

Parent Handbook 2018



My Friends Discovery Center

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www.myfriendsdiscoverycenter.com

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services # 480979

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The owners and directors of My Friends Discovery Center approve all the policies listed below. These policies are effective January 2018.

POLICY 1 MISSION STATEMENT

My Friends Discovery Center's mission is to provide quality child care for young children whose parents are concerned about safety, structured-yet-fun educational activities, a clean and friendly atmosphere, and convenience.

POLICY 2 WELCOME

Welcome to My Friends Discovery Center!

We invite you to visit our center and see why so many families have chosen us:

- Your child's safety is our main concern with our **Safety First Program**.
- Our goal is to help your child achieve **Educational Excellence**.
- We create a **Family Atmosphere** so your child will feel comfortable and safe while away from you.
- Our **Custom Designed Building** was built to allow your child to have the best educational experience.
- Our **Professional Staff** has your child's well-being and education as their top priority.
- We are **State Licensed** to insure the highest standards are met.

We have prepared this handbook as one way to help you get acquainted with our policies and expectations and to explain the benefits you will enjoy. It is also a reference for where to turn with any questions, suggestions, or concerns you may have in the future. Please take time to review this carefully. If you have any questions, please speak with one of the directors. Then, when you understand the information presented, sign the Parent Agreement at the end and return it to the front office. Again, welcome to My Friends Discovery Center. We are very glad you are here!

Jamie Eskew, Director
Chris Foys, Assistant Director
Bob & Jyl Waller, Owners

2.1 Hours of Operation

My Friends Discovery Center is open Monday through Friday, 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. There are **no** deductions for any absences, weather closures, or holidays. Normal tuition rates apply to weeks that include holidays, although the center will be closed. The following holidays will be observed this year: The center's 2018 Holiday Schedule will be as follows:

- New Year's Day, Monday, January 1, 2018
- Memorial Day, Monday, May 28, 2018
- Independence Day, Wednesday, July 4, 2018
- Labor Day, Monday, September 3, 2018
- Thanksgiving and the following Friday, November 22 & 23, 2018
- Christmas Eve, Monday, December 24, 2018 (**Close at 3:00pm**)
- Christmas Day, Tuesday, December 25, 2018
- New Year's Eve, Monday, December 31, 2018 (**Close at 3:00pm**)
- New Year's Day, Tuesday, January 1, 2019

If any holiday falls on a weekend, the holiday will be observed on previous Friday or following Monday. Notice will be posted.

POLICY 3 PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

My Friends Discovery Center's program philosophy is based on meeting the developmental needs of children. The daily activities provide children experiences that enrich and enhance each child's cognitive, language, social, emotional, physical, and creative development. The children will be given opportunities to create, explore the environment, learn problem-solving and personal interaction skills, and learn concepts through first-hand experiences. Children develop a positive self-concept through a balance of self and teacher directed activities. Staff serve as positive role models, and provide care that is supportive, nurturing, warm, and responsive to each child's individual needs. We respect families as the primary and most important providers of care and nurturing. We believe parents and teachers are partners in children's care and education.

POLICY 4 LICENSING INFORMATION

My Friends Discovery Center's license is licensed with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, #480979. My Friends Discovery Center is fully insured. Our building has state-of-the-art multiple safety features, including a secured main entrance, daily check in procedures, and camera monitoring of all exits and classrooms so that you know your children are protected during the day.

POLICY 5 CONFIDENTIALITY

My Friends Discovery Center cannot give out information to any individual or agency without first obtaining written permission from the child's parent/guardian. Confidential information about other children, parents, or staff will not be shared with anyone, as My Friends Discovery Center strives to protect everyone's right of privacy.

POLICY 6 ENROLLMENT

6.1 Enrollment Guidelines

My Friends Discovery Center enrolls children from 6 weeks through 6 years of age.

Enrollment shall be granted without regard to a child/family's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability. The center will serve children with disabilities provided that the care required for that particular child does not compromise the quality of care for other children enrolled at the center. MFDC is a group child care center, not an individual care program.

Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed Enrollment Forms, registration fees, payment of first week's tuition, completed DCFS forms, the child's certified birth certificate, and a signed Parent Handbook Agreement Form. All of this must be presented to MFDC 2 business days prior to enrollment. Both parents must sign the parent handbook.

Continued enrollment at My Friends Discovery Center is contingent upon timely tuition payment, up-to-date emergency contact information for the child and parent, and adherence to the policies and procedures outlined in this parent handbook.

6.2 Registration Fee

Parents can apply for enrollment at My Friends Discovery Center by completing an Enrollment Form and paying a \$25 Registration Fee per child. The Registration Fee is non-refundable.

6.3 Part Time/Full Time Status

Children enrolled for more than 5 hours a day are considered full time. Children enrolled for less than 5 hours a day are considered part time.

MFDC is no longer accepting infants on a part time status, either part time days per week or hours per day.

MFDC does not except children on a part time status (five hours or less), unless the child is enrolled in District 186 ELC program and only attends MFDC for less than five hours a day. If ELC is not in session, you will be charged full rate for the day.

Parents with part time children already enrolled cannot request specific room changes. It is up to the director's discretion for room assignments.

6.4 Attendance

When a child is enrolled at My Friends Discovery Center, that child is expected to be in regular attendance. Regular attendance is important for your child's adjustment and development. We do prefer a courtesy call when your child will not be in attendance on a regularly scheduled day. Please call the center by 9:00 am so the center has proper notification on meal preparation and room staffing.

6.5 Children with Special Needs

When a parent/guardian of a child identifies that a child has special needs (including physical, mental, behavioral, developmental, nutritional conditions or needs), the director of My Friends Discovery Center and the parent/guardian will meet to review the child's care requirements. Please provide a copy of the child's IEP or Specialized Care forms.

My Friends Discovery Center does not discriminate on the basis of special needs. The program accepts children with special needs unless their presence would pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others or require a fundamental alteration of the program. My Friends Discovery Center does not provide one-on-one care for individual children. The center is a group care setting.

To help the center staff better understand the child's needs, the staff will ask the parent/guardian to complete the *Special Care Plan* in conjunction with the child's health care provider. Individual health care plan forms for the children with life-threatening allergies, diabetes, asthma, seizures, and other medical issues are available from your child's physician.

The center will attempt to accommodate children with special needs consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If the center is unable to accommodate the child's needs as defined by the child's health care provider or the Individual Education Plan without posing an undue burden as defined by federal law, the director will work with the parent/guardian to find a suitable environment for the child.

Prior to the child's attendance, a conference with the parent/guardian and the child is required to acquaint each new family with the environment, staff, and schedule for the child care. During this visit, the parent/guardian will have a personal interview with one of the directors of My Friends Discovery Center. At this time, the family will be provided with the Parent Handbook, Enrollment forms, DCFS forms, and other written materials. Each child will spend at least 20 minutes at the center with a parent/guardian before remaining in the care without a family member.

The forms will be completed and submitted to the center director at least 2 business days prior to the child's first day of attendance. The information in these forms will remain confidential and will be shared with other

caregivers only as required to meet the needs of the child. All incomplete forms will be returned to the parent/guardian for completion prior to the child's first day of attendance.

Information concerning the child will not be made available to anyone, by any means, without the expressed written consent of the parent/guardian. Only exception to this policy is if DCFS should request information about a child.

My Friends Discovery Center reserves the right to dismiss a child from enrollment if a parent/guardian is not forthright about the child's special needs.

POLICY 7 TUITION AND FEES

A tuition rate sheet is included in your child's enrollment packet. Tuition fees are due weekly, on the first day your child is scheduled to attend. **Tuition fees are considered enrollment fees, not attendance fees. Fees must be paid whether or not a child is in attendance.** Tuition fees are accrued on a weekly basis.

Payments are to be secured in the tuition box hanging on the wall near the reception desk. Payments should be made on Fridays for the upcoming week. If payment is not received by the close of the day on Tuesday, payment will be considered late and a \$25.00 fee will be assessed. If tuition payment and late fee are not paid by Friday, the child relinquishes his/her spot and is not allowed to return until the account is reconciled. Once your account has become delinquent, My Friends Discovery Center cannot guarantee that your child's spot will be available

Split Accounts – The center's director will split the account (two separate ledgers) as a courtesy to both parties such as with divorced parents; however, both are responsible for 100% of any fees charged. This means that in the event one party defaults in their obligation, the other party is responsible for the full fee. This center cannot be responsible for enforcing divorce decrees or other personal agreements between the parties. Neither party has access to the other party's account information.

7.1 Method of Payment

You may make payment by cash, check, credit card, or money order. If paying by cash, secure the payment in an envelope from the front counter. Place the envelope in the tuition box. A written receipt will be provided.

Parents using Tuition Express to pay for tuition by credit card or withdrawal from a checking or saving account will be billed an additional \$3.00 processing fee per transaction. If you pay by credit card/debit at the clock in computer you will **not** be charged a \$3.00 processing fee.

7.2.1 NSF Fee

A \$25.00 fee will be charged for a check or credit card returned for insufficient funds. If this should occur, My Friends Discovery Center will then have the option of refusing any future checks or credit cards and require cash or money order for payment of tuition.

7.3 Sibling Discount

If a family has more than one child in the program, a \$2/daily discount is available on the oldest child's tuition. There is no sibling discount for children attending 5 hours or less a day. The sibling discount also does not apply if parents/guardians are receiving tuition assistance and their co-pay/weekly tuition is \$25.00 or less.

7.4 Vacation

Each **full time** child is eligible to receive one week of vacation credit each year after the child has been enrolled in the program for one year. A year begins on the child's enrollment date. This vacation must be used five days consecutively, Monday through Friday, with the child **not** in attendance during the vacation week. Please notify the director at least one week before your vacation. After a year's time has passed you may use another week of vacation.

7.5 Subsidized Care

Parents/Guardians should consult the center director for information regarding tuition assistance. Any sponsor who is applying for assistance must have written approval from the appropriate agency in their file at My Friends Discovery Center **before** the child can attend. If the child attends before receiving approval, parents/guardians are responsible for the full tuition until approval is received. Parents/Guardians are financially responsible for the difference that Community Child Care Connection will cover vs. My Friends Discovery Center's tuition. The center director will give you a written explanation of your weekly tuition. Any sponsor whose case has been cancelled will pay full tuition until re-determination has been approved. If the family is unable to pay full tuition, the child will be dis-enrolled until assistance is granted by the appropriate agency. MFDC cannot guarantee that your child's spot will be available.

CCC clients who withdraw their child before the end of the month are responsible for paying the entire co-pay on the DHS certificate

7.6 Delinquent Tuition

When any tuition and/or co-payment is delinquent, the child will **not** be allowed to attend the center until the balance is current. Parents/Guardians will be responsible for all payments due. If you fail to clear your account within thirty days, your account will be sent for collection. Should the balance not be paid, the parent/guardian will agree to pay all reasonable costs My Friends Discovery Center incurs to collect this debt. This includes, unless prohibited by law, all reasonable attorney's fees, filing fees, court costs, collection agency costs, service fees, and other related collection costs or contingencies. The parents/guardian will understand that if any unpaid balance is turned over to My Friends Discovery Center's collection agency, that a fee ranging from 33%-50% will be added to the total balance due. This provision also shall apply if the parent/guardian files a petition or any other claim for relief under any bankruptcy rule of law of the United States, or if such petition or other claim for relief is filed against the parent/guardian by another. My Friends Discovery Center or its agents or affiliates has full authority to obtain a copy of the parent's/guardian's credit report.

7.7 Schedule Changes

Schedule changes are no longer available.

7.8 Clothing Fees

Failure to provide the necessary clothing for your child will result in the following fees billed to your account: diapers - \$1.00 each wipes - \$5.00 per package

Failure to return extra clothing provided by My Friends Discovery Center will result in the following fees billed to your account: underwear - \$1.00 shirt - \$2.50 pants/shorts - \$2.50

7.9 Early Drop Off Fees

Parents/Guardians should not drop off their child before the Center's opening time of 6:00 A.M. Should early drop off occur, the parent/guardian will pay an early fee of \$5.00 per minute.

7.10 Late Pick Up Fees

Parents/Guardians should make arrangement for their child to be picked up before the Center's closing time of 6:00 P.M. Should after hours occur, the parent/guardian will pay a late pick-up fee of \$25.00 for the first ten minutes and \$5.00 for each additional minute.

7.11 Sick Child Late Pick Up Fees

If your child becomes ill, you will be called to pick up your child within an hour of the phone call. Anyone arriving after 1 hour of being contacted regarding a sick child will be charged a \$15.00 for 1-14 minutes, \$30.00 for 15-29 minutes late, and in additional \$15.00 increments if after 30 minutes late.

POLICY 8 ARRIVAL

We recommend that children be dropped off prior to 10:00 A.M. If your child will be later than this time, please call the Center. This is necessary for our scheduling purposes and for food preparation for the children. If after 10:00 A.M. and without proper notification of late arrival, MFDC reserves the right to refuse admission due to maintaining DCFS ratios.

For the safety of all who attend My Friends Discovery Center, please turn off your car engine while you are in the building. Do not leave a child unattended in your vehicle. Please park in the designated parking spaces.

8.1 Parent's Responsibilities at Arrival

Please refrain from using your cell phone while dropping off/picking up your child. This time should be devoted to your child and MFDC staff.

Each day upon arriving, the parent is required to sign in his/her child using the computer system at the front door. Parents/guardians **must** accompany their child into the classroom. Parents are required to help their child put away outerwear and other items brought into the center. These items are to be placed in the child's cubby. Parents are required to notify the child's teacher or center director of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. If a child is on medication, a Medication Log should be submitted to the staff at drop off. DCFS requires that the child's hands be washed upon entering the room. Parents must ensure that their child is under staff supervision before leaving the premises.

8.2 Center's Right to Refuse Admission

My Friends Discovery Center reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time, with or without cause.

Possible reasons for refusal of admission include, but are not limited to:

- Staff determine the child is too ill to attend
- The center's need to maintain compliance with DCFS licensing regulations
- Parent's non-payment of account
- Parent's failure to complete and return required documentation
- Director's decision

Parents will not be reimbursed tuition for days when their child is refused admission to the center.

8.3 Early Drop Off Policy

Parents/Guardians should not drop off their child before the center's opening at 6:00 A.M. Should early drop off occur, the parent/guardian will pay an early drop off fee of \$5.00 per minute.

8.4 Parking

The driveway in front of the main entrance is not a parking zone. This driveway is used for buses loading and unloading at various times of the day. Please use the designated parking spaces only.

The spaces on the east side of the main entrance are for handicapped use only. For the safety of all who attend My Friends Discovery Center, please turn off your car engine while you are in the building. Do not leave a child unattended in your vehicle. Please park in the designated parking spaces. Use caution when pulling in/out of parking spaces.

Policy 9 DEPARTURE

Parents are encouraged to handle all business issues prior to picking up their child. Daily, parents must take home all papers in the child's cubby or mailbox.

9.1 Parent's Responsibilities at Departure

Each afternoon upon departure, the parent is required to sign out his/her child using the computer system at the front door. Children will be released only to a parent/guardian or to persons whose names are listed on the Child Pick Up portion of the Enrollment Form (DCFS 593). Parents/Guardians should advise the Director in advance, in writing, of a person not listed on the Child Release. Photo identification will be required of **all** persons picking up a child. **Children will not be released without written authorization.**

Parents may not allow the child to wander the building in rooms/closets unsupervised by center staff. This includes parents allowing their child to linger in the center, playing with the toys.

If there is a custody order or other court order preventing a natural parent from picking up your child, we must have a copy of this court order in your child's file. MFDC will not prevent a natural parent from picking up unless we have a court order.

9.2 Late Pick Up

Parents/Guardians should make arrangement for their child to be picked up before the Center's closing time of 6:00 P.M. Should after hours occur, the parent/guardian will pay a late pick-up fee of \$25.00 for the first ten minutes and \$5.00 for each additional minute the child is left at My Friends Discovery Center after closing. Measurement of time will be according to the clock on the computer located in the front door entry area. This fee is to be paid before the child can return to the center. If a parent or authorized adult is late for pick up, a phone call will be made to the parent. If there is no response, the emergency contacts will be called. If the child is not picked up within 30 minutes of the center's closing, the police and/or DCFS will be contacted.

9.3 Persons Who Appear to be Impaired by Drugs/Alcohol at Pick Up

If a person attempting to pick up a child from My Friends Discovery Center appears to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, the staff will delay the impaired individual as long as possible, while contacting the child's parent, local police, and Child Protective Services to notify them of the situation.

Policy 10 COMMUNICATION

Parents are the first teachers of their children. The staff of My Friends Discovery Center strives to involve parents through daily sheets, newsletters, open houses, family events, questionnaires, and a variety of activities. Parents are welcome to volunteer in the classroom, share their expertise and experience, help with a special activity, or join your child for lunch. We appreciate your input, suggestions, and ideas in helping develop your child's learning and meeting their needs. When teachers, children, and parents work together, everyone benefits.

Quick conversations about the child's day are encouraged at drop off/pick up times. If at any time the parents request a conference with My Friends Discovery Center staff, please schedule a conference time with the director.

My Friends Discovery Center encourages professional relationships with staff and parents. Employees are encouraged to refrain from being “friends” with clients on social networking pages. We ask that parents do not encourage these relationships, nor text our staff during work hours.

Policy 11 EMERGENCY CLOSING

My Friends Discovery Center will be open whenever possible on a regularly scheduled day, during normal hours. In the event that conditions prevent the center from opening on time, or at all, it will be announced on WICS. Every effort will be made to keep the center open; however, the decision to close may be made due to weather conditions or other emergencies that present threats to the safety of the children, staff, or center property.

In case of severe weather, fire, or physical plant problems during the operational hours, we notify parents so that you may pick up your child, and the children will be moved to a place of safety, as necessary. If staff is unable to reach a parent, the emergency contacts will be called.

There will be no tuition credit for any time the center is closed.

My Friends Discovery Center practices drills routinely for severe weather, fire, and physical plant problems. Emergency plans are posted for your viewing. The tornado safe room is conveniently located in the center of the building, enabling all children and staff a secure place to wait during severe weather. DCFS also requires posting of any radon testing.

Policy 12 WITHDRAWAL

If you decide to discontinue childcare with My Friends Discovery Center, you must provide a two-week written notice. Payment is due for the two weeks whether or not your child is in attendance. Any outstanding fees must be paid on or before the child’s last day.

Should you desire to discontinue care for a period of time, then return to MFDC, for any reason, you will not be guaranteed your child’s spot without continuing to pay the tuition.

Re-enrollment for any reason will result in an additional \$25 Registration Fee, per child.

Once your child is withdrawn and no longer in attendance, any personal items left behind become property of My Friends Discovery Center.

It is the parent’s responsibility to make arrangements to pick up year-end tax statements from My Friends Discovery Center.

Policy 13 TERMINATION OF CARE

My Friends Discovery Center reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause. This is including but not limited to:

- Children are harmful to themselves, other children, or staff.
- The health of the other children or staff warrants that the child be removed.
- Expectations of the parent cannot be met.

- Parents/guardians failing to comply with Policies and Procedures of My Friends Discovery Center.
For example:
 - parents/guardians fail to return appropriate forms needed for enrollment
 - parents/guardians falsify any information on the child's records
 - non-payment on account
 - consistently late pick up

If My Friends Discovery Center has concerns that a child's developmental needs are not being appropriately met in the daily program, or believes My Friends Discovery Center cannot meet your needs as a parent/guardian, every effort will be made to involve you in the process of identifying the problem and working toward possible solutions. However, if after reasonable and appropriate interventions have been tried, we determine that the program is not in the best interest of the child or the parent/guardian, My Friends Discovery Center reserves the right to request that the child be withdrawn. My Friends Discovery Center will help to prepare the child for withdrawal in a way that is consistent with the child's ability to understand. Implementation of withdrawal procedures will be effected in the time frame that the administration believes appropriate.

Policy 14 MEALS AND SNACKS

The center provides nutritious and well-balanced meals and snacks, prepared on site. Parents are responsible for providing food for special dietary needs. My Friends Discovery Center provides breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack daily. Breakfast is served at 8:00-8:30, lunch is served from 11:00-11:30, and afternoon snack is served at approximately 2:30. Weekly menus are posted outside of the kitchen and in each classroom. A menu is also available at the reception area if you wish to take a copy home.

Parents/guardians are responsible for providing milk/formula, infant cereal, and jarred baby food for infants. Glass bottles are **not** allowed. Juice cannot be given in bottles, only in sippy cups. Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come to the center during the day to feed their child. The conference room by the front desk is available for nursing mothers. Glass food containers are **not** allowed.

DCFS 407.210 f) 11) Breast milk may be stored up to 48 hours in the refrigerator or up to 2 weeks in the freezer before discarding.

Older infants may drink formula from a bottle. Only milk or water is given in a sippy cup.

My Friends Discovery Center does not allow bottles in the toddler and older classrooms.

If your child has an allergy to a specific food, please be sure to let the administration know. A doctor's note is needed in the child's file for any medical or religious exceptions to the center's menu.

Due to the number of children with allergies, food from home may not be brought into My Friends Discovery Center. Birthday and holiday treats are welcome, but they need to be **peanut free**, store bought, prepackaged, and unopened due to regulations from the Illinois Department of Public Health. **My Friends Discovery Center is a peanut-free environment.**

Children may not have gum while at MFDC.

Policy 15 DRESS CODE

15.1 Children

Please make sure that your child has an extra 1-2 sets of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) at My Friends Discovery Center at all times. Label the articles of clothing with your child's name. Be sure to check the clothing on a seasonal basis to make sure it is appropriate for the weather and the correct size. My Friends Discovery Center does have extra clothing, if it necessary for your child to wear home. If the clothing is not returned to the center, the parent's account will be billed:

diapers - \$1.00 each
wipes - \$5.00 per package

underwear - \$1.00

shirt - \$2.50

pants - \$2.50

Children are encouraged to wear "play clothes" while at My Friends Discovery Center. Daily activities include active play indoors and outdoors, weather permitting. Girls wearing skirts or dresses need to wear shorts underneath. When choosing jewelry/hair accessories for your child, be aware of the potential safety/choking hazards to your child or other children who attend the center.

Please do not send your child (infant, toddler, two) to MFDC with tiny hair accessories, earrings, bracelets, Amber bead necklaces, etc. These accessories can be a potential safety hazard/choking hazard to your child or other children.

DCFS 407.210 d) Indoor and outdoor play materials and equipment suitable for staff to use with infants and toddlers to stimulate learning, growth, health, and overall development shall be provided in accordance with the equipment requirements in Appendix. 1) Equipment and play materials shall be durable and free from characteristics that may be hazardous or injurious to infants and toddlers. Hazardous or injurious characteristics include sharp, rough edges, toxic paint, and objects small enough to be swallowed.

For example, a small barrette or hair beads scattering on the floor can be a potential choking hazard to a young child.

My Friends Discovery Center is not responsible for lost or soiled clothing.

15.2 Parents

Parents are required to be dressed in appropriate clothing while at My Friends Discovery Center. Nothing revealing, suggestive, or vulgar will be allowed. Please be respectful of the children, families, and staff who are at the center.

Policy 16 NAPS

All children age five and under are required by state law to have a rest time. Cots and cribs are provided for each child. Children are required to stay on their cot for no longer than 60 minutes, unless they are asleep. Children who wake up before the rest time is over will be guided in finding a quiet time activity to engage in that will not disturb any sleeping children. My Friends Discovery Center provides a sheet for your child's crib or cot. Toddler-preschool children should bring their own blanket, labeled. Small, travel sized pillows are optional. Parents/guardians may be asked to launder the blanket.

Policy 17 Health and Safety

17.1 Medical Forms

When you enroll your child, there will be some necessary paperwork to be filled out. Medical forms, annual physical, verification of immunizations, and medical release forms must be completed **prior** to enrollment.

These forms must be kept up to date during the entire enrollment of your child. Children are required to have a lead and TB test at 1 year of age.

17.2 Handwashing

My Friends Discovery Center is responsible for the health and safety of those children within our care. Reducing germs by proper hand washing is a guideline set by DCFS for the children and staff. Children's hands shall be washed routinely and frequently with soap and water:

1. Upon arrival to the center
2. Before and after each meal or snack
3. After using the toilet or having diapers changed
4. After handling pets or animals
5. After wiping or blowing nose
6. After touching items soiled with body fluids or wastes
7. Before and after cooking or other food experiences
8. After outdoor playtime
9. Before and after using the water/sensory table

17.3 Health

Another main goal of My Friends Discovery Center is to keep the children as healthy as possible. Children should be well enough to keep up with the day's activities if they are present. It is the parents' responsibility to keep the child at home when he or she is ill. My Friends Discovery Center does not have the appropriate staff to care for sick children.

These are the symptoms that should tell you to keep your child home.

Temperature of 101 degrees F or more	Nausea/vomiting
Inflamed eyes	Severe pain
Sore throat	Dizziness/faintness
Earache	Chills
Skin rash	Diarrhea
Swollen glands	

A child experiencing any of the above symptoms to the point of physical discomfort will be sent home. Parents will be contacted to come pick up a child registering a temperature of 101 degrees F or higher, or 100 degrees F if under the arm according to DCFS. A child must be **fever free, without fever reducing medication** for 24 hours before returning to My Friends Discovery Center. The child care staff recognizes that children sometimes vomit or experience diarrhea as a reaction to certain foods, medications, or stress. There are times when making the decision to call a parent is a judgment call that must be made. If we cannot pinpoint a single episode to a specific reaction, or if it is accompanied by other symptoms, you will be called to pick up your child within an hour of the phone call.

The Department of Children and Family Services and My Friends Discovery Center exclusionary guidelines are as follows:

- Illness which prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities
- Illness which calls for greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- A fever of 101 degrees F or above with behavior change or symptoms of illness
- Unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or other signs of possible severe illness

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting two or more times in the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined to be due to a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration
- Mouth sores associated with the child's inability to control his or her saliva, until the child's physician or the local health department states that the child is noninfectious.
- Rash with fever or behavior change, unless a physician has determined the illness to be non-communicable
- Purulent conjunctivitis, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated and until the child has been without fever for 24 hours
- Head lice, until ALL evidence is gone (nits, eggs, and live lice)
- Fleas, until ALL evidence is gone
- Scabies, until the morning after the first treatment
- Chicken pox (varicella), until at least six days after onset of rash and all are scabbed over
- Evidence of infection
- Any communicable disease

Children may be readmitted:

- A. With a physician's statement that the child is free from communicable disease and the returning poses no risk to the child or others.
- B. If visibly free from communicable disease, fever free without benefit of fever reducing medications for 24 hours, and free of vomiting/diarrhea for 24 hours while on a normal diet.
- C. After being on prescribed antibiotic medication for a full 24 hours.

17.4 Medication

In order to insure the safety of the children, the following steps must be taken in order for the staff to administer medicine to your child.

- Tell the care staff that your child has medicine to take on that day.
- Fill out a medicine slip with the name of the child, name of the medicine, dosage, time needed to be given, parent's signature, and date.
- Provide prescription medication in original, labeled container.

- Inform the teacher if the medicine needs to be refrigerated.
- Please make sure that all non-prescription medicines are labeled with the child's name.
- A written log will be kept of all medications dispersed.

Essential medications, such as EPI pens or inhalers must remain at MFDC and not be taken home on a daily basis.

17.5 Injuries and Other Emergencies

Minor cuts and abrasions suffered while at My Friends Discovery Center will receive proper care - specifically, they will be washed with soap and warm water and properly bandaged. Bumps and bruises will be cared for with an ice pack when needed. Treatment will be logged and you will be notified of the injury.

My Friends Discovery Center is also required to log any injuries observed on your child which have occurred outside of the Center.

My Friends Discovery Center will not be financially responsible for the treatment of any illness or accident occurring at the center, unless the illness or accident is a direct result of the gross negligence on the part of the personnel of My Friends Discovery Center. Further, parent/guardians agree to indemnify and hold harmless My Friends Discovery Center, its officers, directors and employees against any financial costs and expenses associated in any way for the treatment of any illness or accident occurring at the center, unless such illness or accident was a direct result of the gross negligence on the part of the personnel of My Friends Discovery Center.

If a medical emergency arises, My Friends Discovery Center will attempt to contact the parent first, unless doing so endangers the child's life. If a parent cannot be contacted, the child's needs will be taken into consideration first, calling the hospital, doctor, poison control, etc. If needed, an ambulance will be called. If a parent cannot be reached, My Friends Discovery Center will continue trying until he or she is available.

17.6 Accident/Incident Reports

If your child is involved in an accident or incident during the course of the day, a staff member will complete an Accident/Incident Report. Upon pick up, the parent will be required to sign the report. A copy will be given to the parent and the original copy will be placed on file at the center.

17.7 Damaged/Broken Equipment

Parents/Guardians will be responsible for damaged/broken equipment or property caused by their child. All fees required to fix the damage or purchase of new equipment will be paid by the parent/guardian before the child can return.

17.8 Individual Care

My Friends Discovery Center does not provide one-on-one care for individual children. MFDC is a group care setting. If a child's behavior requires frequent or one on one attention, MFDC may not be the appropriate program for your child. If your child poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or requires a fundamental alteration of the program, you may be asked to find other care for your child.

17.9 Firearms and Weapons

Firearms and weapons are not allowed at My Friends Discovery Center. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the center. Parents who are law enforcement personnel are asked to follow this policy.

17.10 Biting

My Friends Discovery Center recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior in the infant through two year old classrooms. Occasionally this behavior is seen in a preschool room as well. The staff understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in an incident with another child. The staff request that parents recognize this behavior is developmentally appropriate for young children. Young children have not developed skills to verbalize, so often they interact with their friends by biting, scratching, hitting, etc. The staff will make every attempt to identify the situations that elicit this behavior so that it may be prevented in the future. The center staff track the incidents and strive to strategize with staff/parents to prevent the biting from occurring. The staff also confer with specialists training with infant/toddler behavior. We ask that parents cooperate and work with the staff to identify strategies to help their child control this behavior.

17.11 Potty Training

When you begin potty training at home, please let the teachers in your child's room know the procedure you are using at home, and they will follow the same procedure. During this time, please provide extra changes of clothing (at least three changes are recommended). The best way for potty training success at school is to have open communication with the teachers in your child's classroom.

17.12 No Smoking

For the health of all employees, children, and parents, smoking is prohibited anywhere on the center's property. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot. Please dispose properly, and **not** in our parking lot or grass.

17.13 Security Cameras

My Friends Discovery Center has security cameras in the entrance, every classroom, playground areas, and parking lot. This enhanced security is for the safety and security for the welfare of the children and staff within the center. The directors have access to the archived security recording for up to 2 weeks. For live viewing, monitors are located near the front reception area and in the directors' office. Viewing is not available off site.

17.14 Pest Management

My Friends Discovery Center has adopted an Integrated Pest Management program involving the cooperation between the day care staff and pest control personnel to use a variety of non-chemical methods as well as pesticides, when needed, to reduce pest infestations to acceptable levels and to minimize children's exposure to pesticides. Parents/guardians will receive written notification before a pesticide application.

Policy 18 FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are occasionally scheduled with the older children in our center. Parents will need to give written authorization for their child to participate in the field trips. Notices will be posted in advance.

Policy 19 PLAY

19.1 Indoor Play

Indoor play takes place both in the classroom and in the large motor room when the weather is not conducive to outdoor play. Children are provided with age appropriate toys and educational activities.

19.2 Outdoor Play

Please dress your child appropriately for the current weather. When the weather permits, we spend our playtime outdoors, ranging from walks to playing on the playground. All children, toddlers to school age, are required to spend time outdoors, unless the child has a doctor's note requiring the child to stay inside. **Parent requests for children to stay inside cannot be accommodated.** My Friends Discovery Center will use information provided by the National Weather Service and a chart entitled Child Care Weather Watch provided by the Iowa Department of Public Health to determine whether or not there will be outdoor play. We will have indoor play if there is any kind of weather advisory.

Policy 20 TOYS FROM HOME

My Friends Discovery Center is not responsible for loss or damage to toys or other belongings brought from home. Families are discouraged from bringing toys from home, except for show and tell days. See your child's teacher for schedule of show and tell days. When bringing toys, please make sure they are labeled with your child's name. Place the toys in your child's cubby upon arrival. Guns, swords, sabers, or any other weapons are not allowed at the center.

Policy 21 DISCIPLINE

My Friends Discovery Center is committed to providing a supportive environment where children can experience and grow. Our discipline procedures are intended to help children learn self-discipline as they build self-esteem. The Center focuses on redirection and positive reinforcement.

Parents should never engage in any disciplinary action, verbal or physical interaction, with another child other than their own. If a parent has concerns about another child's behavior, please notify either the staff or one of the directors.

There are many ways to keep children's interests high and frustration level low, which create positive behaviors. Playing, learning, friendships, and respect for others are all behaviors given positive attention, while inappropriate behavior is redirected or dealt with in accordance with the incident. Physical punishment is NEVER used at My Friends Discovery Center. Guidance will always be positive, productive, and immediate when behavior is inappropriate.

However, when it does become necessary to manage a child's behavior, and he or she is more than 24 months old, time out will be used until the child has regained composure. Time out is the separation of the child from group activities for one minute per year of child's age. During this time out, the teacher will then discuss why the child needed to sit and how next time the child might handle the situation differently. Instead of physically reacting to the situation, the child is encouraged to use his/her words to express how he/she feels. The child is then encouraged to engage in the classroom activities. However, if after receiving 3 time outs within the classroom, the child may be brought to the office to regain composure before returning to the classroom environment.

If a child is brought to the office more than 3 times in one given day, the parent will be contacted by the administration, and may be asked to take the child home for the remainder of the day. If the child continues to not follow the discipline guidelines established by My Friends Discovery Center, a meeting will be scheduled with the director, staff, and parents to discuss permanent removal from the program.

Some basic discipline guidelines that My Friends Discovery Center follows are:

1. Every child is expected to behave in a respectful manner.
 2. Bodily harm to oneself or another individual will not be tolerated.
 3. Foul language or profanity will not be tolerated.
 4. Every child is expected to follow the rules set forth by the classroom teacher and administration.
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Policy 22 CURRICULUM

22.1 Creative Curriculum

My Friends Discovery Center offers an outstanding curriculum that is designed specifically for your child. *Creative Curriculum* is the curriculum that our staff is trained to use in each classroom. Our trained staff observe what skills each child is working on, and what their interests are. Then they plan activities that will be both educational and fun. This way, our children are learning at their own pace, through their play experiences. Through all activities at our center, there are several broad objectives:

- To help create security and self-confidence in each child.
- To explore learning and make it fun and exciting for every child.
- To create the ability to problem solve.
- To develop fine and gross motor skills.
- To allow children to make choices and experience the consequences of personal decisions.
- To encourage children to make good health and safety choices.
- To help children distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behavior.
- To develop a concern for the rights and well being of others.
- To develop an appreciation that everyone has his/her own unique characteristics that make each person different.

Our daily program allows periods of quiet and active play, with set routines, such as meals, naps, and bathroom time. Each classroom has their daily schedule posted within the classroom.

22.2 Development Screenings

My Friends Discovery Center along with parents will use the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ). ASQ is a system of age-specific questionnaires designed to be completed by the parents and caregivers of young children to ensure that the children are developing typically.

My Friends Discovery Center participates in the Ready to Learn Initiative in Sangamon County. Children in our preschool classrooms will be screened using the Brigance Assessment tool. This screening tool will give us insight into the development of our students to help prepare them for success in kindergarten. Screenings are done at the center by MFDC employees. Additional parent permission is needed in order for MFDC to share the screening results with the Sangamon County Regional Office of Education.

Policy 23 SUPPLIES

Please label all supplies with your child's name. Each child is provided a cubby to store supplies. You are responsible for providing the following supplies for your child:

- Infants disposable diapers, wipes
 - *diaper rash ointment or cream
 - *sunscreen (no spray sunscreen)
 - *teething medication
- breast milk and/or formula (labeled bottle with caps)

bottles (**No glass bottles**)
infant cereal, baby food
two complete changes of clothing
Optional: mobile
Blankets are not allowed in infant cribs, per DCFS

Toddlers disposable diapers, wipes
*diaper rash ointment or cream
*sunscreen (no spray sunscreen)
*teething medication
two complete changes of clothing
blanket
water bottle

Twos & Preschool
disposable diapers, wipes (until your child is toilet trained)
*sunscreen (no spray sunscreen)
Two complete changes of clothing, including underpants and socks
blanket
Optional: small, travel sized pillow
water bottle

* DCFS requires that you sign a permission slip before we can apply any topical ointment, including sunscreen.

During summer months, your child will need to bring in a swimsuit, towel, and water shoes for outside water play.

During the winter months, please provide a warm winter coat, hat, gloves/mittens, and winter boots for outside play when the weather is appropriate.

My Friends Discovery Center requests that children come to school dressed in seasonally appropriate, play clothing. Closed-toe shoes are requested for the safety of your child.

Closing Statement

My Friends Discovery Center hopes that visitors and participants will sense that we have created a home away from home. Each person on our staff respects the rights and needs of young children, and is dedicated to providing them with a warm and supportive atmosphere in which they can feel a sense of excitement about learning and discovery. We appreciate your trust and the opportunity to be a part of your child's growth and development.

My Friends Discovery Center reserves the right to amend policies at any time.

MY FRIENDS DISCOVERY CENTER 2018 PARENT AGREEMENT FORM

Name of Child _____

Policy Number	Policy Statement	Initial Date
1	MISSION STATEMENT	_____
2	WELCOME	_____
2.1	Hours of Operation	
3	PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY	_____
4	LICENSING INFORMATION	_____
5	CONFIDENTIALITY	_____
6	ENROLLMENT	_____
6.1	Enrollment Guidelines	
6.2	Registration Fee	
6.3	Part Time/Full Time Status	
6.4	Attendance	
6.5	Children with Special Needs	
7	TUITION AND FEES	_____
7.1	Method of Payment	
7.2	NSF Fee	
7.3	Sibling Discount	
7.4	Vacation	
7.5	Subsidized Care	
7.6	Delinquent Tuition	
7.7	Schedule Changes	
7.8	Clothing Fees	
7.9	Early Drop Off Fees	
7.10	Late Pick Up Fees	
7.11	Sick Child Late Pick Up Fees	
8	ARRIVAL	_____
8.1	Parent's Responsibility at Arrival	
8.2	Center's Right to Refuse Admission	
8.3	Early Drop Off Policy	
8.4	Parking	
9	DEPARTURE	_____
9.1	Parent's Responsibilities at Departure	
9.2	Late Pick Up	
9.3	Persons Appearing to be Impaired by Drugs/Alcohol at Pick Up	
10	COMMUNICATION	_____
11	EMERGENCY CLOSING	_____
12	WITHDRAWAL	_____

13	TERMINATION OF CARE	_____
14	MEALS AND SNACKS	_____
15	DRESS CODE	_____
15.1	Children	
15.2	Parents	
16	NAPS	_____
17	HEALTH AND SAFETY	_____
17.1	Medical Forms	
17.2	Handwashing	
17.3	Health	
17.4	Medication	
17.5	Injuries and Other Emergencies	
17.6	Accident/Incident Reports	
17.7	Damaged/Broken Equipment	
17.8	Individual Care	
17.9	Firearms and Weapons	
17.10	Biting	
17.11	Potty Training	
17.12	No Smoking	
17.13	Security Cameras	
17.14	Pest Management	
18	FIELD TRIPS	_____
19	PLAY	_____
19.1	Indoor Play	
19.2	Outdoor Play	
20	TOYS FROM HOME	_____
21	DISCIPLINE	_____
22	CURRICULUM	_____
22.1	Creative Curriculum	
22.2	Developmental Screenings	
23	SUPPLIES	_____

Parent/Guardian's Signature/Date

Parent/Guardian's Signature/Date

MY FRIENDS DISCOVERY CENTER 2018 PARENT AGREEMENT FORM

Name of Child _____

As part of the Center’s activities, the children may be observed in their classrooms by child care professionals not employed by My Friends Discovery Center. In such cases, the confidentiality of information related to the child will be maintained. I give My Friends Discovery Center permission to allow my child to be observed in the classroom.

Parent/Guardian’s Signature/Date

Parent/Guardian’s Signature/Date

Occasionally My Friends Discovery Center may take photographs of children at the center. I give My Friends Discovery Center permission to photograph my child for center purposes only. My child may be photographed for photos to display on MFDC’s website and Facebook page. My child’s name will not be used, photo only.

Parent/Guardian’s Signature/Date

Parent/Guardian’s Signature/Date

I agree to comply with policy Injuries and Other Emergencies (#17.5):
My Friends Discovery Center will not be financially responsible for the treatment of any illness or accident occurring at the center, unless the illness or accident is a direct result of the gross negligence on the part of the personnel of My Friends Discovery Center. Further, parent/guardians agree to indemnify and hold harmless My Friends Discovery Center, its officers, directors and employees against any financial costs and expenses associated in any way for the treatment of any illness or accident occurring at the center, unless such illness or accident was a direct result of the gross negligence on the part of the personnel of My Friends Discovery Center.

Parent/Guardian’s Signature/Date

Parent/Guardian’s Signature/Date

I have read Policy 17.14 Pest Management. I am aware My Friends Discovery Center has adopted an Integrated Pest Management Program and will provide written notification before a pesticide application.

Parent/Guardian’s Signature/Date

Parent/Guardian’s Signature/Date

I agree to comply with the policies within this Parent Handbook. This includes the Late Pick Up Policy (#9.2) and the Discipline Policy (#21).

Parent/Guardian’s Signature/Date

Parent/Guardian’s Signature/Date

Director’s Signature/Date