Staff Handbook

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CHILD CARE & PARENT INSTITUTE

**MISSION STATEMENT**

We are committed to striving for the highest possible standards in childcare and early education programs and, in so doing, supporting the children, families, students and professionals of the Nest Child Care and Parent Institute. At Nest, children are encouraged to explore the world around them and we are motivated to help them discover their world by providing a space that is emotionally secure, physically safe and fun!

**VISION**

We strive to be a dynamic, professional force dedicated to improving the lives of young children through providing consummate care and early education for children, support systems and resources for families, model training, and development opportunities for early childhood educators.

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**Welcome**

We are pleased to have you join our professional teaching staff. We strive to create a sense of community amongst ourselves as well as with the families we serve and hope you will soon find yourself comfortable among new friends and colleagues here at the Nest Child Care and Parent Institute.

Please familiarize yourself with the information in this handbook. It should give you a clear understanding of our guiding philosophy while detailing policies and procedures that you will use on a daily basis. Feel free to ask lots of questions and, once again, WELCOME!

**General Staff Expectations**

Professionalism

Each Nest staff member is a child care professional and is expected to act as such. The following guidelines for professionalism should be maintained at all times:

* Arrive on time and stay entire shift, if needed.
* Is not absent from work on a regular basis and finds a substitute when necessary.
* Dress appropriately for interaction with children.
* Take directions, suggestions and criticisms, and follow through to improve performance.
* Respect confidential information regarding children, families, and co-workers.
* Display a positive attitude toward the entire center (the program, children, families and co-workers).
* Attend staff meetings and other Center events.
* Complete required training courses in a timely fashion.

Dress Code

Staff members are expected to observe the 3 C’s for appropriate attire at work as follows:

COMFORTABLE – Staff is expected to play with the children and be down at their level whenever it is appropriate. To do this, staff must be dressed in comfortable clothes that allow free movement and activity. Staff members should wear clothing they feel comfortable getting dirty or stained, as staff members are expected to participate alongside the children during all daily activities. **Flip-flops and open-toe shoes are inappropriate footwear.**

CLEAN - All clothing should be clean with no stains, rips or tears, and must smell appropriate. This also applies to personal hygiene.

COURTEOUS - Staff members interact with children and parents on a daily basis and should dress professionally. Clothing may not contain alcohol, drug, or cigarette references. Vulgar sayings or suggestions are forbidden. Certain articles of clothing are never appropriate for the work environment.

**Do not wear any of the following: halter tops, strapless “tube” tops, short skirts/miniskirts/shorts, sweatpants, yoga pants, jeans, jeggings, excessively torn jeans/shorts, low-rise jeans/shorts which expose undergarments, hoodies, t-shirts with graphics, sweatshirts with graphics.**

It is expected that all staff members will present themselves and the Nest Child Care and Parent Institute in a professional, respectable manner. Any staff member not adhering to the dress code may be asked to leave and return dressed appropriately.

Cell Phones

It is important that every staff member’s attention remains on the children at all times. A second’s lapse in attention could result in a serious accident, which, with appropriate supervision, would have been prevented. Therefore: Cell phones are not permitted in any of the program rooms. **Cell phones should remain turned off and stored in a purse, bag, coat, etc. while a staff member is clocked in.** Cell phone use is permitted only during an approved break, and never in a classroom. It is never appropriate to make a personal phone call, send a text message, check voicemail, etc. while in the presence of children, even while on an approved break.

It is expected that when leaving the center for any reason (walk, field trip, playground, etc.), one staff member will carry with them a cell phone. In this circumstance, the cell phone should only be used in the event of an emergency and not for personal calls/text messaging.

In the event of an emergency, the staff member must inform both the Lead Teacher and Director. In this case, cell phones must be set to vibrate. Calls may be answered only after a substitute has arrived to replace the staff member, and outside of the classroom. Ratios must be maintained at all times.

Computers

All Nest-owned computers are to be used for work purposes only. Under no circumstances may software be installed without the prior permission of the Director and/or Executive Director. Staff members may bring in a personal computer to use during nap-time only. The wireless network password may be obtained from the Director. Computer use is forbidden during all times other than nap/rest time.

Unmonitored Contact

**For the protection of each staff member, we always work in teams.** No staff should ever be alone with a single child. Another staff member should be within sight/sound at all times.

Timesheet and Payroll

**Each hourly staff member is responsible for signing in and out each scheduled workday** in addition to tracking their hours worked using a bi-weekly timesheet. Staff members may not sign in more than 15 minutes before their scheduled shift and are expected to clock out immediately after their shift ends. If a staff member forgets to sign in or out, the Director should be notified promptly when this situation arises for approval of time for that day. Failure to follow the above guidelines may delay processing of a staff member’s payroll check until the following pay date. Payday is every two weeks.

Direct Deposit

Direct deposit of payroll checks is available to all staff members. Interested staff should submit their bank and routing information to the Director to enroll. Processing may take one to two weeks; staff members will receive a paper check until direct deposit is processed.

Personal Belongings

Coats, backpacks, purses, etc. must be safely put on hooks, in closets/cabinets, lockers and out of reach of children. Nest is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Food/Meals

Staff members may store a small amount of food in the break room refrigerator. All food should be clearly labeled with the staff member’s name and date. Food should be removed or discarded after one week or when spoiled. Meals should be eaten and prepared only during nap/rest time or during an approved break.

Handwashing

Staff members must wash their hands at the following times:

* Upon arriving at the center
* After each diaper change
* After helping a child use the toilet
* After wiping a nose, coming into contact with saliva or any other bodily fluid.
* Before preparing meals
* Before and after meal times
* Before and after using the sensory table
* After removing gloves
* After using the restroom
* After returning to the center from a break
* After coming indoors from the playground

*\*\*Frequent hand washing with soap and warm running water for at least 20 seconds is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illnesses like diarrhea, the flu, and conjunctivitis (pink eye).*

**Program Policies and Procedures**

The following policies are intended to protect the rights of staff members and to ensure maximum understanding and cooperation. Nest staff members are expected to be:

* On-time and alert when scheduled to be at work.
* Careful and conscientious in performance of duties, including the use of positive words and actions.
* Respectful, thoughtful, and considerate of other people.
* Courteous and helpful when dealing with children, parents, visitors, and other staff members.

Confidentiality

**It is important that all staff members be discreet in sharing information regarding the children and their parents in public areas.** Names and identifying characteristics of children and families should not be shared with anyone other than staff members working in the classroom and the Executive Director and/or Director. Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances arise; staff members who discuss issues with individuals not directly related to the situation may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.

**Staff should also be careful in discussing details of the center operation, particularly problem areas, with others in public.** Staff members may not distribute or post children’s last names, address, phone numbers, etc. with the exception of distribution to Nest employees. Personal information should never be used for personal purposes. Michigan law specifically prohibits the sharing of information about children or staff members within a child care setting without written consent from the parent, guardian, or individual. This applies to outside professionals as well. **You must seek written parental consent before consulting with an outside agency about a child.**

Child Abuse and Neglect

All Nest staff members are mandatory child abuse reporters. Suspected cases of child abuse or neglect must be reported to the Department of Human Services/Child Protective Services (CPS) at:

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES, **855-444-3911**

Staff members may directly report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect to the Michigan Department of Human Services and will complete all necessary paperwork. **The staff member should inform the Executive Director and/or Director of the report and together decide whether or not to inform the parents of the report.**

If a Nest staff member is accused of abuse and/or neglect by a parent or co-worker, such an accusation will be reported to the Director and a determination will be made as to whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse and/or neglect. If there is reasonable cause, a report must be made to the Department of Human Services (DHS). Nest will cooperate with any DHS investigation. In addition, the accused staff member will be informed of the allegations and be given an opportunity to respond to those allegations. Termination of employment after a child abuse allegation is at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Grievance Procedures

**As childcare professionals, all staff members are expected to make reasonable attempts to resolve conflicts directly with the individual(s) concerned.** If a solution cannot be reached, staff members should then seek assistance from the Director and/or Executive Director in resolving the conflict.

**Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances arise. Staff members who discuss issues with other staff members not directly related to the situation may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.** This policy applies both during paid hours as well as on a staff member’s personal time.

Co-Worker Communication

Open communication between staff members, parents, and children is crucial to a successful program. Before leaving a classroom for any reason (bathroom, making a copy, calling a parent) an employee should inform his/her cooperating teachers of the reason he/she is leaving. For all involved, it is important that all issues be addressed and resolved as they arise. **All employees are expected to function as a team at all times.**

Supplies

Lead Teachers are responsible for reporting to the Director when supplies are running low so they can be replenished before supplies are completely depleted.

Parking

Staff should park in the designated or main visitor parking lot.

Suggestions

Nest is always seeking suggestions that will: improve methods, procedures, and working conditions; reduce costs or errors; and benefit the children, staff, and center. **Staff members who have suggestions or innovative ideas are encouraged to discuss them with the Executive Director and/or Director.**

Personnel Files

Nest maintains a permanent personnel file for each staff member**. These files are confidential and staff must arrange a time with the Director to review their file.** Staff members are prohibited from accessing the personnel file of another staff member for any reason. Staff members should report to the Director if there is a change in address, phone number, emergency contact, e-mail address, marital status, or number of dependents.

Substance Abuse

**Any staff members reporting for work under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances will be asked to leave immediately.** If the Executive Director and/or Director or other staff member has probable cause to believe a staff member’s faculties are impaired while on the job, the staff member may be suspended or terminated immediately.

Reimbursement

**The Director must first approve all purchases made by a staff member using personal funds.** Any unapproved purchases may not be eligible for reimbursement. Original sales receipts should be submitted to the Executive Director and/or Director within one week of purchase to receive reimbursement.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Nest Child Care and Parent Institute does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran. Nest is an equal opportunity employer.

**Nest prohibits harassment of and by its staff members** on the basis of gender, race, age, color, national origin, religion, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, citizenship, disability, and other characteristics. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, making derogatory remarks about any of these characteristics, making jokes or stereotypical comments about ethnic or other groups, and engaging in verbal, physical, and visually offensive behavior. A staff member who feels harassed has the right to file a complaint with the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Dress Code

**The Centers are places of exploration and we encourage the children and adults to dress comfortably in clothes that can get messy**. At the same time staff must keep a professional appearance. Sturdy shoes will protect your feet and make it easy to move quickly in an emergency. *(See Dress Code Policy for additional specifications)*

Keys

A key to the building will be checked out to Lead Teachers as needed and must be returned upon completion of employment. Please carry your key at all times to insure you can exit the building / yards quickly during a fire drill or emergency.

Mailboxes

Mailboxes for all staff members are located in the directors offices. Please check your box upon arrival and periodically during the day. This is one of the primary methods of communication between staff.

Planning Time

Planning time of forty-five minutes per day is paid for each classroom as staffing allows; it is generally given in conjunction with the lunch hour or during the children’s rest time. Teachers are allocated planning time on a team and individual basis.

*Unforeseen staffing shortages may affect available planning time on a day-to-day basis.*

Lesson Plans

Lesson plans are worked each week during daily planning sessions for the upcoming week. Lesson plans should be approved and posted by Monday morning on your classroom parent board. These should note specific plans including art, sensory, music, cooking projects, special stories read, field trips, outside activities, etc. for that day/week.

The Teacher is responsible to give completed lesson plans to the Center Manager at the end of each week for the upcoming week (see forms).

Physical Environment

The actual room arrangement of each program room is the responsibility of the program Lead Teacher and Teacher. Space should be organized according to the Environment Rating Scales (ERS). Centers should include blocks, dramatic play, art, large and small motor, and books. These areas should be clearly defined, with obvious boundaries. Quiet areas should be set-up as far away from noisy activities (blocks, cars, etc.) as possible. The room décor should consist mostly of child artwork and photographs of animals, people, food, and the children themselves at the child’s eye level. Room arrangement should take into consideration that staff must be able to see every child at all times. The Executive Director must approve changes to the physical environment, including the room arrangement.

**Attendance Policy**

Attendance

Consistency is crucial to creating a successful program. We make every attempt to put as few staff members as possible in each classroom. Therefore, **all staff members are expected to be in regular attendance, in order to meet ratios and provide a consistent environment and routine.**

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential for the smooth operation of the center. We want to establish uniform guidelines that will ensure a consistent and fair approach to solving attendance problems. Instances of absenteeism and/or tardiness will be documented in the staff member’s personnel file. Recurring absences or tardiness are subject to the Disciplinary Procedure. Therefore, we have developed the following attendance policy.

A. **Definitions**

1. **Incident:** An incident is a term used to tabulate deviations from a perfect attendance record.
2. **Perfect attendance:** No absences or tardies in any twelve (12) month period.
3. **Absence:** An absence from work is defined as the failure of any employee to report to work when scheduled.

This applies to any assignment, be it a regular shift, overtime work, work related meetings, lunch, training, etc. One day of absence will be considered one (1) incident. A second day of absence is considered a second incident, and so on. If, however, a physician releases the employee from work in writing, the entire time of absence is only counted as one (1) incident.

1. **Tardy:** Tardiness occurs when an employee is not present, and ready to begin working, at his/her workstation at their scheduled time. Tardiness also occurs when an employee leaves work prior to the end of their scheduled shift without prior approval. Tardiness of less than two (2) hours will be considered one- half (1⁄2 ) incident. Tardiness of two (2) or more hours will be considered one (1) incident.
2. **No Call/No Show:** Employees must report their absence each day; failure to do so is considered a no call/no show. Also, failure to report one’s absence at least one-half (1⁄2) hour prior to the start of the scheduled shift will be regarded as a no call/no show which is considered one and one-half (11⁄2) incidents.

**Exception:** Vacation, paid holidays, jury duty, paid funeral leave, job related injuries, lack of work, military leave, suspension and lay-off will not count as incidents. Pre-approved time off request and pre-approved leaves of absence will not count as incidents.

B. **Reporting Requirements:** Employees must notify their supervisor at least 30 minutes prior to the start of their scheduled shift if they are going to be absent or late.

C. **Guidelines for Attendance Control:** Based on the number of incidents in a twelve-month rolling period, an employee will be subject to disciplinary action under the following guidelines:

1. Two incidents in any 30-day calendar period result in a documented Friendly Reminder.
2. Three incidents in any 60-day calendar period result in a documented Verbal Warning.
3. Two additional incidents within the next 90-day calendar period, following the verbal warning, will result in a Written Warning.
4. Any additional (full) incidents within the next six months after the written warning will result in suspension and/or termination of employment, pending investigation and review by management.

**Any employee who fails to call in and/or report to work for three (3) consecutive workdays can only return to work with a doctor’s note otherwise it will be considered VOLUNTARILY termination.**

Absence Due to Illness

**If a staff member is ill and unable to work, the Director should be notified immediately, by phone**. Electronic communications such as text message and email are not acceptable methods of contact when reporting sick. When possible, a staff member must assist in making arrangements for a substitute. In some cases, the Director may request a note from the staff member’s physician indicating the type of illness and when said staff member may return to work.

The assigned caregivers are expected to always be in the classroom. **Situations in which both the primary caregivers/teachers of a classroom are gone must be avoided.** Staff members are expected to communicate with each other to ensure both primary caregivers/teachers of a classroom are not absent on the same day.

Schedules

Nest is open Monday through Friday, actual hours of operation vary per location. **All scheduling requests should be submitted in writing to the Director.** Schedules will be created based upon the needs of Nest and the children, as well as staff member availability.

Occasionally, staff members may be required to dedicate time outside their regular work schedule in order to satisfactorily complete Nest responsibilities (parent-teacher conferences, staff meetings, trainings, lesson planning, etc.). In this case, it is at the discretion of the Executive Director to determine if staff members will receive additional pay for work performed outside their normal work schedule.

Voluntary Resignation

Lead Teachers and Teachers should submit a letter of resignation to the Director when resigning from a position. **Nest appreciates at prefer four weeks’ notice but at minimum a two weeks’ notice if you choose to resign.** This will ensure an appropriate replacement can be hired and adequately trained

**Work Schedules and Rest Periods**

The Work Schedules and Rest Periods Policy insures adequate staffing during working hours and provides you with the understanding of what is expected of you during your shift. **The purpose of a work schedule is to insure that the center is not understaffed or overstaffed for any part of the day and to provide adequate rest and planning time to keep the classrooms flowing as smoothly as possible.**

Policy

**Employees must follow established work schedules.** The usual work schedule is 40 hours per week, Monday through Friday. Work schedules at Nest are 9 hours between 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. An employee will be informed of work schedules by the immediate supervisor.

Work schedules for hourly paid staff normally include an unpaid lunch break of at least 30 minutes. Work schedules provide for one paid 15-minute rest period for each consecutive four hours worked. At supervisor discretion employees may receive additional rest breaks.

If conditions warrant, employees may be asked to work through the normally scheduled rest period. At such times employee cooperation is expected. An employee who believes the supervisor is abusing the rest period policy should contact Executive Director.

Guidelines

* **Employees are expected to be in their classrooms ready to implement the day’s lesson plan and daily schedule at the start of their shift.** If you are going to be late or if you are unable to report to work you must notify your Director.
* **Rest periods are an employment privilege.** Rest periods may not be "saved" to shorten the employee's workday, to extend lunch breaks, or to alter the work schedule in any way. Rest periods not taken will be forfeited. Abuse of rest periods may result in loss of the privilege.
* Lunch breaks are required to break up the employee shift to allow time for a meal or to rest. Lunch time may not be used to shorten the work day.
* If the employee wishes to use their lunch break to run errands you are allowed half an hour or an hour (whichever is applicable) to do so. It is important that you consider how much time is needed for the errand as to not exceed thirty minutes. Any additional time will be unpaid. Repeated lunch break violations is an attendance violation and you will be written up.
* There should be at least two staff in the center at all times. This includes the opening and closing of the center. **It is important to never leave a person alone with children in the center.**
* Classroom staff need time away from children and the classroom to plan, complete reports or other administrative duties**. Planning time should be scheduled every week for every staff person for at least 30 minutes but not more than one hour.** Planning time can not be used to extend rest periods, lunch breaks or to extend the work day. If the time scheduled conflicts with staffing ratios or other events that may require the teacher to be present in the classroom; planning time will be rescheduled.

**Outside Employment Policy**

**As a general rule, employees may not obtain outside employment that creates interference with their primary job or that creates a conflict of interest.**

The Nest Child Care and Parent Institute has no objection to an employee holding outside employment so long as they can meet the performance standards of their job with Nest. **Secondary jobs are permissible only if the employee can continue to perform their normal duties and work requirements within the regularly scheduled workweek.** Work assignments and schedules will not be modified to allow the employee to perform duties or services that are not related to the Nest Child Care and Parent Institute.

Unless otherwise agreed to, employment with Nest Child Care and Parent Institute is deemed to be full time. The Nest recognizes that an employee may be justified under certain circumstances to accept casual outside employment to be performed after working hours if no conflict with Nest Child Care and Parent Institute interest is involved.

**Employees shall not engage in or accept any activity, business, or employment during or after working hours that could be considered in conflict with Nest Child Care and Parent Institute interests or diminish the ability of the employee to render to the company the full, loyal and undivided service which is contemplated in his or her employment by the Nest.**

Should an employee wish to obtain outside employment, it should be discussed with the employee’s supervisor/ center manager prior to accepting the job. Any questions related to the content of this policy or its interpretation should be directed to Executive Director.

**Benefits**

Eligibility for benefits is determined by employment status. Full-time staff members are eligible for:

* Paid Time Off (*Eligible after One Year of Service)*
* Paid Holidays
* Individual or family health and dental coverage through HealthChoice of Michigan
* Discounted child care

Benefits will be offered to employees without discrimination to any person on the basis of race, color, age, creed, sex national origin, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, physical/mental disabilities or marital status.

Paid Time Off

Vacation and sick leave will be disbursed in a lump amount on January 1st of every year and must be used by December 31st of the following year. **Full-time staff members with 1-3 years of service will receive 40 hours of paid time off. Full-time staff members with 3-5 years of service will receive 80 hours of paid time off.**

Vacation leave must be scheduled at least one week in advance using the PTO Request Form. The form should be completed for approval after the staff member has made arrangements for coverage during their time off. **Only one full-time staff member per classroom may be absent at a time; unless there are unusual circumstances. The** Director must be notified in advance of all absences. Vacation time used should be noted on the staff members timesheet.

Holidays

Nest recognizes (10) ten days during the year as paid holidays for its regular, full-time employees. Those holidays are New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year’s Eve.

**Guidelines:**

* Employees who are regularly scheduled to work 30 or more hours per week are eligible for holiday pay.
* **Holiday pay is the regular straight time rate for the number of hours an employee is regularly scheduled to work.**
* **An employee must work the day before the holiday and the day following the holiday to be eligible for holiday pay.**
* When the regular holiday falls on Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be considered the Company holiday. When the regular holiday falls on Sunday, the following Monday shall be the Company holiday.
* Employees are not allowed holiday pay while in an out-of-pay status such as leave of absence or layoff or suspension or while receiving short-term disability payments.
* Teacher In-Service Holidays, means the center is closed in observance of the holiday but staff is required to report to work. As such, it is considered a regular work day. To request a Teacher In-Service Holiday off (refer to Time Off Request). Teacher In-Service Holiday is excluded from Holiday Pay.
* **Holiday pay is not to be considered hours worked in the computation of overtime.**

Health Insurance

Medical, dental and vision insurances are available for enrollment for Nest Child Care and Parent Institute and Bright Stars Educational Center employees through HealthChoice of Michigan. Please review and select the group health benefits and coverage options that meet your needs.

*Who Qualifies?*

* Active employees of Nest Child Care and Parent Institute/Bright Stars Educational Center
* Working at least 20 hours per week for at least 12 consecutive weeks
* Be without health care benefits at time of enrollment
* Be a resident of the State of Michigan

Child Care

All staff members have access to child care if they meet the eligibility requirements. The Director will provide additional information to eligible staff members upon hire.

**Daily Duties for Classroom Staff**

Each classroom has a set of opening, nap time, closing and weekly cleaning tasks. Below are some general things that must be completed each day. Staff members are expected to familiarize themselves with the classroom specific duties.

Morning Duties

Make sure all program room doors are unlocked; mix new bleach water; put away sanitized toys; straighten toys and shelves; re-stock supplies such as soap, paper towels, toilet paper, diapers, wipes, etc.; and complete room set-up for the day’s lesson plan.

Noon/Nap-Time Duties

Straightening of shelves; sanitizing toys; cleaning tables/chairs/floors; curriculum planning; wash dishes; complete daily activity sheets for children; and prepare for afternoon.

Afternoon Duties

Wash or spray toys that have been mouthed by children with bleach solution and air dry; take trash to dumpster, sanitize trash can, and replace trash bag; put toys and equipment away; check outdoor play area for equipment that needs to be put away; sanitize tables, chairs, and shelves; wash dishes; empty bleach solution; vacuum carpets; lock all program room doors after the last parent leaves for the day.

Opening Teacher (s):

* Opening and closing the main entrances.
* Receives phone call.
* Unlocks doors, turns on the lights and air/heat, if necessary.
* Is in the classroom ready to greet children and families by center opening time.
* Creates a welcoming environment with available activities for the early arrivals. There may be additional early morning cleaning or set up depending on the classroom / age group. Morning classes can be combined from 6:30 – 8:30 for Early Birds.
* Evaluates each child’s health and accepts *or not* according to Institute and licensing guidelines.

The Closing Teacher (s):

* Leaves classroom clean – tables and chairs wiped, materials put away and chairs placed on tables.
* Closes and locks all classroom doors and windows.
* Turns off lights and turns heater down.
* Ensures all trash is taken to dumpster.

* Exit though the main entrance, insuring the door is locked and alarms are set.

**Performance Disciplinary Procedure**

Unacceptable Job Performance

Nest uses progressive discipline as a positive way to correct unacceptable job performance. This is not a contractual obligation because all Nest employees are “at will” which means an employee can be terminated at the will of Nest for any reason or no reason. The following are the steps, which are taken using progressive discipline.

**STEP 1 Verbal Warning**

If a staff member’s job performance is not meeting Nest standards, or if a staff member is in violation of any policy stated in this handbook, he/she will be informed of the problem and the possible penalties if performance does not improve. Suggestions on ways to improve job performance are discussed. Verbal warnings may be given for violation of Nest policies, failure to follow procedures, unsatisfactory performance, absenteeism or tardiness.

Verbal warnings will be recorded, discussed, and signed by both the staff member and Director and/or Executive Director. After three (3) verbal warnings have been issued for any reason within a period of six (6) months, a written warning will be issued.

**STEP 2 Written Warning**

A written warning is given if a problem/s identified by multiple verbal warnings has not been corrected. Written warnings will be recorded, discussed, and signed by both the staff member and Director and/or Executive Director. A staff member may receive only one (1) written warning during a six (6) month period. After one (1) written warning has been issued, any further issues or actions subject to the Disciplinary Procedure may result in suspension or termination.

Written warnings will be issued immediately for refusal to follow lawful instructions or any other serious policy violation, which endangers the safety or integrity of a child or staff member.

**STEP 3 Termination**

Termination may result when using progressive discipline if steps have not produced satisfactory and acceptable performance. Termination may be immediate without using progressive discipline. Reasons for immediate termination may include, but are not limited to:

* Committed act(s) of child abuse under Michigan law
* Abuse of a parent/guardian of a child or another staff member
* Harassment
* Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while at work
* Theft
* Possession of a weapon
* Violation of any policy which states that violation of such policy may result in termination

The above violations are only examples and are not meant to be all-inclusive. Disciplinary action up to and including termination may be taken immediately at the discretion of the Executive Director.

**Staff Development & Training**

Required Training

Research indicates that formal education or training that increases the knowledge of providers has been shown to be the greatest determinant of safe and quality programming for children. Therefore, at the Nest Child Care & Parent Institute education and training is a continual process. At a minimum:

* 8 hours of pre-service training must be completed by new staff without previous experience in a regulated childcare facility.
* All new staff must be oriented in the requirements in the minimum standards outlined in the employee handbook, the facility’s child care policies, the procedures to follow in handling emergencies and exits, and the use and location of all fire extinguishers. Emergency Maps and Exits are displayed throughout the Institute.
* All staff must obtain at least 20 clock hours of training annually, exclusive of CPR and First Aid, selected from the following areas:
  + Child Development
  + Care of Children with Special Needs
  + Adult and Child Health
  + Nutrition and Safety
  + Curriculum-Planning
  + Risk Management
  + Identification and Care of Ill Children
  + Recognition of Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Abuse and the Responsibility of reporting any incidents
  + Cultural Diversity
  + Professional Development

Note: It is the responsibility of each employee to pay for any costs that may result from these trainings (full or part-time).

Training of teacher assistants, volunteers and interns is primarily ‘on the job’. Training of staff will be mainly through modeling with explanations and feedback as necessary. The Center Manager will find a private moment to review any situations that should have been handled differently. The Management Team will continuously share articles with staff that will give them a better understanding for the age group with which they are working and for the style of interaction which is required.

CDA Certification/Continued Education

All teachers must have at least 12 credits in Early Childhood Education or a CDA certification to perform the duties of a teacher in our Early Head Start Classrooms. Employees who do not meet these minimum requirements will be given the opportunity to enhance their training by attending an online CDA certification program paid for by the employee through biweekly payroll deductions. At the time of enrollment in the CDA program, the Director will discuss expectations for completion as well as complete a professional development plan. Nest requires all teaching staff obtain at minimum a CDA certification in order to deliver high-qualify Early Childhood programming to families. Upon completion of CDA program, employees must apply to TEACH scholarships to receive CDA accreditation. Employees are encouraged to continue their education and pursue even higher learning to achieve their educational goals.

Staff Meetings

All Nest staff members are required to attend all weekly staff meetings. Important information, procedures, and policies are introduced and reviewed at these meetings; it is important to have 100% attendance. Additional staff meetings may be held throughout the year on or offsite and will be paid.

New Staff Orientation

All new staff members will be asked to read the Nest’s staff and parent handbooks. Prior to working in the classroom, the Director will schedule an orientation meeting to complete required paperwork, and review center operation and policies. Additionally, all new full-time staff, under the supervision of the Director will complete the Nest New Staff Orientation Checklist within 120 days of hire.

Evaluations

Evaluations of a staff member’s performance will be conducted by the Executive Director and/or Director. Evaluations will be performed annually. Informal evaluations will be performed throughout the year during scheduled and unscheduled classroom observations. Parent surveys will be passed out shortly before a staff member’s evaluation meeting and feedback will be included in the staff member’s evaluation.

Staff members will be required to complete a self-evaluation prior to meeting with the Director and/or Assistant Director.

**Discipline Policy**

It is the objective of our Child Care & Parent Institutes to provide quality child care and pre-school educational services to the community. In so doing, one must realize the importance of discipline and its effect on the children we serve. The Nest Child Care & Parent Institute’s discipline policy makes great use of positive behavioral supports. **Whenever possible, staff members use the technique of positive redirection, distraction, or humor to change unacceptable behaviors.** Teachers try to avoid power struggles by focusing on children’s expressed desires and capabilities. Children also have the opportunity to remove themselves from the situation in order to regain control or have quiet time. Listed below are disciplinary guidelines, which are to be maintained.

1. Maintain constructive discipline with the objective of helping the child learn, rather than forcing him/her to conform to adult standards.
2. Consider the child’s age, intelligence, emotional make-up, and his/her past experience.
3. Patience and understanding must be used if the child is to establish habits of good citizenship.
4. When enforcing disciplinary lessons, be fair and consistent, make sure the child feels safe, and make every effort to help the child recognize it as such.
5. Encourage and praise good behavior. This approach is frequently much more effective than scolding.
6. Keep in mind that the child’s acceptance of discipline and his/her ability to profit by it depend largely upon his/her feeling that he/she is liked, safe, and accepted.
7. Be sure that the staff is in agreement regarding supervision, training, and disciplines of children.
8. Maintain discipline guidelines set forth by your State Licensing Authority.
9. NO CORPORAL/PHYSICAL punishment shall be used.
10. Punishment shall not be associated with food, naps, or bathroom procedures.
11. Techniques or punishment shall not be humiliating, shaming, or frightening to the child.
12. No verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or his/her family shall be used.
13. A kind, firm voice shall be used.
14. When uncontrollable behavior persists and becomes disruptive and/or harmful to other children, the child’s parents shall be advised and a probationary period for possible dismissal will be set.
15. No child or group of children shall be allowed to discipline another child.
16. When a child is removed from the group for disciplinary reasons, he/she shall never be out of sight of a staff member.
17. A guideline of one minute per child’s age may be used for a calming period or time out if necessary.

All employees (prospective and those presently employed) should be in compliance with the Center’s discipline policies and procedures. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action up and including termination.

**Staff Handbook Acknowledgement**

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the **Nest Child Care and Parent Institute Staff Handbook**. I understand that it is my continuing responsibility to read and know its contents. I also understand and agree that the Staff Handbook is not an employment contract for any specific period of employment or for continuing or long-term employment. Therefore, I acknowledge and understand that unless I have a written employment agreement with Nest that provides otherwise, I have the right to resign from my employment with Nest at any time with or without notice and with or without cause, and that Nest has the right to terminate my employment at any time with or without notice and with or without cause.

I have read, understand and agree to all of the above. I have also read and understand the Nest Staff Handbook. I agree to return the Staff Handbook upon termination of my employment.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Questions should be referred to Director or Executive Director.*