



**Messy Hands
Happy Hearts
Parent Handbook**



Messy Hands, Happy Hearts LLC

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IMPORTANT: Non Compliance Notices

To stay within New York regulations, we must have an updated health record for your child, at the start of enrollment and/or annual session. Please note, we will verbally remind parents to provide this documentation (or to update it). However, if we do not receive these records, and you (as a parent) receive a written notice, care will be suspended, until records are received. Please note, that you will still be responsible for paying for care, even during the term of suspension.

REVISIONS TO HANDBOOK AND CONTRACT

There will be a yearly revision to this handbook and the accompanying contract. All families will sign a new contract each year. I reserve the right to make changes in rates and policies, as I deem necessary. You will be notified, in writing, of any changes that may occur. Every attempt will be made to give at least two-week's notice of changes

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Handbook Guide

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About This Handbook

This handbook will help to explain our school and our operational policies. We reserve the right to update this handbook at any time, but we will let families know if we do. Please take a few minutes to become familiar with this information, along with the Enrollment Agreement provided to you. On your Enrollment Agreement, you will be asked to acknowledge your receipt and agreement to the policies outlined in this handbook. To facilitate good communication between parents and our facility, we have created this handbook. It covers MHHH's child care philosophies, business policies and expectations. To make our relationship as enjoyable as possible, the following pages contain mutually beneficial requirements, which are necessary to ensure that there are no misunderstandings between either party. The words "I" or "me" or "my" "we" or "us" refers to the childcare provider and/or staff. The word "you" or "your" refers to the child's parents or guardian.

Please read this handbook carefully, and reach out with any questions that you may have.

History

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, established in 2018, is the dream of Katia Kirkland. She wanted to create a safe space for all children to learn and thrive, through hands-on experiences and sensory introduction. The environment, which was key to Kirkland's dream, was crafted over the first year, introducing programs of play-to-learn patterns, both within the classroom and outside. Kirkland offered this safe and loving environment to children, from infant to school age. The majority of children were toddler age.

In the beginning of 2019, Messy Hands Happy Hearts set a new record: they were the second program in New York State, to receive the Caring Spaces Endorsement. Caring spaces is a company with a three-tiered approach to measuring levels of quality in infant and toddler's environments and responsive caregiving.

By October 2019 Messy Hands Happy Hearts was welcomed into Quality Stars NY. Quality Stars is New York's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for early childhood programs, providing support and resources to improve and sustain high quality across New York State.

As the rest of the world, Messy Hands Happy Hearts, welcomed in the New Year of 2020 with Covid knocking at the door. Throughout the two years of the pandemic, Messy Hands Happy Hearts continued to be committed, whole -heartedly to the health and well-being of their little charges as well as the families. This was done through a systematic approach to everyday cleaning and organization, in order to not only provide a higher standard of cleanliness but to also be able to accommodate all students, while maintaining recommended social distancing. In 2022, Messy Hands Happy Hearts continues to provide a quality program that prides itself in meeting the needs of their kids, while ensuring they thrive in a developmentally appropriate program.

Mission and Values

At Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC., we believe in the value and uniqueness of each child and family we serve. The mission of Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. is to create a stimulating and nurturing environment where children of all abilities, regardless of socio-economic or cultural background, can grow and learn together, in acceptance of one another. Our curriculum is designed to promote each child's own individual social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. As caregivers and educators, our mission is to provide a safe and developmentally appropriate learning environment, which fosters a child's natural instinct to explore, discover, create and become a lifelong learner. This mission is carried out daily by highly trained staff, low teacher/child ratios, specialized curriculum, and contracted therapy services. At

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC., we value the importance of character, commitment to the family, commitment to the community, respect for the individual, and celebrating our differences.

Philosophy

We believe that in the right environment a child's natural curiosity and creativity leads to endless opportunities to grow in knowledge and develop a love of learning. We provide this environment at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. by making it a safe and nurturing place where your child will be encouraged to build, splash, dash, pretend and create their way to exciting discoveries about the world around them. We welcome children to join the Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. family starting at 6 weeks old and are welcome to stay with us until age 12.

As early as infancy, your child will be provided with learning opportunities adapted to fit his or her age, developmental stage, and learning style. Full-day, year-round care (and all-day care) in one location, makes it possible for you to provide your child with the care and education that will help them become happy, healthy lifelong learners.

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. philosophy is based on a belief that children of all abilities benefit from an inclusive environment, emphasizing acceptance of individual differences and ability levels. For children with special needs, inclusion facilitates developmental progress by exposure to role modeling of social, language, and physical skills through interactions with typically developing peers. We also believe that the typically developing children gain solid interpersonal skills, including self-confidence, acceptance, empathy, and communication. Inclusion allows all children to relate and interact with peers in play and daily routines, engaging in experiences that promote the development of self-help skills, self-control, and the understanding that others have different backgrounds and perspectives than themselves.

The Staff

The quality of the program is a direct correlation to the quality of the staff. It is vital to attract staff that are experienced and knowledgeable in the field of early childhood development. Each classroom is staffed with three full-time teachers. Additional part-time staff float between rooms to offer additional support or coverage where/when needed.

Each staff person must complete 30 hours of continuing education in child development or special education, each year. This requirement goes above and beyond what state licensing regulations require and is crucial in maintaining qualified teachers for the ongoing success of the Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. program. All teachers must have some level of experience with young children and demonstrate a genuine interest in children. All staff members must have an initial physical, TB test, criminal records check, and a reference inquiry before employment begins.

Licensing and Accreditation

OCFS

Our school is state-licensed and regularly inspected to ensure everything meets (or exceeds) New York State standards, including child-to-teacher ratios and safe facilities. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. is subject to inspection by state and local health, fire, licensing, and building agencies. Regulations and inspections pertain to staff qualifications, the facility and playground, nutrition, health and safety matters, record-keeping, and child-to-staff ratios. If you have any questions regarding licensing or regulations, please speak with Ms. Katia.

Caring Spaces

At Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC we hold the Caring Spaces endorsement. This endorsement recognizes high-quality environments that allow freedom of movement, demonstrates responsive caregiving and provides high-quality materials and experiences. We participate in training and technical assistance that have not only improved the quality of our program, but also gives us the confidence to share what we have learned with parents.

Quality Stars New York

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts is part of New York State's Quality Rating & Improvement System. The Quality Stars Standards, focus on 4 main categories:

- Learning Environment
- Family Engagement
- Qualifications and Experience
- Management and Leadership

At MHHH, we follow these standards to the letter, in order to offer the highest quality care for your little ones. For more information on these standards, ask Ms.Katia or find out more at our website: messyhandshappyheartslc.com.

Educational Programming

Curriculum

At Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC., we focus on child-centered teaching, developmentally appropriate practices, and the belief that 'play is a child's work.' Our goal is to develop each child's confidence, creativity, and life-long learning skills in our program. To support this goal, we use a combination of:

- Experience Early Learning
- Mother Goose Time
- Creative Curriculum
- Learning Without Tears

For more information, visit: Experience Early Learning: mothergoosetime.com

Free Choice

"Free-play" (also referred to as child-initiated activities, free choice, self selection) activities are incorporated into the children's schedules. During free-play, teachers actively participate with the children by asking questions about what the children are doing, participating in their pretend play, reading books when prompted, encouraging children to try new activities or play with a new toy, etc. Free-play is another opportunity for a child to grow socially and cognitively through the development of relationships.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is incorporated into the daily schedule. Staff members actively engage in activities when prompted by the children. Outdoor play is an opportunity for children to run, jump, climb and use their bodies in ways that would otherwise be unsafe in an indoor classroom. In addition, a large amount of

social interaction takes place when children play outdoors. Because they are engaged in fewer teacher-directed activities and more child-directed play, children are able to choose their friends and interactions.

Children will go outside year-round, including winter. Only during extreme weather conditions will the children remain indoors.

Nap/Rest time

The New York Department of Human Services requires that all children must be provided a regularly scheduled nap or resting time. Children will not be forced to sleep but may be encouraged to lie quietly for a period of time. The length of time a child should have to remain resting varies by child. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the maximum amount of time a child should have to remain resting. Children will be provided alternative quiet activities if unable to rest.

Screen Time

As per New York State regulations, television and other electronic visual media must be turned off while children are sleeping and during established nap times. Children will not watch television or other electronic visual media during meals. If television or other electronic visual media is used, it must be part of a planned developmentally appropriate program with an educational, social, physical or other learning objective that includes identified goals and objectives. Children ages 2 and older may use television, videos and other visual recordings to watch no more than 30 minutes per week of educational programs or programs that actively engage children's movement. Children younger than 2 are not permitted to watch television, video and other visual recordings.

Obesity Prevention

Healthy Kids, Healthy Future was developed in partnership with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. It provides practical strategies for implementing best practices in an early childhood setting for promoting healthy young children. This includes five best practical goals:

- Increase physical activity
- Limit screen time
- Offer healthy beverages
- Serve only healthy food
- Support breastfeeding

Assessments

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. uses Experience Early Learning to assess students' levels in the following seven categories:

- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical and Motor Development
- Language and Literacy
- Math and Reasoning
- Science
- Community and Economics

- Social Studies

Parents are encouraged to work with their child's teacher to assess, and then meet, their child's needs. Child assessment is a vital component of all high-quality early childhood programs. Assessments are essential to understanding and supporting young children's development. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. has selected Experience Early Learning to measure your child's needs. Experience Early Learning is an ongoing observational assessment tool based upon years of feedback from thousands of educators and significant research about how children develop and learn. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. assessment policy adheres to the NAEYC Position Statement: Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation. These objectives are built into every classroom activity, which means that the teacher helps your child develop skills and knowledge in these critical areas all day long.

Assessment Plan

- The Developmental Continuum of Skills is used alongside informal assessments such as written observations, work samples, and checklists and is built into all of our classroom activities.
- Initial enrollment and annual forms allow parents to provide information about their child that may assist the teacher when completing assessments.
- Children are assessed multiple times a year.
- Children will be assessed in familiar spaces, and assessments will be conducted by adults that the child is familiar with.
- Assessments will be conducted via observation during the natural course of the child's day.
- This may include during one-on-one, small group, or large group opportunities.

Assessment Results

- Teachers use the information gathered during the assessment process to:
 - Identify children's interests and needs
 - Be intentional in their teaching
 - Develop goals for each child and plan for individual student needs
 - Guide instructional/environmental planning that best meets the needs of all children
 - Share progress with families by pinpointing where children are along a continuum of development and education.
- Assessment results and developmental progress is shared with parents, at their parent-teacher conferences.
- Sometimes assessments indicate a need for further evaluation. In that case, the teachers will discuss this with the family and use the information gathered for referral to an outside agency for additional diagnostic screenings and assessments.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences will typically be held twice per year, as well as each time your child

transitions to a different classroom. The goal of the parent-teacher conference is to gain insight into your child's development, both in the classroom setting as well as the home setting. During conferences, your child's development and any goals you may have for your child will be discussed. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. uses the Experience Early Learning to help assess children's development. Parents are encouraged to request conferences whenever they feel it necessary.

Family participation is encouraged and welcomed. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. uses Family Conferences to offer family support and communication. Family Conferences are designed:

- To guide families and teachers with a way of sharing valuable information about their child.
- To individualize the planning process for each child in the context of their family, culture, and community.
- To explore ways to use a child's family's strengths to promote growth and development.
- To create an ongoing process for recording the growth and development of the child.

We schedule two formal conferences each school year, but we encourage you to reach out to your child's teacher at any time if you have questions, concerns, or want an update on your child's progress. While conferences are not mandatory, they are encouraged, even for our youngest students, as they allow parents the opportunity to follow their child's progress. During these conferences, you will be provided with a written report about your child's strengths and areas for growth.

Developmental Concerns

If at any point, you have developmental concerns for your child, please reach out to your child's teacher to discuss. We are happy to provide strategies, resources, or community programs that may be of help and support.

Behavior Guideline Philosophy

The foundation of our goals at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. is to help our students develop strong social and emotional skills. Instead of discipline, we use guidance. Guidance is about building an encouraging setting for every person in the group. It means helping young children understand they can learn from their mistakes, and it starts with showing them how (Reference: NAEYC). Research indicates that children with strong social-emotional skills tend to be happier, show greater motivation to learn, have a more positive attitude toward school, more eagerly participate in class activities, and demonstrate higher academic performance than students who exhibit social and emotional difficulties (Hyson 2004; Kostelnik et al. 2015).

Additionally, socially and emotionally healthy children are better able to establish and maintain positive relationships with adults and peers. To support our students in developing these skills, we take a proactive and preventive approach to guidance that reinforces appropriate behaviors rather than focusing on inappropriate behaviors.

- **Our Environment:** We provide children with exciting materials, and engage them in activities that are appropriate for their age, to keep them focused and attentive. We develop schedules that meet the needs of young children by avoiding long periods of wait time without activity. Yet, our schedule is flexible enough to follow the children's interests as well as their cognitive, physical, and biological needs.

- **Our Teachers:** We work to develop a strong rapport with each child speaking to children calmly, especially during redirections. We help children put words to their emotions. We use social stories to help teach our students healthy social skills. We strive to serve the individual needs of each child while ensuring the safety of young children.
- **Our Families:** We communicate regularly with families to ensure consistency in guidance between home and school. We partner with families to offer support, guidance and, if necessary, connect them with experts to help give their children the best foundation for academic and life success.

Guidance Procedures

When any student at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. presents with challenging behavior, teaching staff shall follow the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):

- Observe the child to identify events, activities, interactions, and other factors that indicate, and may contribute, to challenging behavior.
- Teaching staff shall focus on teaching the child social, communication, and emotional regulation skills and using environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support, and other teaching strategies to support situationally-appropriate behavior.
- Teaching staff shall respond to challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that provides for the child's safety and the safety of others in the classroom. Our response will be calm, respectful and give the child information on what is acceptable behavior and what is not.
- We will document the challenging behaviors and the intervention methods that were attempted in a log. Documentation may include incident reports, ABC charts, or Behavior Plans.
- Teacher-parent discussions regarding a child's behavior shall be held in private. They shall focus on working as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.
- If necessary, intervention shall ensure each child has access to professional services, such as referrals to community agencies offering early intervention services, community mental health centers, and/or a private therapist.
- All discipline decisions will always be individualized, consistent, and appropriate to each child's understanding level.

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. does not condone or tolerate the use of physical punishment of any kind at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. This policy restricts parents and staff from using physical punishment on a child while on Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. property. Also, Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. will not tolerate psychological abuse, coercion, threats, derogatory remarks, withholding (or threatening to withhold) food as a form of discipline.

Despite these efforts, some children may continue to exhibit significant, challenging behaviors. The following steps will be completed if a child must be removed for challenging behaviors that constitute an imminent danger to the child or others:

Biting

Biting is a normal part of child development. Young children bite for various reasons, such as teething or exploring a new toy or object with their mouth. Biting can also be a way for toddlers to get attention or

express how they're feeling. Frustration, anger, and fear are strong emotions, and toddlers lack the language skills to deal with them. If they can't find the words they need quickly enough or can't articulate how they're feeling, they may resort to biting.

Biting tends to occur most often between 12-24 months of age. Biting past the age of two and a half to three is less common. For repeated biting instances with preschoolers, we may request a parent-teacher conference. The purpose of the parent-teacher conference is to discuss what may be causing the child to be upset, frustrated, confused, or afraid and therefore leads to biting. Additionally, we would develop a joint plan of action following our behavior guidance procedures listed in this handbook. If your child bites or is bitten, you and the family of the other child involved will receive an Incident/Accident Report that keeps the identity of both children confidential.

Weapons/Violent Play

There is a strict policy of allowing no weapon play at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. . Children are not permitted to play with weapons of any type or size or to pretend that other items are weapons, including their fingers, hands, or blocks. Redirection should be used when a child is engaging in weapon or violent play. If a child brings a weapon to Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. , the weapon should be placed out of sight and sent home the same day with a note explaining the policy about weapons.

Competitive behavior is minimized in our programs. In young children, competition often increases negative behavior and decreases acceptance of others. Bullying is not considered acceptable behavior; all efforts will be made to guide children in finding appropriate ways to interact with others.

Enrollment

New Family Orientation

Each family is strongly encouraged to schedule a time with Ms. Katia to complete a "New Family Orientation." This orientation is a great time for parents to drop off routine care items (diapers, bottles, etc.) as well as an opportunity to participate in a portion of classroom activities with their child, familiarizing themselves with their child's routines at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. Important policies and procedures are also reviewed with Ms. Katia at this time, as well as the paperwork required for enrollment completed. Typically, "New Family Orientation" is scheduled prior to the start date.

Records

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. completes an audit of enrollment records annually. At the conclusion of this audit, families will be notified if anything needs to be updated. Some forms must be updated every year, including the Emergency Contact and Medical Consent form.

Other records must be updated throughout the year, such as physicals and immunization records. When visiting your child's physician for a yearly "well-child" appointment, please request a copy of your child's physical and most recent immunization record. You may bring these items yourself.

In addition, any time a family's information changes such as address, place of employment or health insurance provider, a new Emergency Contact and Medical Consent form must be completed.

Admissions Process

Spaces are filled from the interest list according to the following priority system:

- Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. staff children
- Siblings of currently enrolled children
- Previous Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. families
- General Public

Children must be able to benefit from participation in an inclusive group setting. If, after a tour and discussion of the child's needs, it is determined that Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. is not a good fit for the child, Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. will attempt to give resources and information about other programs that may benefit the child and family.

Registration & Requirements for Enrollment

After parents are notified of the admission date, you must complete the Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. Enrollment Application (found on our website) and pay the non-refundable registration fee.

Upon receipt of the enrollment application and payment of registration fees, the parent will receive the enrollment agreement, family handbook, permission forms (photo, CACFP, sunscreen), nutrition forms (if applicable), and health and immunization forms.

On the first day a child attends school, the office must have in each child's file:

- A completed Enrollment Application, including Schedule & Tuition Agreement
- A signed Enrollment Agreement
- A completed set of enrollment paperwork
- Completed medical action plan (if applicable)

Within 30 days of a child's first date of attendance:

- A health assessment by a licensed physician
- A record of immunization or a completed exemption form

PLEASE NOTE: We are required to have each of these forms in our files in order to maintain our license to operate. State law requires us to exclude any student, from school, whose files are incomplete. They will be restricted from attending, until we have received their missing paperwork. We appreciate your cooperation.

Withdrawing

If you need to withdraw your child from Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC., you must give **two weeks** advance notice in writing. The two weeks notice begins the day it is received in the school office. You will be charged tuition during this two-week notice period, whether your child is in attendance or not.

The School Day

Attendance

Regular attendance is strongly encouraged for the benefit of the child, as well as the classroom, as a whole. If your child will be absent, please call the center by 9:00 am so your child's teacher may make accommodations to the lesson plan.

If your child will be absent for an extended period of time (more than 14 days), the center

should be notified in writing of the date the absence begins and the expected date your child will return. Fees are still due, even if your child is absent, based on the contract signed at the time of enrollment.

Enrollment will be terminated if a child is absent for a period of 30 days or more, and no notice has been received or contact made by the family.

Your Child's First Day

Preparing for the first day of school can be exciting, but it can also be an overwhelming and anxious time – we understand! We will work with you to make your child's first day the best it can be. Don't hesitate to share any concerns you have before that first drop-off. If possible, we recommend new students (or students that have not been in a daycare environment before) start with a few half days, gradually lengthening their time. This helps your child become familiar with the new environment and new faces and it will reduce anxiety. Each child is unique in their ability to adjust to new patterns and environments.

Be sure to talk with the staff daily during the transition phase. A consistent daily schedule (arrival and departure routines) also help children adjust to a new routine and environment. You're always welcome to call any time to see how your child's adjusting or download the HiMama app for updates throughout the day.

Weather Related Closings

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. will remain open during the most severe weather. Ms. Katia will monitor the weather and local news stations to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day. In the event that Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. closes early or cancels care for the following day, parents will be contacted and informed of the situation via phone.

Children should be picked up in a reasonable amount of time to ensure all parents, children, and staff can travel safely home. In case of inclement weather, Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. will close as determined by Cornwall Central School District closings.

Parking & Carpool

To ensure our children's safety, it is of utmost importance that we practice safety and courtesy while in the parking lot. Please watch out for others, drive slowly, and hold children's hands.

Arrival

Parents are required to accompany their child into the center and into their child's classroom. Parents should also speak with the teacher in the classroom, if only briefly. We encourage parents to communicate with their child's teacher about their child's temperament that particular day, how he/she slept the night before, whether he/she has eaten that morning, etc. Most children go through periods of difficulty with separating from their parent(s). This is common and developmentally appropriate. Try these tips for a successful drop-off:

- Establish a regular, predictable routine. Whether you have a kiss and a hug and go, or help your child put his things in his cubby first, do it the same way every day. What often makes separating stressful for children is the uncertainty. If your child can predict what will happen, the separation won't be as difficult.

- Separate once. If you come back into the classroom again and again, it will increase your child's stress. Remember the moment of separation is the worst part for your child, so doing it more than once makes it more stressful for your child
- Be reliable. Return when promised. Children who are picked up later than expected may have more difficulties separating. Phrase time in terms your child will understand. For example, you will be back after snack time or before nap time.

Mornings can be busy times, and they often set the tone for our day. Help your child have a successful start to their day by doing the following when you and your child arrive at school:

- Parents must accompany their child to and from the classroom each day.
- You must connect with the teacher upon your child's arrival. This is a wonderful opportunity to share any important information they should know about your child's morning or changes to their schedule.
- Help your child wash their hands before playing.

Please plan to bring your child to school by the time agreed upon. We want each of our students to gain the most they can from their experiences at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. When children consistently arrive late, they miss out on educational opportunities and fun activities that the teachers have carefully planned.

Separation Anxiety

The first few weeks of school are always a time of adjustment, and many students (and parents) feel a sense of separation anxiety, which is perfectly normal. Here are a few strategies to help with the process. Remember, separation anxiety is a phase, it is perfectly natural, and it will pass.

- Make the goodbye prompt and cheerful. Giving your child "one more minute" prolongs the inevitable. As a parent, the best thing you can do is hug your child, say "I love you," and reassure them that you will be back soon.
- Establish a goodbye routine. Children crave routine, and parents who establish a consistent goodbye routine have better luck with successful goodbyes. This could be a secret handshake or a special 'I Love You' ritual. This provides a special moment between the two of you that offers a sense of reassurance.
- Trust your child's teacher. This may be difficult to do when you do not yet know them, but keep in mind that our teachers have chosen this profession because they love children, and they have a wealth of ideas and strategies to help settle an upset little one.
- Acknowledge how your child is feeling. It is important to accept and respect your child's temporary unhappiness as it is genuine and normal. Say things like, "I know you feel sad when Mommy leaves, but you will have a good time, and I will be back very soon."

Also, be prepared for regression. Sometimes a change in schedule like a long weekend or an illness that keeps your child home for a few days can make you feel like you are right back to square one. As frustrating and upsetting as this can be, it is perfectly normal. Stick to the above strategies, and you should notice a significant difference in a couple of days.

Classroom Schedule

Each classroom follows a slightly different schedule that is customized for their students. The primary school day is from 9:00am, with a rest time from 12:00pm-2:00pm. While all parts of the school day are important. If you need to make appointments during the school day, we generally recommend your child not miss the primary educational time of 9:00am-11:30am. During this time, we heavily focus on working in large and small groups, completing centers, and circle time.

Staff is sensitive to the attention spans of young children and plan accordingly, making activities extensive enough to be challenging and fun but short enough to avoid overwhelming a child. We have a schedule posted that lists approximate times of activities. Routine provides security, but flexibility is also important in meeting the varying needs of young children.

Classroom Activities

Teachers plan activities for the learning centers in the classrooms weekly. Teachers strive to be culturally aware and sensitive in their approach to planning. They plan concrete activities that can be modified to meet all children's needs and provide challenges in skill development. The classrooms are organized into centers or defined interest areas. Activities are planned for each center in which the children move freely throughout each day.

Learning Experiences

Teachers connect with and use their community's resources, and the families we serve, to expand our curriculum and provide additional hands-on learning experiences. In-house learning events may include cultural experiences through community members as well as a cultural experience provided by families within the center, demonstrations by community helpers, or scientific investigations.

Playground and Outdoors

We play outside every day that weather permits. When the weather keeps us inside, we find safe and fun ways to get active indoors. Our playground equipment and materials are designed for active play and exploration, which keeps kids learning while getting exercise and fresh air. Teachers plan outdoor activities to address multiple areas of skill development, including climbing, balance, and coordination, throwing, kicking, running, jumping and pedaling.

Air Quality

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. staff monitor the conditions and make decisions using the Hudson Valley Weather App on days that are labeled code yellow, outdoor time will be reduced. Children will not go outside on days labeled code red, and gross motor activities will occur indoors. Children will use the playground at least twice daily in most situations. In exceptional cases, such as a child with asthma or an extreme allergy condition, a doctor's note is required, outlining proper care for the child.

Mealtimes and Snacks

Breakfast is served between 8:00am and 8:15am
Lunch is served between 11:30 and 11:45
PM Snack is served between 2:30 and 2:45

Food Service Policy

At Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC., children are provided a nutritious breakfast, lunch and PM snacks. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. follows the nutritional guidelines established by the Child and Adult Food Program. Menus will be posted on the HiMama App. You may request a copy to take home if you would like. Children will be encouraged to sample all foods that are offered, but will never be forced to eat. Please inform your child's teacher if your child cannot eat a certain food or has different dietary needs (e.g. vegetarian, vegan, lactose intolerant) so a substitution can be made. For certain dietary restrictions, you may be asked to provide food from home for your child.

Celebrations & Birthdays

Celebrations and birthdays are special days for kids, and we want to share in the fun! If you'd like to provide a small treat for the celebration, all items must be nut-free (including peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter, and food processed in plants using nuts) and commercially packaged with ingredient statements so we can be sure we're accommodating any allergies or dietary restrictions. Please do not send in any treats or candy, which may be a choking hazard to our students. Healthy snack options such as whole-grain items, vegetables with dip, fresh fruit, fresh fruit popsicles, or yogurt are always a great choice. Please be sure to provide enough for everyone in your child's classroom and check in with your child's teacher before the special day so they can share any tips and to help you plan accordingly.

Food Allergies/ Action Plans

If your child has a food allergy, please complete a Food Allergy Action Plan form. This form will be posted in your child's room, as well as in food preparation areas. If medication for an allergic reaction is provided, please have your physician sign the Food Allergy Action Plan as well as the consent for giving said medication. Healthy, balanced meals are just what growing bodies need! Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks are provided to all students daily. Weekly menus and mealtimes are sent via HiMama.

Additionally, all meals are served and prepared following the Child and Adult Care Food Program/USDA requirements for children ages twelve months to six years. This includes one protein, one grain, two fruits and/or vegetables, and milk at lunch. Breakfast and snacks include one grain and a fruit or vegetable.

It has been the experience at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. that children will eventually try foods at school that they may not consume at home simply because the other children are eating them. During mealtimes, students and staff are sitting together and engaging in conversations. Staff uses positive reinforcement to encourage children to try new foods.

Special Dietary Needs

We can provide allergy-friendly alternatives with documentation from a doctor for students with food allergies or intolerances. We encourage all students to eat the meals provided at school; however, we understand that may not be the best option for all students.

If you would like to provide your child meals from home, please reach out to Ms. Katia to discuss. We ask that you not send snack foods, candy, or gum with your child as this can cause difficulties within the classroom.

For children with disabilities who have special feeding needs, staff keeps a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes and provides families with that information.

Documents of Allergies

A child with allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan posted in a visible location in the classroom. If the allergy is food-related, an Allergy Action Plan must also be posted in the kitchen area. All staff working in the classroom of a child with allergies must review the Allergy Action Plan to ensure understanding of emergency procedures should the child have an allergic reaction. All allergic reactions must be documented with a Health Incident Form.

Formula/Bottles/Sippy Cups

Center staff cannot mix formula bottles and cannot add cereal to bottles. If a child is drinking formula, it must come to school premixed and labeled with the child's name and date every day. Please do not leave bottles at the center overnight; their contents will be discarded. Due to the potential risk, children will not be laid down to rest with a bottle/sippy cup, nor will the bottle/sippy cup be propped. Children cannot walk around the classroom with their bottle/sippy cup. We will work with our families to ensure our students are offered fluids from an open cup as soon as the families and teachers decide together that a child is developmentally ready to use a cup.

Infant, Toddler, and Two-Year-Old

Parents must supply diapers, wipes, diaper cream, bottles, formula, baby food, extra clothing, pacifiers, blankets, and stuffed toys for rest time. Please label all items with the child's name. Children may use pacifiers during rest time. To reduce the likelihood of spreading illness, pacifiers must be kept in a child's cubby or diaper bag during all other times of the day. If you are breastfeeding, please discuss with your child's teacher when your child should be fed breast milk, and when you would like to come in and feed your child. Breast milk must be brought in ready-to-use containers. For health reasons, we are not able to store bags of frozen milk for extended periods of time. We recommend that all new foods be tried at home first since a child could have an allergic reaction to foods they have not had before. Please inform your child's teachers on the daily charts of any new foods your child has tried.

Rest Time

All children will participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep; however, we have a very busy and stimulating morning, so most toddlers and preschool-aged children will nap when given a relaxing and quiet space to do so. If a child does not fall asleep after a short rest, they are given quiet activities within the nap room. The center provides cot, cot covers, blanket and pillow. These items are washed weekly but disinfected daily. There are always two teachers within the nap room during naptime, observing by sight and sound. We do not use mirrors, video, or sound monitors in place of sight and sound (physical) supervision.

SIDS

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexpected, sudden death of a child under age 1 for which a cause of death cannot be identified. It is not known what causes SIDS; however, several sleeping practices have been linked to an increased risk for SIDS. Therefore, Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. has a strict policy for infant sleep placement.

All infants less than one year will be placed on their back to sleep. Infants shall not be allowed to sleep in a car seat or swing at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC.

Once a child has been placed in his or her crib for a nap, if the infant rolls from back to front - and is also able to roll from front to back - it is acceptable to leave the infant sleeping on his or her stomach. NO

heavy blankets, stuffed toys or pillows should ever be placed in a crib. A request for alternative sleeping positions must be accompanied by a signed and dated physician's note stating the reason for the request.

What to Provide

Items from Home

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. allows one stuffed animal or comfort item to be brought to school for nap/rest time. We ask that all items brought to Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. from home be placed in your child's cubby shortly after arrival by parent. Please clearly label all belongings brought from home. It is recommended that items of value, such as iPods or handheld gaming systems be left at home, due to the risk of damage or theft. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

Personal Belongings

To prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost, please label **ALL** items brought from home with your child's name. Each child has a hook and/or cubby assigned to them. This will provide storage space for your child's personal belongings. Please check your child's cubby daily for items that need to be taken home.

Clothing & Shoes

A full day at our school includes fun activities like singing, painting, playing indoors and out, dancing, and eating, so we recommend easy-fitting, washable clothes. Being comfortable lets kids focus on learning and having fun!

Make sure your child is wearing shoes for easy movement. Flip-flops, clogs, cowboy boots, and slick-bottomed shoes often cause children to fall when running outside and limit their play. Please be sure that your child's shoes are rubber-soled and closed-toe with a closed heel or heel strap. Shoes are required for all students.

- Please provide two complete sets of extra clothes, including socks, for your child. It's always a good idea to keep an extra pair of shoes and a sweater or sweatshirt at school, too. Clothing should be labeled with your child's first and last name and checked periodically to make sure it still fits.
- Please provide appropriately layered clothing to keep warm in cold weather, including mittens or gloves, caps, hoods, or hats, sweaters or sweatshirts, socks, and warm, waterproof outerwear and footwear.
- Please have your children wear sun-protective clothing such as clothing made with fabrics rated for ultraviolet protection or clothing that protects skin areas most prone to sun damage.
- Sometimes learning and fun can get messy! Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. isn't responsible for lost, stained, soiled, or torn clothing.

Change in Pickup Person

The safety of our students is our top priority. Please notify your child's teacher if someone other than you will be picking up your child. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. staff will only release your child to the parents and guardians or the other adults you authorized on the student's Enrollment Application. If you need to authorize a new pickup person, please request this, in person to Ms. Katia. For your child's safety, any time a person we do not recognize comes to pick up your child, we will ask for a government-issued photo ID.

Departure

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. closes at 5:30pm Monday-Friday. If you will be late picking up your child, please provide us with as much notice as possible. Please note that there is a late fee for arriving after 5:30pm. If someone we are not familiar with is to pick up your child, it is essential that you inform your child's teacher in advance of the pick-up. This person must be listed as an authorized person on the Emergency Contact and Parent Consent form. Remind the authorized person that they may be asked for identification, such as a driver's license, to ensure your child's safety. Even if the individual has picked up before, he or she may still need identification if the teacher in charge has never met him or her.

Be sure to say goodbye to your child's teachers so they know you are leaving. Once you have reunited with your child and are departing, Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. is no longer responsible for your child. For safety reasons, please do not let your child run ahead of you inside or outside of the building.

The School Year

Consistency

It is important to maintain consistency as much as possible. Understandably, there will be unanticipated changes throughout the day, which will be communicated with all caregivers, parents and children, if applicable. Environments that are consistent, give infants and toddlers the security to feel relaxed and secure with caregivers. Flexibility is necessary- birthday, holiday celebrations or as children get older. Routines may need to be arranged to accommodate developing independence in a child. When these situations arise, the caregivers at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. will adapt these changes only once per week so each child may become familiar and secure with the new routine or transition.

School Calendar

You will be provided a calendar upon enrollment. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. will be closed most federal holidays. We also dedicate time each year for professional development. Tuition and fees are not prorated for illness, holidays, inclement weather, or emergency closures.

Communication & Family Involvement

HiMama is an app to help parents stay connected with their child and teacher during school hours. This is where you can communicate directly with your child's teachers throughout the day including caregiving routines such as feeding, sleeping, and diapering/toileting. Talk to Ms. Katia to get set up.

Newsletters

A monthly newsletter will be posted on the bulletin board in your child's class. If you sign up for HiMama a copy will be sent to you. This newsletter provides you with general information and announcements about the center and the detailed weekly themes and announcements.

Family Support

While Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. specializes in providing high-quality early childhood education, we recognize that our students and families may have needs outside early education. We have a variety of ways that we can support our families. These include:

- Assist families with locating community resources.
- Help families obtain emergency assistance in areas such as food, clothing, utilities, housing, and counseling.
- Assist families with a successful transition to school.
- Access to a Family Resource Lending Library.

Please reach out to Ms. Katia if you are in need of support.

Home Language

It is important to Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. that all families are given the opportunity to fully understand, interpret, and become involved in their child's education. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. will work with the family to provide information in the language they are most comfortable with. If an alternate language is needed, please speak to Ms. Katia.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a top priority for Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. Personal information of families and staff will not be shared for any reason without prior written consent of the individual. When discussing a child's activities and friends in the classroom, only first names will be used. In situations regarding behavior problems and/or Incident/Accident Reports, names of children involved will never be given to families. HiMama is an app used to communicate between parents and staff. Please know that staff can read messages sent via Brightwheel. Please use HiMama communications for information on things that you do not mind the staff reading.

All information contained in your child's records, including your personal information, is confidential. Anyone who is not directly involved in the care of your child or affiliated with protective services, or other government agencies will not have access to your child's records without your written authorization or a court order. All Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. staff members and contracted therapists must sign a Statement of Assurance of Confidentiality upon employment and annually after that.

As a parent or guardian, you can request access to your child's records; to do so, please email Ms. Katia. If you withdraw your child from the center, we will maintain your child's records per New York State regulation. Lastly, out of respect for other children and families, please do not post photos or videos that contain images of children other than your own on the Internet.

Family Involvement

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. believes that children thrive when the relationship between the family and the center is a partnership. We have an open-door policy—parents and guardians are always welcome at the center, so just let us know when you'd like to come to say hello! We strongly believe in positive two-way communication. Families are encouraged to communicate with teachers and administration in whatever way is most convenient for them. This may include by phone, notes, email, or in person. Information is shared with families through verbal conversations, the HiMama, newsletters, flyers, family bulletin boards, notes, phone calls, posters, conferences, and e-mail. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. offers many opportunities to be a part of your child's early learning experience and connect with other families. All Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. employees are expected to treat all children and families with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. If difficulties arise, we encourage families to share their concerns with Ms. Katia verbally or in writing. Inappropriate language directed toward staff and/or in front of children will not be tolerated. Through communication, we will work to resolve the issue. If you are not satisfied with the solution, we encourage you to contact Ms. Katia. Please do not confront children or other parents in our program. When any member of the Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. community shows behavior that threatens the safety of others or shows repeated disrespect towards other members of our community, Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. reserves the right to ask the family in question to leave the school immediately and terminate that child's enrollment at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC.

Transferring to a New Program

This will be one of the many changes in your child's life. It's okay for them to feel uncertain or scared for a bit. When it's time to start transitioning your child out of a daycare center into kindergarten or a special needs program, daycare providers and parents will discuss tools and resources to make the transition easier on your child. It's best to tell your child about the upcoming change with as much notice as possible. Keep things as consistent as possible, by providing a blanket, lunch bag or favorite animal. Visit the new space in advance with your child before their first day so they may become familiar with the environment and have a positive, safe association with it. Inform new providers of everything that they will need to know about the child in advance and any extra worries you may feel. As a provider, we may help the transition process by discussing the new space with them, reading books about the new center/school they may be entering and role-playing.

Tuition & Fees

Financial Agreements

Upon enrollment and any changes to tuition, families are provided a Financial Contract. This contract should be carefully reviewed and checked for errors. The contract states the days and hours your child may be at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. as well as the amount due. This contract is binding and can only be changed with approval and signatures from parents and Ms. Katia. Fees that must be paid, in addition to your contract are:

- * **Yearly Supply Fee: \$100 annual supply fee to be paid by parents in August**
- * **Curriculum Fee: \$100 for 2 years of age and older.**

Tuition

Before your child is admitted into child care, we require a one-week security deposit. This deposit protects us from NSF checks and an unexpected family departure from our child care. This deposit will be credited towards your last two weeks of childcare when you decide to leave Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. Your rates may be higher when you leave Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. then when you initially enrolled you may still owe an undetermined amount when you leave our facility.. These deposits are equal to your normal weekly fee. In the event your child does not start care by the agreed-upon date, your position will be forfeited and your deposit to hold the position will become non-refundable.

We know that your child's early education is important and doesn't come without a price. Paying tuition on time helps ensure that we can continue to retain our highly trained teachers and provide them a positive work experience. Information about current tuition rates is available on the website: Messyhandshappyheartsllc.com. Tuition increases occur annually and typically reflect a cost-of-living increase. All tuition is due in advance of services provided and in accordance with your tuition agreement.

All tuition should be paid by the time frame set forth in your contract. While we strive to take the needs and problems of our families into consideration, we must maintain financial stability. Accounts in arrears or repeated failure to pay tuition by the due date may result in the termination of services. Any requests for exceptions must be made with Ms. Katia through the completion of a tuition payment plan. A late fee will be assessed on any account that has not been paid in full by the day tuition is due unless these arrangements have been made. Upon enrollment at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC., all families will be expected to sign a statement that they have read, understand, and will abide by the tuition agreement.

Rates

Please note these fees are subject to change, at the discretion of Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. Written notice of such changes will be provided to you. We accept Cash, check and credit cards, for your convenience. A 3% third party fee will be charged when using a credit/debit/bank card. This fee is not for Messy Hands, Happy Hearts LLC and does not go towards your enrollment. It is charged by the processing company, in order to provide the convenience of credit/debit/bank cards.

Full Time: \$250/ week (eight hour days; after eight hours, late fees do apply; UNLESS agreed upon, at the signing of your annual contract, additional hours can be added at the rate of \$10/hour)

Pay by the day: \$60/day (eight hours); \$40/half day (four hours)

Late Fees

Please note a late fee of \$10 per (15) minutes per child will apply if a child remains in care after their CONTRACTED time. This does apply if a pre-arranged and discussed agreement has been made. When a pre-arranged agreed upon time has been set, please note you will be charged an additional \$5 per (15) minutes if you are late past the agreed upon time.

You are scheduled for childcare for the hours listed in your Contract and Rate Agreement. If you drop off before or pick up after these times, you will be charged a late/early fee. (Examples: If you put 4:30 p.m. as your pick-up time, your late fees will begin at 4:31 p.m. even though child care is open until 5:30 p.m. If you put 8:30 a.m. as your drop-off time and you drop off earlier than that you will be charged an early fee

even though child care is open at 7:30 a.m.) The late fees will be as follows: an overtime rate of \$10.00 per child per every 15 minutes that you are late or early. (Example: 1 to 15 minutes late or early, you owe \$10.00 per child; 16 to 30 minutes late or early, you owe \$20.00 per child.) Calling the center to inform us that you will be unavoidably late does not waive your late fees. If overtime is pre-arranged, the fee will be \$2.00 per every 15 minutes. This is to assure that children are picked up on time as not to impose on our staff's family time. Late drop off does not constitute late pick up. Payment is expected, by your next regularly scheduled fee payment due date. These rules will be strictly enforced, and your habitual tardiness may result in termination of services.

Additionally, this will not apply if the tardiness cannot be helped due to a medical emergency or weather. One (1) such allowance is made per parental unit, per 90-day period. A work emergency does not meet these requirements. This late fee will be added to the following week's normal charges and will be due then.

Absences, Sick Days & Vacations

For children to learn from our program, they need to be here on a regular basis.

- Please notify your child's teacher if you know that your child will be out of school ahead of time for an appointment or vacation. If your child is sick, please notify us as soon as you can.
- If your child has been absent two days in a row for unknown reasons, a staff member will touch base with you to check in and ensure the child is well and when we can expect their return.

There will be no refunds or adjustments made to your child's care fee for your time missed due to illness, holidays, or days off. A place has been reserved for each child that cannot be filled on a short-term basis. Although we will make every attempt to be available each day, there will be occasions when another family member or Ms. Katia is ill, and she is unable to provide service. You will be notified as soon as possible of any personal or family illness, funeral, or emergency. It will be your responsibility to obtain substitute care on such occasions and to arrange payment to the substitute. If Ms. Katia is unable to provide care for any of these reasons, she will try to credit your next week of care day per day. We strongly suggest that you have a family member, a friend, or a substitute provider lined up for the times that such an illness or emergency occur.

When Ms. Katia must be away for a short time (1 - 4 hours), care will be provided by one of her OCFS approved substitutes who underwent the fingerprinting/background check and training process required by OCFS. If we are unable to use one of the substitute providers, then it will be necessary for us to close for half the day or the full day. Substitutes will not be used for more than 20% of the time (e.g., no more than one day per week). Ms. Katia's substitutes and assistants are authorized to carry out the terms of this contract.

Although very rewarding, childcare is also a very high stress occupation. For Ms. Katia to be the best provider that she can be, she will need time to relax with her family, accomplish household or child care projects, or attend training seminars/conferences.

Each year she may take up to 3 week's vacation time. Only one of the weeks will be a paid week off and will be taken as one full week (5 consecutive days Monday - Friday). The remaining 2 weeks of vacation (if she takes them) will be unpaid. She may take these 2 unpaid weeks of vacation time as consecutive days or may take them broken up. Ms. Katia will give no less than 3 week's advance notice of all vacation dates.

You may take one week unpaid vacation per year, providing that we receive a minimum of 2 week's advance notice in writing. Payment will be required for any other time off that is taken. One-week's

vacation will be equal to the same number of days you are contracted with us for childcare services. Example: if your child attends childcare on only Wednesdays and Thursdays, you will receive two free vacation days per calendar year. If you would prefer to use your one-week's vacation as separate days that would be acceptable, but we require a two-week's written notice. No vacation days will be allotted during the first three months of childcare services. Any vacation days not used within your one-year period will be forfeited. Vacation days may not be applied to your final two weeks of childcare nor may they be applied to any outstanding child care debts you may owe such as late pick up or late payment fees, etc. You may not use any of your vacation days for days when your child is in attendance. We keep a record in your folder of your vacation days used; however, it will not be our responsibility to remind you that you have so many days left that you may use before the end of the year.

Returned Checks

There will be a service charge for any returned checks. In the event of a returned check, a money order will be due immediately, late fees will apply, and immediate termination of services may apply. Payments from customers with prior unpaid returned checks must be, from that day forward, in the form of a money order or cashier's check.

Multiple Child Discount

Families with two or more children enrolled full-time at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. are eligible for a 10% discount to be applied to the youngest child's weekly tuition fee.

Temporary Withdrawal

On a case-by-case basis, Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. may be able to work with families who wish to withdraw their child for ten weeks or less (i.e., summer, or due to an extended trip outside the country). If this is the case, you must send the request in writing to Ms. Katia at least 2 weeks in advance. If tuition fees are not paid promptly, the child's space will not be held, and re-registration will be required upon return.

In case of your potential absence due to maternity or extended leave from your job, we still require full child care rate payments for the entire time of your absence to hold her child's position. In cases of maternity leave, where you will be placing your new baby in our care, you will be required to fill out all necessary enrollment forms no less than two weeks prior to the baby's starting date.

Delinquent Accounts

Families that are behind in payments more than a week, without contacting Ms. Katia and setting up a payment arrangement, may have their child care services terminated. For information about assistance programs that will help cover the cost of child care tuition, please speak with Ms. Katia. A payment plan must be agreed upon between family and Center before an account will be considered "in good standing" and no longer eligible for termination. This requires a signed payment plan contract.

Taxes

We will supply you with a year-end summary of all daycare fees paid during the year, for tax purposes. This will be given to you in January each year or when services are terminated. You may request a statement at any time.

Health & Safety Policies

We all know that safety comes first! At Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. our first goal is to keep children safe, which starts with paying attention to every detail - big and small. Every day at our center, you can be confident that your child is in the very best hands.

Signing In & Out

We are required to have all parents sign in and out for pick-ups and drop offs each day. A tablet pre-loaded with HiMama, a sign in/out sheet, pen, and a clock are located by the door for your convenience. This gives us a written record of the child's attendance, hours, and the person who brought/picked up the child each day.

Daily Health Checks

Each morning when your child arrives, we will conduct a daily health check. This is a quick physical observation where we check and observe a child's behavior/mood and physical condition, including breathing, skin, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Additionally, we ask that you please alert us of anything out of the ordinary we need to know regarding sleep, appetite, bowel movements and urination, mood, and behavior at home and/or unusual events.

Illness Policy

Our first priority at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. is providing a healthy and safe learning environment for all children. A child will be sent home as soon as possible, if any of the following is experienced: an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (as determined by the staff); an illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can reasonably provide without compromising the health or safety of other children in the classroom; or a child is experiencing any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 101 (under the arm) or greater, until 24 hours symptom-free without fever-reducing medication
- Signs/symptoms of severe illness, including: lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, and/or wheezing
- Diarrhea (not associated with diet changes or medications) (Two instances) until diarrhea stops for 24 hours or the continued diarrhea is deemed not be infectious by a licensed healthcare professional.
- Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
- Vomiting (One instance) the child can return after vomiting has been resolved for 12 hours or until a health care provider determines the cause for vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than 2 hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs/symptoms of illness
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines the sores are not contagious
- Rash until a physician determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis) until after treatment has been initiated for 24 hours
- Scabies, until after treatment has been completed
- Tuberculosis, until a health care provider states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend child care
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated

- Strep throat, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- Chickenpox, until all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)
- Hand Foot and Mouth sores have dried and crusted and no fever
- Pertussis, until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed
- Mumps, until 9 days after onset of symptoms
- Hepatitis A virus, until 1 week after onset of illness
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash
- Rubella, until 6 days after onset of rash
- Unspecified respiratory tract illness accompanied by another illness which requires exclusion
- Herpes simplex, with uncontrollable drooling

A child who becomes ill while at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. will be isolated in their classroom in order to limit exposure of other children to communicable disease. An ill child will be isolated, to wait for his/her parents to arrive. For this reason, we ask families to make every effort to pick up a sick child as soon as possible.

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness. Any exceptions to our illness policy will require a written note from a licensed healthcare professional stating that the child is not contagious.

*Parents will be notified by telephone and HiMama. Please contact Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. via phone whenever your child is ill.

It is always helpful if you can provide Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. with a doctor's note, when applicable.

Exposure & Reporting Disease

If your child is exposed to a communicable disease, a notice will be shared by phone. Additionally, families who are signed up for HiMama will receive email notification of the illness. If your child or anyone in your household becomes ill with a communicable disease, please notify the New York Department of Health immediately. In the event a child is reported to have a communicable disease, Ms. Katia will notify the health department.

Chronic Health Conditions

For any child with health care needs such as allergies, asthma, or other chronic conditions (ex: seizures, G-Tube, etc.) that require specialized health services, a medical action plan shall be completed. The medical action plan must be updated annually and when changes to the plan are made by the child's parent or health care professional. The medical action plan shall be signed by both the parent and the child's health care professional and must include the following:

- A list of the child's diagnosis or diagnoses, including dietary, environmental, and applicable activity considerations
- Contact information for the child's health care professional(s)
- Medications to be administered on a scheduled basis; and
- Medications to be administered on an emergency basis with symptoms, and instructions

Medications

We recommend that you administer medications at home. To help with medication scheduling, you may consider asking your health care provider for prescriptions with 12-hour dosages. Currently our staff

members are not MAT certified. Therefore, no prescription medication may be administered by staff at any point. Parents however may come and administer if needed.

General Medication Policies

No over-the-counter medication, no topical, non-medical ointment, repellent, lotion, cream, or powder shall be administered to any child:

- a) without written authorization from the child's parent
- b) without written instructions from the child's parent, physician, or another health professional
- c) in any manner not authorized by the child's parent, physician, or another health professional
- d) after its expiration date
- e) or non-medical reasons, such as to induce sleep
- f) with a known allergy to the medication.

Emergency Medication

If your child requires the use of emergency medications (i.e., inhalers, Epi-pen, Diastat, etc.), you will need to complete the corresponding medical action plan. These plans MUST have a doctor or healthcare professional's signature. Emergency medicines will be kept unlocked and easily accessible to adults but out of children's reach (at least 5 feet off of the ground). This is to ensure easy access in the case of an emergency. All staff members are trained on emergency medication administration annually. We work with a county nurse to ensure our staff is appropriately trained for your child's specific medical needs.

Topical Creams and Sunscreen

Parents and guardians may give a Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. standing authorization for up to 12 months to apply over-the-counter topical ointments, topical teething ointment or gel, lotions, creams, and powders, such as sunscreen diapering creams, baby lotion, and baby powder, to their child, when needed.

The over-the-counter topical medications form must be completed before we can administer these medications. Please apply sunscreen to your child before arriving at the center and dress them in hats/visors and tightly woven clothing to help prevent sunburn during outdoor play. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. staff can reapply sunscreen in the afternoon before going outside if we have an up-to-date Sunscreen Permission Form on file. Please complete the over-the-counter topical medications form.

Cleaning & Sanitation

Cleaning and disinfecting are part of our broad approach to preventing infectious diseases at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. Each classroom has a "yucky bucket" for toys that have been contaminated with bodily fluids. Contaminated toys are specifically washed, sanitized, and air-dried. All surfaces and toys are sanitized and air-dried daily upon arrival and departure. For more specifics about the frequency and type of cleaning that occurs for each surface at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC., please reference the [NAEYC Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Frequency Table](#).

Hand Washing

Frequent hand washing with soap and warm, running water is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illnesses commonly found in childcares such as the flu, diarrhea, and pink eye. Parents are encouraged to assist their child in the hand washing process upon arrival. Handwashing has long been established as one of the most important things to prevent the spread of illness.

In our school, hand washing requirements for staff are as follows:

- Upon arrival at school/center
- Before and after setting up snacks/food for student consumption
- Before and after helping students use the bathroom
- After handling items soiled with body fluids such as blood, drool, urine, stool, or discharge from nose or eyes
- After handling an ill child
- After using the bathroom or taking care of other personal needs (i.e., nose-wiping) and eating
- Before and after administering medication
- After cleaning or handling garbage

In our school, hand-washing requirements for students are as follows:

- Upon arrival in the morning
- After using the bathroom
- Before and after eating food
- Before and after sensory play
- After they have touched a child who may be sick or who has handled soiled items
- After blowing/wiping their nose
- After coming indoors from the playground
- After handling pets and other animals

The required method for handwashing is as follows:

- Rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds using warm water (no colder than 60 degrees F) and soap.
- Wash between fingers and back of hands and wrists.
- Rinse hands well under running water and dry thoroughly with a clean paper towel.
- Turn off water using a paper towel instead of bare hands. This helps prevent acquiring new germs on already clean hands.

Help reinforce the importance of hand washing by encouraging frequent hand washing at home as well.

Universal Precautions

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. follows universal precautions to prevent the transmission of HIV/Aids, Hepatitis B, and other bloodborne pathogens. Universal precautions refer to infection control measures that all healthcare workers and childcare providers follow to protect themselves and the children in their care from disease-producing microorganisms. The concept requires workers to treat all blood and various other bodily fluids as infected with HIV, hepatitis B virus, and other bloodborne pathogens. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. staff follow the following universal precautions when encountering blood or bodily fluids:

1. Gloves are worn for contact with blood, body fluids, mucous membranes, open wounds, and handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids. Only approved latex or vinyl gloves are worn. Gloves are never to be washed and reused.
2. Hands and other skin areas are washed thoroughly if they contact blood or body fluids. Hands should be washed immediately after gloves are removed.
3. Saliva is not considered by the Center for Disease Control to transmit HIV. Still, it is a body fluid, and mouth-to-mask ventilation devices will be available for resuscitation and shall be used by trained personnel.

4. Staff must review information and procedures about universal precautions, HIV/HBV infections/transmissions, and handling of infectious waste annually.

Toilet Training

Collaboration between you, your child, and your child's teachers makes for more successful toilet learning. Children learn toileting skills through consistent, positive encouragement from all the adults who care for them. When your child shows an interest, you and your child's teachers will discuss how to work together to encourage toilet learning. We're committed to working with your child consistently so that toilet learning can be accomplished in a developmentally appropriate manner with minimum stress for you and your child. Every child begins toilet learning at a different age and progresses at a different rate. We're always available as a resource to answer any questions about your child's progress. Several complete changes of clothes and two pairs of shoes should be kept at the center during toilet learning.

Supervision

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. staff assume responsibility for enrolled children when they enter the classroom or are escorted by a staff member onto the Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. property. We monitor attendance by updating their attendance records throughout the day and counting and matching the numbers of children present with names on attendance records. "Name to Face" headcounts occur throughout the day, particularly when moving about the center at every threshold.

Injuries/Accidents

Your child's safety is of our utmost concern, but we recognize that minor bumps and scrapes are an everyday part of your child exploring and learning through experience. Known minor injuries sustained at school are reported to parents on an Incident Report Form, of which you will receive a copy. If your child is injured in our care, our first step is to administer first aid. A first aid kit is available in the office, and each class always has a small first aid kit with them. The most common treatment is ice on bumps, soap and water cleansing, and a bandage on a minor wound. All permanent staff members are trained in First Aid and Infant/Child CPR within the first 90 days of their employment, and they must maintain their current certification every two years.

If an accident is more than minor, a parent will be called to discuss the need for possible medical treatment. If the accident is more serious, a parent will be contacted and requested to come immediately. In the event of a life-threatening illness or injury, an ambulance will be called. To ensure your child's safety, your Enrollment Agreement provides a record of names, addresses, and phone numbers of the people you have authorized to pick up your child. We ask you to keep this information current and supply names and phone numbers for your child's doctor and preferred hospital.

Emergency Procedures

We make every effort to be prepared for potential emergencies. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. has an emergency response plan for fire, inclement weather, or if a lockdown becomes necessary. This plan is updated annually and submitted to New York State. These plans are reviewed annually with the staff. Additional precautions we take in the event of an emergency are:

- Emergency phone numbers are posted by all phones.
- Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. keeps an emergency "To-Go" bag in the main office with first aid supplies and emergency contact information for all students and staff.
- Fire drills are practiced once each month, and shelter-in-place drills every three months to prepare children in the case of an emergency.

- Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each room.
- Annual inspections by the New Windsor fire inspector.

If an emergency requires evacuation, we'll notify you as soon as the children have been relocated to a safe area.

Documentation of Accidents/Incidents

Staff members shall document accidents and incidents that occur at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. using an Accident/ Incident Report and Incident report on HiMama. The parent shall sign the report the same day as the incident. A copy may be given to the parent. All Accident/Incident Reports must be given to Ms. Katia to be placed in the child's permanent file.

Emergency Medical

It is important that parents complete and update, as needed, an Emergency Contact and Parental Consent Form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. In addition, the form allows Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. staff members to seek emergency medical or dental care from authorized care providers in the event of serious injury. It is the responsibility of the parent to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary.

- If a child becomes ill or injured after arriving at the center, Ms. Katia will attempt to contact the parent(s) at all available telephone numbers. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts/authorized pick up persons on the Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form will be called.
- Children who are ill or seriously injured will be sent to the office and remain under the supervision of Ms. Katia until a parent arrives.
- If the child requires immediate medical attention: The staff member who witnessed the emergency situation will remain with the injured child and instruct someone else to call 911. If no one is available, first ensure the child is stable and if possible, the staff member will bring the child with them, to call 911.
- A staff member who witnessed the emergency situation will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing the child's physical exam, immunization records, and Emergency Contact & Parental Consent Form.
- Ms. Katia will contact the parent(s).

Fire, Tornado, Bomb, or other Emergency Situations

Fire and emergency procedures are posted near the exits in each classroom. Fire drills are conducted every month; and shelter in place is conducted twice a year. All classrooms are required to participate. In the event of a fire, bomb threat, or other evacuation emergencies, the children and teachers will immediately leave the building and go to each class' designated spot. Once all children are accounted for all classes will meet at the designated emergency location.

In case of a shelter in place each classroom has a designated area to seek shelter until the emergency is over. Parents will be called as soon as safely possible following an emergency situation. For the safety of children, parents, and staff, we ask that parents do not attempt to pick up their child during an emergency situation.

Power Failure

Staff members and children should remain in the classroom and if possible, proceed with activities as usual, or may go to the outdoor playground until power resumes.

- If power cannot be restored within a reasonable amount of time, the center will close and parents will be contacted.
- Ms. Katia is responsible for contacting parents to inform them of the closing and of the need to immediately pick up their child.
- Activities will resume as soon as possible until parents arrive.

Special Needs Care Policy

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. is committed to the principle of inclusion and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. We are committed to every child equally, regardless of their special needs, and will commit to learning more about each child's specific needs and finding the best resources necessary to accomplish our common goal of finding the best care for each child. We believe that including children with special needs can enrich the experience of learning for all children and Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. will make accommodations for children with special needs within the guidelines of ADA.

To assure that we are meeting the individual needs of each child enrolled with an identified special need, the following procedures and programs are followed:

- Staff receive ongoing training on inclusion and special needs as related to the specific needs of enrolled children.
- Confidentiality of children and families is respected and maintained at all times.
- Children with special needs will be included and encouraged to participate to the fullest extent of their abilities.
- Staff and families collaborate to meet the individual needs of the child.
- Communication with families is ongoing and is responsive to the needs of families.
- Physical environment is free of barriers.
- A variety of teaching strategies are used to meet the individual needs of each child.
- An individualized special needs care plan will be created with help of the parent/guardian, doctor, and Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. to ensure that all parties are aware of the care practices which need to be in place.
- The special needs care plan will be completed annually or more frequently at the request of the parent/guardian or child's doctor.

Mandated reporting requirements

As childcare professionals who interact with children on a daily basis, each staff member of Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. is a mandatory child abuse and neglect reporter and must contact the New York Department of Human Services whenever abuse or neglect is suspected.

It's our mission to ensure all children in our center are safe and well cared for, not only while they are at our center, but at all times. New York law requires everyone who works directly with children to report suspicions or evidence of child neglect or abuse to local law enforcement. Those who fail to report can be held accountable under the law. The law prohibits interference with an individual's attempt to report child abuse or neglect. Our school will offer full cooperation during the investigation of the reported incident.

- Should a staff member have reason to suspect abuse, they will contact Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. administration and follow up with an immediate phone call to Orange County Human

Services. If an administrative staff member is unavailable, staff members have the authority to make the call and to prepare a written report of the account.

- Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. will not hire a person who has been convicted of abuse of any type, and all staff undergo a fingerprint and criminal background check before employment begins.
- All staff members are responsible for protecting all children from abuse from any child or staff member.
- All staff members are required to report any suspected cases of abuse, whether it is suspected at Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. or away from Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC.
- All Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. staff receive training in recognizing and responding to child maltreatment, including abuse and neglect.
- Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. strictly prohibits the mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of any child in the program by any staff member. Any employee found in violation of the abuse and neglect policies shall be immediately terminated.

School Policies

Smoke-Free and Weapon-Free Environment

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. and both playgrounds are smoke-free and tobacco-free environments. Smoking and the use of any product containing, made, or derived from tobacco, including e-cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, smokeless tobacco, and hookah, shall not be permitted on the premises of the childcare center or during any off-premises activities. Additionally, firearms and ammunition are prohibited in all licensed childcare centers, including Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC., unless carried by a law enforcement officer.

Transportation

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. does not transport children to and from school or for any off-premises activities. Parents are expected to provide transportation for their children.

Babysitting

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. strongly discourages families from entering employment arrangements with staff. However, we recognize that our staff members are highly trained, wonderful people and are often the people that know your child best, next to you. Any arrangement between a family and a Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. employee for employment or services outside the program and services of Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. is an individual endeavor and private matter, not connected or sanctioned by Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC.

Program Oversight

Our program's quality and compliance with State laws are carefully regulated and evaluated annually by the Orange County Family Services. In addition, we also ask parents to complete and return an evaluation of the program intermittently. Summaries of evaluations are reviewed by the owner, Katia Kirkland, to monitor the quality of our services.

Program Evaluations

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. asks parents to complete a program evaluation annually. The information gathered from these anonymous surveys is used by the staff to develop goals for our center and to improve the overall quality of care at our center. A parent's point of view is different from a teacher's point of view. Therefore, parent feedback on the program evaluations is very important to the success of our program and satisfaction of our families.

Questions/Concerns

If you have a question or concern, do not hesitate to bring it to the attention of the teacher most directly involved. If the concern is not resolved, Ms. Katia can be reached at (845) 401-6645 or Messyhandslc@gmail.com. Ms. Katia is available to assist parents and staff in resolving concerns.

Legal Information

Affidavit Policy

At times families may be dealing with difficult situations at home. When legal matters are present in the home, families may need to collect affidavits for their legal team. Due to the nature of the relationship between caregiver and child, families may choose to ask a Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. staff member to provide such a statement. Our program's priority is providing the best possible care when children are away from home and our focus will remain on the child, making sure all their needs are met during what could be a difficult time at home. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. staff members will not provide written statements or affidavits of a professional nature to families.

Code of Ethical Conduct

For an updated NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, please go to www.naeyc.org.

Commitment to Diversity

Tolerance and understanding are fostered by positive exposure to various ages, genders, lifestyles, family structures, races, cultures, religions, and physical abilities. Therefore, we emphasize an environment that welcomes diversity and challenges bias and discrimination.

Cultural Competence

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. is committed to respecting each child's and family's culture and diverse needs. We recognize that culture influences every aspect of a child's development and is reflected in childrearing beliefs and practices. We believe it is important to support and preserve the child's home language usage, faith and beliefs, and cultural traditions. We recognize that children can and will acquire the use of English even when their home language is used and respected.

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. carries out this philosophy of cultural competence in the following ways:

- Families are treated with respect and sensitivity from our first meeting.
- Families' financial limitations are respected when planning for activities that could potentially result in additional costs, through the acceptance of DHS payments, and clear understanding of payment expectations from the time of enrollment.

- We attempt to learn accurate information about each family, their culture, faith and beliefs, and cultural traditions (we encourage each family, if they feel comfortable, to share this information with us at the time of enrollment). This information is part of the child's daily plan as it relates to meals and snacks, holiday recognition, etc.
- Families are encouraged to be actively involved in what their child is doing in our program through family "homework", dress up days, holiday parties, and volunteer opportunities such as chaperoning field trips.
- Families are asked to inform us of the best way for them to receive communication (i.e. verbal, written, text, email, etc.)
- Families where English is their second language are encouraged and assisted in becoming knowledgeable about the cognitive value for children of knowing more than one language and providing them with strategies to support, maintain, and preserve their home language. Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. will continue to acquire training annually to further our knowledge of culture, language, and diversity.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Our policy is to accept children in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), its regulations, and any other applicable local, state, or federal laws pertaining to providing services to individuals with disabilities.

Record Retention

Messy Hands, Happy Hearts, LLC. complies with the requirements outlined in the "Records Retention and Disposition Schedule" developed by the State of New York.

USDA

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- 1) Mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture,
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights,

- 1400 Independence Avenue, SW,
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Parent Resources:

Find listed below some popular resources for parents! If you have any additional questions, please contact us today!

New York Resources:

- The ALLIANCE National Parent Technical Assistance Center (NPTAC) provides Parent Centers, Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs), with innovative technical assistance, up-to-date information, and high quality resources and materials. A major goal of the ALLIANCE National PTAC is to build the capacity of Parent Centers in order to improve results for children with disabilities ages 0 -26 in rural, urban and suburban areas and from underrepresented and underserved populations.
- The New York State Parenting Education Partnership (NYSPEP) seeks to promote and improve parenting education, in order to enhance parenting skills, knowledge, and behavior.
- The New York State Parent Guide
- The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages has also created the Parents' Bill of Rights for New York State's English Language Learners and Multilingual Learners & Parent Hotline. This content summarizes critical rights concerning educational access and programming for ELLs and their parents while providing additional resources. Parents and students who have questions or concerns can contact the hotline using the instructions provided in 13 languages.