clothes are labeled and placed in your child's cubby area.

REST TIME

The center will provide each child with an assigned sleeping mat. We ask you provide a child size blanket and sheet to be used during rest time. These items will need to be taken home each Friday for laundering.

TELEVISION AND VIDEO POLICY

Television and video are used in our schools for very specific, educational purposes. We do not use television for entertainment purposes.

MEALS AND NUTRITION

Children's Nest in Brandon, Lutz, Northdale, Plant City, Town & Country, and Temple Terrace all participate in the USDA Child Care Food Program. We serve 2 snacks and a hot meal to all enrolled children Monday through Friday. Menus periodically include representative of a variety of cultures. At these centers, families enrolled will be asked to fill out an additional food application form upon enrollment and yearly thereafter. The information requested on these forms is necessary for the centers to be reimbursed for meals served.

All meals and snacks served by Children's Nest meet the meal patterns established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. (Children's Nest also serves milk to all non-allergic students. Please see the following link for information regarding the CACFP milk guidelines: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/Regs-Policy/policymemo/2011/CACFP-21-2011.pdf>)

Any food that is brought into the Center to be shared among children **must** be commercially-prepared or prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by local health officials. Monthly menus are posted in the lobby area and in the classrooms.

Breakfast may be available at an additional charge. See the Director for information regarding cost, serving times and menus.

Parents of children requiring special diets because of food restrictions or allergies need to speak to the Director about providing for the needs of the child. Children's Nest will provide an alternate within the same food group. We have a special Nutritional Agreement Form you must sign. Further, and individual meals brought from home must also meet the meal patterns established by the USDA as linked above.

Handouts on proper nutrition are available in the office or at the parent resource table.

Food Safety: Children's Nest follows appropriate food safety, handling and storage as outlined by the USDA and local Health Department. All staff that handles food must have their Food Handlers Certification.

AFTERCARE AND TRANSPORTATION

Children's Nest picks up school age children from local elementary schools in our service area. The children come back to the center where they are served a snack and then engage in organized play both inside and outside. We have supervised homework time Monday through Thursday.

Our vans are equipped with age appropriate safety restraints and first aid supplies.

Every van driver must have a current:

Driver's license

Annual physical

First aid/CPR training

On school holidays and during the summer, we plan fun field trips and outings for the school age children such as skating, movies, visits to county parks, etc.

There is no additional fee for your child to attend when we pick up half day from public schools, but a fee will be charged for extra entire holiday attendance.

FIELD TRIPS

On our registration forms there is a place to sign giving consent for Children's Nest to transport your child (4 year olds and up) on exciting and fun field trips. You will be informed as to where we will be going and if there is any additional cost. You MUST sign individual permission slips for each trip your child goes on. ***If there is a cost for the field trip you will need to pay in cash and not include it in your tuition check.***

Field Trip Procedures and Rules:

Procedures:

Clipboards with accident/incident reports

Field trip sheets with parent emergency numbers

Roll call list with staff and driver signatures

Call roll on the van before you leave Children's Nest

Departure time must be written on the roll call sheet

The teacher needs to walk around to maintain a safe environment for the children. Before leaving the field trip, teachers call roll before and after getting on van

Each teacher must take a cell phone with them in the van and on the trip

Rules:

Children must stay with the teacher at ALL times

If the children need to go to the restroom, ask the group if anyone else needs to go so that you are not making too many trips

You need to see or hear the children at ALL times, this is why we call roll every 30 minutes

Van rules:

Sit facing forward in your seat at all times

Seat belts MUST be worn until the van has made a complete stop and driver has said for them

to get off

While in the van, quiet voices must be used to ensure the safety of everyone on the van

When two vans are traveling, THEY MUST STAY TOGETHER

NO RADIO

On field trips we like to take along extra supervision, so if you are free and would like to come, please do not hesitate to volunteer. Children will NOT be allowed to participate unless a parent has signed the appropriate field trip form. A verbal release is **NOT** acceptable. (Monies paid will be reimbursed if child does not attend activity.)

STAFFING

All staff members have been screened through Child Care Licensing and have completed several law enforcement background checks. Each member is required to have a 45 hour training class, which includes a 5-hour segment on early literacy. We require all staff to take the Pediatrics First Aid and CPR. Each year after the initial training classes, we require 25 annual hours of in-service training. Staff is given opportunities to grow professionally through a program of in-service training in child development, curriculum and developmentally-appropriate practices.

We must have on staff one person with a CDA (Child Development Associates Credential) or it's equivalency for every 20 children under the age of 5 . We encourage all staff members to continue with their education and interests. Our staff members must love working with children and have a gentle, caring personality. They respect and accept children and their parents as they are, while being efficient and orderly without being rigid. Hugging and lap sitting are expected.

The State of Florida requires directors of licensed child care centers to hold a Director's Credential Certification. All Children's Nest directors have completed this requirement.

KEEPING PARENTS INFORMED AND INVOLVED

We try very hard to keep parents informed about what is happening in the center. We put out newsletters and e-newsletters letting you know what is being taught in the classroom and other important information. You will find Information Boards and video screens throughout the center advising you of the daily activities or special events. Infant/toddler classrooms send daily reports (while pre-school and VPK send weekly reports) with information about your child's day as well as any information you may need to know. We put on special events during the year that are of interest to our parents, such as "Getting Ready for Kindergarten" in the spring for our VPK parents, for example. We have conference times available to keep parents abreast of their child's progress or you may call between the hours of 12 noon and 2 p.m. and speak to your child's teacher.

Since parents are the most significant adults in a child's life, our teachers strive to create a partnership with parents, which benefit the child. We invite you to participate in all classroom activities, parties, events and field trips. Your involvement is encouraged and appreciated.

PARENTAL DISPUTES

One of the main reasons parents become dissatisfied with a center is they feel they are not receiving the quality of service they require. The Director's door is always open to discuss any problems or issues you might have. We cannot fix a problem until we are made aware there is one. One of our main goals is parent satisfaction. We want to build your confidence in knowing you are leaving your child in a clean and safe learning environment.

WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD

When it becomes necessary to withdraw your child from the center, we ask you give us two weeks' notice. It will give us enough time to prepare classmates for the departure of one of their friends. We may also need to finish any screenings or observations we have been working on. Always request your child's physical and shot record from the front office.

Toilet Training Made Easy

Taken from a pamphlet by Ginny Pease

First, is your child ready to be potty trained?

Can they stay dry for at least 2 hours at a time?

They have regular scheduled bowel movements?

They let you know when they are wet or soiled by some method of communication.

They are walking all by themselves.

Are they off the bottle?

Can your child tell you if they are a boy or a girl?

They are not afraid of the toilet/potty.

They have the ability to wait a short time for something they want.

They can follow simple directions.

They want to do things for themselves.

If they have most of the above list, then go for it.

Children's Nest will assist you in achieving this goal. You will need to supply many changes of clothes as accidents will occur. Don't forget to put your child's name on all articles of clothing. We will not wash soiled underwear

.How to Introduce Toilet Training

First tell them about the bathroom and what you do when you're in it. Example: Show them how the sink works and why they need to use it. Tell them about the toilet (don't give it a funny name.) Tell your child why they are using it, where the waste goes and show them how to flush it. Let them watch as the water flushes away instead of slamming down the toilet seat. Show them how to sit on the toilet. Let them sit with their clothes on. Tell them why and how people use the toilet-because people like to stay "nice and clean." If they act afraid to sit on the potty, you might let them sit one of their favorite stuffed animals on it and pretend like they're toileting. Show them the toilet paper and why they should use it. Give them a word they can have for urination and for their bowel movement. Keep the same name for each action so they don't get confused.

How to Toilet Train

At first you need to put them on the toilet every half hour. If they have accidents then shorten that time to every 15 minutes. When they do accomplish the task, make sure you use lots of praise such as: *Look what you did all by yourself! Good toileting! You're really toileting like a big boy or girl! You can even flush the toilet all by yourself! You pulled up your pants so well!*

Remember to praise them for good toileting and do not punish them for their failure. Don't force them to use the potty against their wishes.

Sometimes it takes a little more initiative to toilet train boys. You must decide whether to stand or sit. If you want them to learn to go toilet when they sit, make sure you show them how to "tuck themselves in" and aim into the potty and not on the floor or walls. If they are to stand, you might want to float something in the water like a small piece of paper or a Cheerio for your child to aim for.

Night time toilet training can begin at the same time as daytime toilet training. Don't give any fluids an hour before bedtime. Make sure you put a plastic sheet on the bed to protect the mattress from accidents. Let them go potty before they get into bed. You might want to check on them about an hour after they have fallen asleep.

The most important key to toilet training is staying calm. Don't get frustrated when you first get started. Make it as stress free as possible. Accidents do happen but that is what they are accidents. Clothes will wash, floors can be cleaned just take your time and be patient.

Screenings and Assessments

All children develop through a prescribed sequence of development; however, each child is an individual and does not develop according to the same timetable. So in order to meet each individual child's developmental needs, we must assess and screen where the child is and what the child's needs are.

As a result, Children's Nest conducts various screenings and assessments on our students during their enrollment with us. Specifically, we conduct the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) on each child ages infants to age 5 after 30 days of initial enrollment and annually thereafter around their birthday (Note: Up until age two, screening are completed every six months). Also, parents will be asked to sign ASQ's after they are completed. In certain circumstances ASQ's may need to be conducted more often. ASQ's are a developmental screening tool used to record development progress in children. Our teachers are responsible for conducting and scoring screenings and assessments in a relaxed classroom setting. We also look to involve families while conducting the ASQ's. Signing your enrollment forms is a grant of permission to administer ASQ's. Beyond ASQ's, we also may use Hillsborough County School Readiness Expectations, Scholastic, Doors to Discovery, VPK Standard Assessment, and others.

Your child's teacher will schedule a conference with you to discuss the findings of the ASQ and other assessments throughout the year. (Also, you will be asked to sign that you have received and reviewed your child's results.) We use these tools in an effort to better plan our weekly lesson plans to help ensure we are meeting the individual needs of our children. If we believe an outside agency would be appropriate or helpful, we will contact you with this information. All Screenings and assessments will be kept confidential in a secure area in your child's classroom. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know and your teacher and/or school director will be happy to go over the screening/assessment with you.

Emergency Procedures for Fire and Weather

Children's Nest conducts monthly fire drills which require children being evacuated from the building. Each classroom has emergency exit posters showing a primary and a secondary emergency route. It is important you follow the directions given by your child's teacher(s) should you find yourself on site during a fire or weather drill. Please make sure to calmly evacuate the building with all staff and children. You may re-enter the building when the all clear is given.