



Family Handbook

Welcome to The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge
at Brookridge!

We are delighted to welcome you to The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge at Brookridge! Our center was created with one purpose in mind: to provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment where every child can grow, learn, and thrive.

We believe that children flourish when families and educators work together as partners. By choosing our center, you have become an important part of a community dedicated to supporting your child's development academically, socially, and emotionally.

This handbook is designed to help you understand our policies, procedures, and daily practices. It also outlines the values and standards that guide our work with children and families. Please take time to read it carefully, and do not hesitate to ask questions or share feedback.

We are honored that you have entrusted us with the care and education of your child. Together, we will create a strong foundation for a lifetime of learning and success.

Our Mission

To provide high-quality care and education for young children in a nurturing environment, while fostering meaningful, intergenerational connections through interactive engagement with older adults.

Our Vision

To be a beacon of care and connection where children are nurtured to reach their full potential, families are supported and strengthened, and diverse generations come together to build a vibrant, compassionate community.

Our Core Values

- Children **ALWAYS** come first.
- We focus on supporting the whole family.
- We are good financial stewards.
- We build strong and lasting partnerships.
- We engage and empower local communities.
- We have the courage to initiate change.
- We hold ourselves accountable for achieving superior outcomes.
- We engage people from a strength-based perspective.

Our Philosophy

At The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge, we believe that children, families, and elders thrive when they are connected across generations. Our intergenerational approach to childcare is grounded in the values of respect, belonging, and community. By creating opportunities for meaningful interaction between children and elders, we foster a culture of mutual learning, joy, and shared responsibility.

We view young children as capable, curious learners and older adults as valuable sources of wisdom, experience, and care. When these groups come together, children benefit from enriched learning experiences, expanded perspectives, and the nurturing presence of elders. At the same time, older adults experience purpose, connection, and vitality through active engagement in the lives of children.

Our philosophy emphasizes:

- **Reciprocal Learning:** Children and older adults learn with and from each other through play, storytelling, arts, and daily routines.
- **Community Building:** We cultivate an environment where every generation feels valued and included.
- **Respect for Diversity:** We honor and celebrate the unique contributions of each child, family, and elderly in our program.
- **Holistic Development:** We support children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth while nurturing the well-being and social connectedness of older adults.
- **Shared Joy:** We believe laughter, creativity, and kindness are bridges that unite generations and strengthen our community.

Our Program

At The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge, we implement the **Creative Curriculum®**, a research-based, developmentally appropriate framework that supports the growth of the whole child. This curriculum emphasizes exploration, creativity, and active learning, allowing children to engage in meaningful experiences that build skills across all areas of development—social-emotional, cognitive, language, and physical.

Through the Creative Curriculum®, our educators:

- **Foster Curiosity:** We create a rich, engaging environment where children can investigate, ask questions, and develop a love of learning.
- **Support Individual Growth:** Each child's unique strengths, interests, and learning style are recognized and nurtured.
- **Encourage Social Connections:** Children learn collaboration, empathy, and communication skills through group activities and guided interactions.
- **Incorporate Families and Communities:** Families are partners in learning, and our intergenerational approach ensures children benefit from meaningful interactions with older adults in our community.
- **Balance Structure and Choice:** Children experience a mix of teacher-guided and child-directed activities, promoting independence while providing essential guidance and support.

Each classroom has a daily schedule posted on the parent board for easy reference. This schedule includes activities for the day from the time the center opens until closing. Our daily schedule serves as a guiding framework to provide structure and predictability for children. However, we recognize that unexpected events, individual needs, and children's unique interests may require adjustments. Teachers may adapt activities, transitions, and routines to support a child's learning, development, and well-being while maintaining a safe and engaging environment.

This flexible approach ensures that each child can thrive, feel supported, and fully participate in our intergenerational, Creative Curriculum®-based program.

Age range of Children Served

Our center will serve children from 6 weeks to 5 years of age.

Enrollment Procedures

Enrollment at the Center for Thriving Children is open to families without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or family structure. Enrollment is based on availability and completion of all required documentation.

1. Enrollment Application

Families interested in enrolling their child must complete an enrollment application and submit all required forms. Submission of an application does not guarantee placement.

2. Required Enrollment Documents

Before a child may begin attending, the following must be completed and on file:

- Completed enrollment application
- Child Information Sheet
- Emergency Contact Information
- Authorized Pick-Up List
- Health Assessment and Immunization Record (as required by state regulations)
- Medication Authorization Form (if applicable)
- Allergy Action Plan (if applicable)
- Signed Parent Handbook Acknowledgment
- Tuition Agreement and payment of required fees

3. Enrollment Confirmation

Enrollment is confirmed once:

- All required paperwork is completed and approved
- Enrollment fees are paid
- A start date is agreed upon with the center

Families will receive written confirmation of enrollment and their child's start date.

4. Orientation

Families may be offered an orientation prior to the child's first day. Orientation provides an opportunity to review policies, meet staff, and ask questions.

5. Waitlist

When classrooms are full, children may be placed on a waitlist. Placement from the waitlist is based on availability, program needs, and date of application submission.

Your Child's First Day

We believe that parents and caregivers are the child's first and most influential teachers. We are excited to partner with you to ensure that your child receives the best early childhood education possible. We know that this can be an exciting time filled with a lot of

emotions and anxiety. Our goal is to partner with you to make this process easy for everyone. Transitions can be difficult for children and parents. It is very important to us that you get to know your child's teacher and the environment. Prior to the first day, we welcome parents to meet the teacher and observe the classroom.

1. Transitions

Transitions can be very hard for the child as well as the parent. Establishing routines will help your family transition well. For many children We strongly encourage you to arrive in time for breakfast for your child to eat with their friends.

When a child is ready to move up to the next classroom, we will allow them to transition by introducing them to their new classroom by visiting the classroom. This gives them time to acclimate to their new environment and teachers. Currently teachers will pass along information from their current classroom to their new classroom to ensure a smooth transition. Parents are welcome to meet the new teachers and ask any questions they may have about the next age group. With every new classroom transition, each family will receive a Welcome Packet.

2. Safe Arrival and Departure

At The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge the safety and well-being of your child is our top priority. An authorized adult must sign your child in and out each day using our electronic system. Each child is required to be accompanied by an adult, inside and outside of the building. Parents are required to accompany their child to the classroom and notify the teacher of the child's arrival. Children should arrive to school with everything that they will need for the day, including diapers, pull-ups, bottles, a change of clothes and coats/hats/gloves and shoes for outdoor play. Parents must take their child to wash his or her hands upon arrival. Before the first day, you will receive instructions on how to access our secure building.

Please notify staff if your child will be late or absent as soon as possible. If your child is in our school age program, it is very important that you notify us of any absences in advance so we can notify the bus driver who will be providing transportation from their school.

Prior written permission from a parent or guardian must be provided for a child to be picked up by someone not on the authorized pickup list. The person must provide a picture ID and at least 18 years of age.

Late Fees

Please pick your child up prior to closing time. The center closes at 7:15pm Monday-Friday. There is a late fee for children left at the center past closing time. A \$10 late fee will be assessed immediately and an additional \$1 per minute is added, per child. Parents should notify us as soon as they are aware that they may be late. This gives us adequate time to make staffing arrangements. Habitual late pick up may result in dismissal from the program.

Tuition Guidelines

Registration

Families interested in enrolling their child in our program must complete a registration packet prior to the child's first day of attendance. The registration process includes completing all required forms and paying the \$150 non-refundable registration fee.

Tuition Payments

Tuition rates are evaluated and set annually. Rates are based on the child's age group and program schedule (infant, toddler, or preschool). Families will receive at least **30 days' written notice** prior to any tuition rate change.

Tuition is **billed on the 15th day of each month** and is due on the **last day of each month** for care provided during the **following month**.

A late fee of \$25 will be assessed after the due date. An additional \$5 per day will be charged for each day and the balance remains unpaid until the account is paid in full.

Consistent late payments will result in suspension or termination of enrollment. We reserve the right to cancel services for any account with an outstanding balance.

A \$45 fee will be charged for any returned checks or declined tuition payments. In addition to the return fee a late charge will be added to the account each week and the account continues to remain delinquent. Payment via certified funds or point of sale credit/debit will be required after multiple decline transactions.

Classroom	Monthly Tuition
Infant Care	\$1600
Toddlers	\$1450

Twos	\$1450
Threes	\$1350
Fours & Fives	\$1350

Withdrawal and Notification

Two weeks written notice is required when withdrawing a child from the center. The family is responsible for paying tuition during the last two weeks. If a child is temporarily withdrawn from the center, re-enrollment will be based on availability, and a new registration fee must be paid.

Tuition Discounts

Sibling Discount

- Families with more than one child enrolled at the child center are eligible for a 10% sibling discount.
- The 10% discount will be applied to the tuition of the child with the lower tuition rate.
- The discount applies only while siblings are enrolled at the same time.
- The sibling discount is not retroactive and begins on the effective date approved by administration.

Employee Discount

- Eligible employees of the child center and Imprints Cares staff will receive an **employee tuition discount of 25%** for their enrolled child(ren).
- The discount applies only to employees who are actively employed full-time and in good standing.
- If an employee separates from employment, the discount will effectively end the employee's last day of employment.
- Employee discounts will not be combined with other tuition discounts.

Operational Policies

Hours of Operation

We are open year-round, Monday through Friday. Our center opens at 6:45 a.m. and closes at 7:15pm.

Holiday Observances

To allow our staff time with their families, we will be closed on the following Holidays:

- New Year's Day
- MLK Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

Should a holiday fall on a Saturday or Sunday, we will observe either Friday before or the Monday after the holiday.

***There is no tuition discount for days the center is closed for a holiday.**

Teacher Workdays

The Center for Thriving Children schedules Teacher Workdays throughout the year for staff training, classroom planning, and program improvement.

- The center will be **closed to children** on designated Teacher Workdays.
- Families will receive **advance notice** of scheduled Teacher Workdays, and dates will be included on the annual center calendar.
- Tuition is **not adjusted** for Teacher Workdays, as staff are working on these days to support high-quality care and learning.

Thank you for your understanding and partnership as we invest in our teaching team and program quality.

Inclement or Hazardous Weather

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge is concerned about everyone's safety during inclement weather. A decision will be made by 5:00 A.M. if the center is closed or will be opening late and communicate that decision through an email message and via local television. Please ensure we have your current email on file to be included in this important communication.

We reserve the right to close for the safety of our staff and children, in the event of hazardous road conditions or water/power outages out of our control.

American with Disabilities (ADA)

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge is in compliance with the American with Disability Act pertaining to the provisions of services with children with disabilities. We strive to meet all the individual needs of the children within our program.

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge will treat our families, children, and employees without any discrimination. We will make reasonable accommodations to provide children with disabilities equal enjoyment of our program.

Equal Opportunity Provider

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge is an equal opportunity provider and employer. We accept applications for admission and employment without regard to race, religion, gender, national origin, color, creed, physical or mental disability or any other protected status.

Important Things to Know

What to Send with Your Child

Please bring one complete change of seasonally appropriate clothing, labeled with your child's name. Caregivers are asked to send a change of outer and under clothes, including socks, diapers and wipes (if applicable), bottles labeled with first and last name with caps (if applicable), and a light blanket for nap time (with the exception of infants 6 weeks-12 months). All items should be labeled with your child's first and last name. We ask that you not allow your child to bring toys from home because they may create jealousy and tension among the other children. However, if your child uses a soft toy for comfort at nap time, you are welcome to bring it. The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge is not responsible for any items brought from home. Children are expected to leave all electronic devices at home unless told otherwise by their teacher.

Clothing

Please dress your child in comfortable, seasonally appropriate clothing that is appropriate for indoors and outdoors. Children will spend time indoors and outdoors daily, weather permitting. For your child's safety, we ask that all mobile children wear closed-toed shoes with at least a strap on the heel when they come to school.

Infants and toddlers are not permitted to wear earrings or jewelry, including teething necklaces, as they can injure a child, especially in a group environment. We discourage all children from wearing jewelry to school, teachers may remove jewelry for safety reasons.

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing.

Meals

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge believe that you are your child's first and most influential teacher. By working together, we can help establish healthy eating habits for your child. Children are provided breakfast & lunch catered by Brookridge Retirement Facility. The center will provide afternoon snacks and late afternoon snacks. The center is a tree-nut and peanut-free center, as it is not uncommon for multiple children with food allergies who may be affected by exposure to foods eaten by others. If your child has a known food allergy, we will partner with you to develop a plan and will make reasonable efforts to accommodate specific needs.

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge does not allow outside food unless we are unable to meet the child's dietary needs. Documentation from a physician may be required to support the family's request. If food is provided from home, it must be provided consistently every day and must be labeled with the child's name and date. As the center promotes healthy eating practices, please do not send chips, snack food, sweet desserts, or carbonated beverages to school with your child.

All meals and snacks will meet the child's nutritional requirements as recommended by the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services. Weekly menus will be posted for your review.

For infant feeding guidelines see infant and toddler care section.

Birthday and Celebrations

We encourage families to celebrate birthdays and holidays with their children at school. Unfortunately, we are unable to permit homemade snacks. If you wish to bring

refreshments, please discuss this with your child's teacher so that accommodation can be arranged for that date and time.

Rest and Nap Time

Infants through pre-school age children will be provided with a nap or rest time daily. We encourage your child to rest during that period. The center will provide some bedding. Light blankets may be brought from home for children older than 12 months. All bedding must be labeled with child's first and last name in addition to being laundered weekly.

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge will use reasonable efforts to follow the guidelines below for infants ages twelve (12) months and younger:

- Infants will be placed to sleep on their backs. The center is unable to accommodate requests for exceptions to this policy, except (where state regulations allow) in case of medical necessity certified in writing by the child's physician.
- Infants will be placed in a crib to sleep, with no swaddle, blanket, pillow, wedge, or other item except an appropriate crib sheet and pacifier. Infants will be placed in an approved sleep sack to sleep, if requested. Parents will be asked to provide the approved sleep sack. Infants who fall asleep outside of a crib will be moved to a crib as soon as possible.
- Parents should notify the center when an infant is able to roll over without assistance. Once the center receives written notice from a caregiver that an infant can roll over unassisted, if the infant rolls over during sleep, he or she will be allowed to remain in that position. Infants will be placed on their stomachs to play each day for "tummy time." This experience can help infants develop strong neck and shoulder muscles and promote motor skills. Tummy time can also prevent the back of the baby's head from developing flat spots. During tummy time, a teacher will be near the infant and engaged with the infant. Infants will be placed on a soft surface such as a carpet or foam pad, or on the lap of their caregiver, for tummy time. State-specific guidelines related to tummy time that include additional requirements must also be followed.

Cleaning and Sanitation Policy

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge is committed to maintaining a clean, safe, and healthy environment for children, staff, and visitors. To prevent the spread of illness and ensure proper hygiene, the center follows a structured cleaning and sanitation schedule.

Daily cleaning includes wiping and disinfecting high-touch surfaces such as tables, chairs, door handles, toys, and learning materials, as well as cleaning and sanitizing bathrooms, diapering areas, and classroom floors.

Weekly cleaning involves deeper cleaning of furniture, shelving, toys, outdoor play equipment, and classroom materials that may not be disinfected daily.

Monthly cleaning includes washing windows, vents, light fixtures, and other less frequently used areas to maintain a thorough level of cleanliness throughout the center.

Yearly cleaning consists of comprehensive facility maintenance, including deep cleaning carpets, draperies, HVAC systems, and any specialized equipment, as well as reviewing and updating cleaning protocols to comply with the latest health and safety regulations. All cleaning products are stored safely out of reach of children, and staff are trained in proper use, dilution, and labeling of cleaning agents. By adhering to this schedule, the center ensures a consistently sanitary environment that supports the health, safety, and well-being of every child.

Our Curriculum

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge will utilize the award-winning Creative Curriculum®.

The Creative Curriculum® is a research-based, comprehensive early childhood curriculum designed for infants through kindergarten. It emphasizes:

- **Developmentally appropriate practice:** Activities are tailored to children's developmental levels.
- **Project-based learning:** Encourages exploration, investigation, and problem-solving.
- **Family and community involvement:** Engages families in children's learning.
- **Learning through play:** Supports social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth.
- **Environment and Learning Centers**
 - Classrooms are organized into learning areas (blocks, dramatic play, art, reading, sensory, science, math, technology, and writing).
 - Each area encourages exploration and independent learning.

- Materials are accessible, safe, and reflect diversity.
- **Daily Schedule**
 - Balanced daily schedule includes free choice, teacher-guided activities, meals, outdoor play, and rest.
 - Consistent routines make children feel secure while allowing flexibility for exploration.
- **Assessment and Individualization**
 - Creative Curriculum® includes **ongoing assessment tools** to track children's development.
 - Teachers will tailor activities to meet individual needs and plan small group or one-on-one instruction.
- **Teacher Role**
 - Teachers act as facilitators rather than sole instructors.
 - They observe, guide, and document children's progress while promoting curiosity and independence.
 - Professional development supports teachers in using the curriculum effectively.
- **Family Engagement**
 - Families receive resources and guidance on how to support learning at home.
 - Communication tools (portfolios, newsletters, parent-teacher conferences) help families track their child's progress.

Implementing the Creative Curriculum® at The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge will create a rich, supportive learning environment where children thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, while ensuring teachers and families are active partners in the process.

Families

Family Participation

At The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge, we believe that families are a child's first and most important teacher. We value strong partnerships between families and educators to support each child's growth, development, and success. Our goal is to create a welcoming environment where families feel included, respected, and actively engaged in the life of the center.

Ways Families Can Participate

- **Daily Communication:** Families are encouraged to share updates about their child's routines, interests, and needs. Teachers provide daily reports and welcome conversations during drop-off and pick-up.
- **Family Conferences:** Formal conferences are held twice a year to discuss your child's developmental progress, goals, and classroom experiences. Additional meetings can be scheduled as needed.
- **Volunteer Opportunities:** Families are invited to participate in classroom activities, field trips, and special events such as seasonal celebrations, family nights, and learning showcases.
- **Parent Advisory Group:** Families can join our advisory group to share feedback, help plan events, and support center initiatives.
- **Workshops and Trainings:** The center offers periodic family education sessions on topics such as child development, positive discipline, early literacy, and health and safety.
- **Open Door Policy:** Families are always welcome to visit the center, observe, or spend time in their child's classroom. We ask that visits be coordinated with the teacher to minimize classroom disruptions.

Communication and Collaboration

We use multiple methods to stay connected, including newsletters, email updates, and the family communication app. Families are encouraged to share ideas, ask questions, and offer feedback to help us continuously improve our program.

Celebrating Family and Culture

We value the unique backgrounds, traditions, and languages of all families. We welcome you to share your family's culture through stories, music, food, or classroom activities that help children learn about and appreciate diversity.

Custody Orders

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge recognizes that some families may experience custody disputes or court-ordered visitation arrangements. Our responsibility is to ensure the safety and well-being of every child while maintaining neutrality in family matters. It is your responsibility to provide custody orders at the time of registration, as well as keep us informed of any changes made in custody orders.

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge does not mediate or take sides in custody or visitation disputes.

Staff members will not provide written statements, opinions, or recommendations regarding custody matters.

All conversations or documentation requests related to custody orders must be directed to the Center Director.

If a non-custodial parent or unauthorized individual attempts to pick up a child, staff will ensure the child's safety by keeping them in a secure area and notifying the Director/ Assistant Director immediately. The Director/ Assistant Director will contact the custodial parent and, if necessary, local law enforcement.

Health and Safety

Immunizations, Illness, and Health

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge follows all immunization requirements set forth by the North Carolina Department of Child Development and Early Education (NCDCDEE) and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS). Immunizations help protect all children and staff from preventable diseases and are a required part of enrollment and continued attendance.

Immunizations must be kept up to date according to the child's age. Families are responsible for keeping their child's immunization record current. When new vaccines are administered, families must provide an updated record to the center immediately. The Center will review records periodically to ensure compliance with current state immunization schedules. If there is a medical or religious reason why your child is not

immunized, you must provide documentation from a physician or a signed affidavit to this effect.

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge is committed to providing individualized care that supports each child's safety, health, and developmental needs. A written childcare plan is developed and maintained for any child who:

- Has chronic health condition (such as asthma, diabetes, allergies, seizures, etc.);
- Requires special dietary restrictions or feeding needs.
- Has developmental delays or disabilities.
- Needs individualized toileting, sleep, or behavioral support; or
- Has any medical or safety considerations identified by the family or physician.

If the plan includes medical procedures or medications, it must include written instructions from the child's health care provider and updated yearly.

When to Keep Your Child at Home

At The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge, our goal is to maintain a healthy environment for all children and staff. To prevent the spread of illness, families are asked to keep their child at home when they are sick or unable to comfortably participate in daily activities.

Keep Your Child Home If They Have Any of the Following:

- **Fever:** A temperature of **100.4°F or higher** (oral, underarm, or forehead). Your child must be fever-free for **at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication** before returning.
- **Vomiting:** Two or more episodes within 24 hours. Child may return after **24 hours without vomiting**.
- **Diarrhea:** Three or more loose stools in one day or any stool not contained in the diaper/clothing. Child may return after **24 hours without diarrhea** and normal bowel movements resume.
- **Rash:** Any unexplained rash, especially if accompanied by fever or behavior changes, until diagnosed and cleared by a healthcare provider.
- **Eye Infection:** Red or pink eyes with discharge (possible conjunctivitis). Child may return **24 hours after treatment begins** or with a doctor's note stating they are not contagious.

- **Sore Throat:** Especially when accompanied by fever or swollen glands. May return after **24 hours of antibiotics** for strep throat or with a doctor's clearance.
- **Severe Cough or Difficulty Breathing:** Until symptoms improve and child can participate comfortably.
- **Head Lice or Scabies:** Until treated and no live lice are present.

If a Child Becomes Ill while at the Center

The child will be separated from the group and made comfortable until a parent or guardian arrives. Parents will be notified immediately and must arrange for pickup within one hour. The center will disinfect any toys, equipment, or surfaces used by the ill child.

A child may return to the center when they are symptom-free for **at least 24 hours** (without medication). If applicable, they must have a doctor's note or clearance to return after a contagious illness.

Medication

Parents are encouraged to administer medications at home whenever possible. However, we know there are some situations where children are required to receive medication while at school. We will administer medications under strict guidelines as directed by regulatory agencies.

General Guidelines

- Medication will be administered only with written consent from a parent or guardian.
- All medication must be in its original container with the child's name, dosage instructions, and expiration date clearly labeled.
- Medication includes prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, topical ointments, and supplements.

Prescription Medication

- Must include a doctor's written instructions with the child's name, medication name, dosage, method, time(s) to be given, and duration.
- Staff will only administer the dosage prescribed on the label.
- Changes in dosage require updated written instructions from the parent and/or physician.

Over-the-Counter Medication

- Can only be administered with a written request from the parent/guardian including the child's name, dosage, and time(s) to be given.
- Staff may not exceed manufacturer's recommended dosage.

Topical Medications

- Includes sunscreen, diaper ointment, lip balm, or medicated creams.
- Written permission from a parent/guardian is required, specifying the product, frequency, and application area.

Medication Administration Procedures

1. All medication must be given to the Center Director or designated staff; children are not allowed to carry medication.
2. Staff administering medication will:
 - Check the child's name and dosage instructions.
 - Record the date, time, and staff initials in the medication log.
 - Store medication in a locked cabinet or as directed (refrigeration if required).
3. Parents/guardians must pick up any unused or expired medication; medication will not be returned to children.

*Medication Administration Permission Form is available on the parent portal

Emergency Medication

- Children requiring emergency medication (e.g., EpiPen, inhaler) must have:
 - Written instructions from a physician.
 - A completed medication consent form.
 - Medication stored in an accessible but secure location.
- Staff are trained to recognize symptoms and administer emergency medication immediately.

Documentation and Records

- A Medication Administration Log is maintained for each child receiving medication.
- Logs include: child's name, medication, dosage, time, date, and staff initials.
- All documentation is confidential and maintained in the child's file.

Parent Responsibilities

- Provide all necessary medication in original containers.
- Supply written instructions for proper administration.
- Notify the center of any changes in medication or health status immediately.

Child Care Center Accidents

At The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge, the safety and well-being of every child is our top priority. Despite careful supervision and safety measures, accidents may occasionally occur. In the event of an accident, staff will provide immediate attention and appropriate care based on the nature and severity of the incident. For minor injuries, staff will administer basic first aid and document the incident in an accident report, which will be shared with the child's parent or guardian at pick-up. For more serious injuries, staff will contact the parent or guardian immediately and, if necessary, call emergency medical services. All accidents are recorded and reviewed to identify any preventive measures to ensure a safer environment. Parents are required to provide updated emergency contact information and to inform the center of any medical conditions that may affect care. By maintaining clear communication and prompt response procedures, the center ensures that each child receives the proper care while fostering a safe and secure learning environment.

Infant and Toddler Care

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge cannot mix formula according to regulatory agencies. Parents are responsible for supplying pre-mixed formula, commercial baby food, and a current, accurately written feeding plan. Feeding plan must be updated according to the state licensing requirements.

All baby bottles must be plastic and have a cap. Bottles and caps must be labeled with the child's first and last name and the current date. All bottles and open food must be taken home daily.

Breast Feeding

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge supports and encourages breastfeeding as the best source of nutrition for infants. Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to breastfeed their child on-site at any time.

A clean, comfortable, and private space (if desired) will be provided for breastfeeding or expressing milk. Mothers are never required to use a restroom to breastfeed or pump.

Expressed breast milk must be clearly labeled with the child's full name and date expressed. Breast milk will be stored, handled, and served according to DCDEE health and sanitation guidelines. Bottles will be warmed using warm water only, never in a microwave.

Families choosing to provide breast milk are responsible for supplying labeled milk, bottles, and feeding instructions.

The center does not discriminate against families who choose to breastfeed and is committed to providing a supportive environment for all families.

Toileting and Diapering

At The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge, maintaining proper hygiene and preventing the spread of illness is a top priority during diapering and toileting routines. All infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children are assisted with toileting and diapering in a safe, respectful, and developmentally appropriate manner. Staff follow strict handwashing and sanitation procedures before and after each diapering or toileting event, and all surfaces and equipment are disinfected after use. Diapers are checked frequently and changed as needed to ensure children remain clean and comfortable. Parents are responsible for providing an adequate supply of diapers, wipes, and any creams or ointments, clearly labeled with the child's name.

For children who are toilet training, staff provide guidance and support while respecting each child's readiness and pace, encouraging independence while maintaining hygiene standards. Any child with medical, developmental, or toileting concerns will have an individualized care plan to ensure their needs are met safely and consistently.

Communication with families regarding toileting progress, supplies, or any concerns is ongoing, ensuring a partnership that promotes the child's health, comfort, and dignity.

Video Cameras

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge respects the privacy and safety of all children and families in our care. The center is protected by video surveillance. Upon entering the center, you are being taped with video and audio equipment.

Visitors

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for all children, families, and staff. All visitors, including parents, volunteers, and outside professionals, must check in at the main office upon arrival and sign the visitor log. Visitors are required to wear a visitor badge at all times while on center premises. Staff may accompany visitors to classrooms or activity areas to ensure that children's safety and privacy are maintained. Visits should be scheduled in advance whenever possible, and unscheduled visitors may be limited to ensure minimal disruption to classroom routines. Unauthorized individuals are not allowed in the center, and staff will take appropriate measures to ensure the security of all children. The center reserves the right to deny access to anyone who does not comply with these procedures or poses a safety risk. This policy helps maintain a safe, welcoming environment while allowing families and approved guests to participate in the center's activities responsibly.

Prohibited Items

To ensure the safety and well-being of everyone, certain items are strictly prohibited on center premises. This includes, but is not limited to, tobacco products, e-cigarettes, alcohol, illegal substances, weapons, hazardous materials, and any item that could pose a choking or safety hazard.

Smoking or vaping is strictly prohibited anywhere on center property, including outdoor areas and parking lots, in accordance with North Carolina state law and licensing regulations.

Emergency Preparedness

Our Emergency Preparedness Plan is available in the center's office. The center maintains a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan that addresses a variety of situations, including fire, severe weather, medical emergencies, natural disasters, and security threats. All staff are trained in emergency procedures, including evacuation routes, shelter-in-place protocols, first aid, CPR, and communication with families.

Emergency drills are conducted regularly to ensure that children and staff are familiar with safety procedures. In the event of an actual emergency, the center will take immediate

action to protect children, provide necessary care, and notify parents or guardians as soon as possible. Emergency contact information for each child is kept on file and updated regularly. By maintaining proactive planning, training, and clear communication, the center ensures a safe environment and minimizes risks during any unforeseen event.

General Policies and Procedures

Licensing

Supervision of Children

The safety and well-being of every child in our care is our highest priority. The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge always maintains active and appropriate supervision to ensure that each child is protected from harm, receives attentive care, and is supported in their development. We track children when they are present at the center, including when they enter or exit the premises.

Staffing

Teacher Qualifications

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge is striving to become a 5-Star licensed Center. To be able to apply for a star rating we must be in operation for six months. However, during this interim period we will uphold the same regulations and requirements of a 5-star center, including:

Teacher Education

Lead Teachers- All teachers will have their North Carolina Early Childhood Credentials (NCECC) and an associate's degree or high in Early Childhood Education or related field with at least 2 years of experience.

Assistant Teachers- at least 50% will have their NCECC credentials or equivalent or a level 1 or high certification on the NCECC with additional coursework.

All Staff be certified with pediatric CPR and First Aid. Infant/Toddler teacher will also be trained in Infant Toddler Safe Sleep and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Teacher/Student Ratios and Supervision

Teacher/Student ratios vary by age.

Age	Max Group Size	Teacher to Child Ratio
Infant Care	8	1:4
Toddlers	10	1:5
Twos	16	1:8
Threes	18	1:9
Fours/Fives	24	1:12

Staff Background Check

Each staff member goes through state-mandated background checks prior to being offered a position at The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge. We only hire teachers who meet the state's mandated requirements. Additionally, each staff member receives ongoing training in accordance with state regulations.

Physical Education and Outdoor Policy

At The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge, outdoor play is considered an essential component of our daily curriculum, supporting children's physical development, social skills, and overall well-being. Outdoor activities are scheduled daily, weather permitting, and appropriate for each child's age and developmental level. Staff closely supervise all outdoor play, maintaining required staff-to-child ratios in accordance with NCDEE regulations.

The outdoor environment is routinely inspected for safety hazards, and any unsafe conditions are addressed immediately. We plan a designated amount of play time each day. Children will go outside at least twice a day, totaling at least 60-90 minutes for toddlers and 90-120 minutes per day for 3 years and older, weather permitting. Outdoor play is limited or modified during extreme weather conditions, including temperatures above 92°F or below 32°F, thunderstorms, or high winds. Staff ensure children remain hydrated and protected from sun exposure during outdoor activities.

All equipment is age-appropriate, well-maintained, and installed on safe surfaces to prevent injury. Outdoor time may include structured activities, free play, and exploration of natural elements, promoting physical fitness, creativity, and social interaction. Parents are informed of the center's outdoor play schedule and any special requirements for weather-appropriate clothing.

Child Abuse and Neglect (Mandatory Reporters)

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of every child in our care. In accordance with North Carolina law, all staff members are considered mandated reporters and are legally required to report any suspected cases

of child abuse or neglect. Staff must immediately notify the Director or Lead Staff member of any suspicions, concerns, or observed signs of abuse or neglect. The Director, or any staff acting as a mandated reporter, will contact the North Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) or local law enforcement as required by statute. Staff members are trained to recognize signs of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect, and to follow proper reporting procedures without delay.

Retaliation against any staff member who reports suspected abuse in good faith is strictly prohibited. Confidentiality is maintained to the extent possible while complying with legal reporting obligations. All reports and subsequent documentation are handled professionally and securely, ensuring that the child's safety remains the highest priority. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect as required by law may result in legal consequences and disciplinary action.

Discipline and Behavior Management

At The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge, we believe that positive guidance and consistent behavior management are essential for fostering a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment. Our approach emphasizes teaching children appropriate behaviors, encouraging self-regulation, and promoting social-emotional development. Staff members use positive discipline techniques such as modeling respectful behavior, offering clear expectations, providing choices, reinforcing desirable behavior, and using redirection to prevent conflicts. Physical punishment, humiliation, threats, or any form of corporal discipline is strictly prohibited in accordance with North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education (NCDEE) regulations. Individual behavior plans may be developed for children who require additional support, in collaboration with families and, when appropriate, professional specialists. Communication with parents is an integral part of our behavior management policy, ensuring families are informed of any behavioral concerns and are partners in supporting their child's social-emotional growth. The ultimate goal of our discipline and behavior management policy is to guide children toward self-control, empathy, and positive interpersonal relationships in a safe and nurturing environment.

Families are required to adhere to all center policies, including discipline. Families will not be allowed to use physical punishment when on the property and may not ask staff to use physical punishment.

Transportation and Field Trips

Each classroom plans its own field trips and parents are informed ahead of time. Infants, toddlers, and two-year-old classrooms do not leave the campus. Their field trips consist of

walking excursions on campus. The three- and four-year-olds may go on walking excursions or field trips off campus using Center buses.

Travel experiences are designed to enrich the educational curriculum by providing hands-on learning opportunities in safe and supervised environments. Trips may include visits to local parks, libraries, museums, or other age-appropriate community locations. Written permission from a parent or guardian is required before any child can participate in a field trip or travel event. A separate permission form will be provided for each trip, detailing the date, destination, mode of transportation, departure and return times, and any associated costs.

Staff-to-child ratios will always meet or exceed NCDEE requirements during travel. Additional adults may accompany the group to ensure safety and provide extra supervision. Teachers are responsible for always maintaining direct visual supervision of the children.

All vehicles used for transporting children are maintained in safe working conditions and comply with all state and federal safety regulations. Only licensed and authorized staff members may operate vehicles. Children will be properly secured in age-appropriate safety restraints or car seats as required by law. A first-aid kit, emergency contact information, and a cell phone will always be available in the vehicle.

Accurate attendance and headcounts will be conducted:

- Before leaving the center,
- Upon arrival at the destination,
- At regular intervals during the trip, and
- Before returning to the center.

Staff will carry emergency contact forms, medical information, and medications (if applicable) for each child. In case of an emergency, parents will be contacted immediately, and appropriate medical or emergency procedures will be followed.

Children are expected to follow the same behavior expectations and positive discipline guidelines used at the center. Staff will reinforce safety rules and respectful behavior throughout the trip. If a parent does not grant permission for their child to attend a field trip, alternate arrangements will be made for the child to remain at the center under supervision.

Acknowledgment of Receipt and Understanding of the Family Handbook

I, _____, acknowledge that I have received and reviewed The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge *Family Handbook*. I understand that the handbook contains important information regarding the center's policies, procedures, and expectations for families and staff. I agree to read and familiarize myself with its contents and to follow all policies and procedures outlined within. I understand that The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge may revise, add to, or update policies as needed to comply with licensing requirements set forth by the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education (NCDEE) and that I will be notified of any significant changes.

By signing below, I confirm that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained in the Family Handbook.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Child's Name: _____

Center Representative Signature: _____

Date: _____