



POLICIES & PROGRAM

Parent Handbook

Please read, sign the last page, and keep this copy

Firefly Family Collective is a home-based child care program licensed through the Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care. We follow all rules and regulations required by the Department of Human Services and the Early Learning Division — and we're delighted you've chosen us.

✦ OUR MISSION

To give children a safe, fun, and loving place to learn and explore. Every child is unique, and we value each child and their culture equally. Our weekly lesson plans are age-appropriate and reach across science, math, art, language, literacy, writing, large and small motor skills, music, and cooking — all while preparing your child for their next chapter. Our staff work hard to be strong role models who help every child grow in the best way possible.

✦ OUR PHILOSOPHY

We aim to provide a positive learning environment for every child, and we welcome the chance to talk with families about your child's progress and development at any time. Partnering with families matters enormously to us — your input and ideas make our program better.

Firefly Family Collective welcomes all children ages **2 months to 12 years**, regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, national origin, disability, ancestry, or sexual orientation. We work with all children equally, with a commitment to quality care and education regardless of any differences.

✦ OUR CURRICULUM

We use **The Creative Curriculum for Family Child Care**, which covers all domains of child development — physical, language, and cognitive. It is relevant, meaningful, and built on children's prior experience so they can make connections. Activities are designed around each child's own strengths, which is what turns children into eager learners. The way we organize the room, choose toys and materials, plan the day, and talk with children is all in service of that.

Lesson plans include language work in **English, Spanish, and Farsi**, plus literacy, writing, music, cooking, motor development, and morning routine.

What we believe

- 1 Children learn best through play — in both their experiences and their environment.
- 2 Children develop daily across five areas: health and physical development, social and emotional development, language and communication, approaches to learning, and cognition and general knowledge.
- 3 Literacy and language development is encouraged every single day.
- 4 Exploration and discovery happen indoors and out, to grow a love of learning.
- 5 A strong classroom community builds confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking.
- 6 The schedule and space let children pace themselves and choose activities that fit their needs.
- 7 Teaching staff are chosen for qualifications, beliefs that align with ours, personality, experience, and education.
- 8 Staff take part in ongoing training, workshops, and conferences to stay current.
- 9 Staff use developmentally appropriate practice and seize teachable moments.
- 10 Staff adjust their teaching to the strengths, needs, and interests of individual children.
- 11 Positive reinforcement and guidance build real relationships with children.
- 12 Parent partnership — open communication, conferences, family activities — is a key ingredient in a child's success.

✦ OUR STAFF

All staff pass a criminal history check before hire, and we thoroughly check personal and work references. Every staff member holds current **First Aid & CPR**, a **Food Handler's card**, and training in **Recognizing & Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect**. Employees working 20 hours or more per week complete 24 clock hours of training each year; those working fewer than 20 hours complete 15 clock hours.

It is against our policy for families to hire our staff outside of child care hours.

✦ CARING FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Children with special needs are welcomed under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act. All families are treated with dignity and respect for their individual needs and differences, and confidentiality about special needs is maintained for every family and staff member. Children with special needs are given the opportunity to participate as fully as possible.

To make that work, we may consult with outside agencies with your written permission (Authorization for Release of Information). We'd love to be included in IFSP and IEP meetings so we can make our program as supportive as possible. Staff receive training on the benefits of inclusion and on any specific accommodations a child needs, and we'll consult with you and your child's health professionals to determine accommodations or therapy requirements. A child's written care plan is followed in all emergency situations. **Parents are responsible for updating the care plan at least annually** and for telling the director about any changes.

✦ ENROLLMENT

All forms provided at enrollment must be completed before your child can attend. Personal information is kept confidential. Forms renew yearly and must be kept up to date if anything changes — please update addresses, phone numbers, and authorized pick-up people as needed.

Registration checklist — due before the first day

- ☐ Child enrollment package
- ☐ Getting to Know You questionnaire
- ☐ Immunization card or exemption (*within 30 days*)
- ☐ \$100 registration fee per child, renewed each year by September 1
- ☐ Tuition, due at the end of the first week

✦ THE FIRST DAY

A new environment can be hard for any child. We watch closely for the things that cause first-day anxiety and work alongside you to smooth the way. Some separation anxiety is normal and expected. **Call or text any time during the day** for an update on how your child is doing — we're happy to.

Please bring, labeled with your child's first and last name

- A complete change of clothes (more than one set for infants)
- Child-size blanket for naptime, ages one and up
- A familiar cuddly toy for naptime only
- A personal item or family photo to ease the transition
- Diapers and wipes
- An extra can of formula for infants, for emergencies
- Breast milk labeled with name and date
- Safe infant sleeping bag (Baby Deedee) for under one year
- Pack-and-play sheet for infants
- Rain boots to keep here for outdoor play
- A copy of your child's immunization card

✦ HOURS & DAILY RHYTHM

Business hours are 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM, seven days a week, except for the holidays listed in our closure policy. Care may begin as early as 7:00 AM by prior arrangement, and no child is in care more than **10 hours per day**. Our **drop-off cut-off is 9:30 AM**.

Families agree to contracted days and times in the enrollment agreement. Consistent transitions really matter to children, and knowing your schedule lets us have your child ready so you can get out the door quickly. If you need to arrive early or pick up late on a given day, please arrange it in advance and in writing.

- ✦ **Running late in the morning?** If it's more than 15 minutes, call or text with your estimated arrival so we can plan. If you'll be more than 30 minutes late without calling, we may have left the premises for a walk or outing, assuming your child isn't coming.
- ✦ **Running late at pick-up?** Call as soon as you know and give us an estimated time. See *Late pick-up* below.

A typical day

Flexible — it shifts with the children's interests and the weather.

8:00 - 8:30	Drop-off, quiet play, breakfast
9:00 - 9:30	Clean up, bathroom break, hand washing
9:45 - 10:00	Morning snack
10:15 - 11:30	Outside play, puzzles, building, table work, circle time, group activities, reading, music, sensory play — then cool down and clean up
11:30 - 12:00	Lunch
12:00 - 2:00	Nap or quiet time — all children rest their bodies quietly
2:00 - 2:30	Bathroom break, hand washing
2:30 - 2:45	Afternoon snack
2:45 - 4:00	Arts and crafts or outdoor play
4:00 - 6:00	Free play and pick-up

✦ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

We sign every child in and out of our attendance book at drop-off and pick-up, as our policy and state law require. Please bring your child in **clean, weather-appropriate play clothes, shoes, and a fresh diaper**.

Authorized pick-up

We release a child only to the person who enrolled them or to someone 18 or older authorized in writing by a parent. Under no circumstances will your child leave with anyone not designated in writing on the authorization form. Anyone picking up may be asked for photo ID — without it, the child will not be released.

- ✦ All children must be properly restrained in accordance with seat belt law.
- ✦ We will not release your child to anyone, authorized or not, who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Your child stays with us until another person can pick them up, and late charges apply. If a person refuses a ride and leaves with a child, we will notify the police department and child protective services.

✦LATE PICK-UP

Please make every effort to be on time. Our staff and I have professional development and other commitments after hours, and being able to meet them is part of what keeps the quality of care high. If lateness is unavoidable, notify us **immediately**, or arrange for another adult 18 or older from your emergency form to pick up.

SITUATION	RATE
Extended care arranged in advance (at least 24 hours' notice), until 7:00 PM at the latest	\$30 / hour, per child
Late pick-up with no prior arrangement	\$40 / hour, per child

A 15-minute grace period is allowed for traffic. Times are according to our clock. Rates are subject to change annually.

✦ TUITION & PAYMENT

Our tuition schedule is designed to give your child high-quality care at a fair, reasonable cost. Current rates are on the separate rate sheet, and your rate is written into your enrollment agreement.

Private pay families

- ✦ **Regular full-time and part-time enrollment.** Families with a consistent weekly schedule may pay monthly or weekly. Monthly tuition is due on the agreed schedule and reserves your child's space regardless of attendance. Weekly payments are due by **Saturday of each week**.
- ✦ **Drop-in, daily, and flexible schedules.** Billed weekly based on actual attendance. Payment is due at the end of the first week of care and weekly thereafter.

ERDC families

Billed at the beginning of each month based on your child's average authorized attendance hours. Copayments, extra hours, and anything ERDC doesn't cover are the parent's responsibility and follow the same payment schedule.

Other charges

- ✦ **\$100 registration fee** per child at enrollment, and each year by September 1.
- ✦ **\$35** for each returned check. Cash payment is required after a returned check.
- ✦ **\$10 per day** late payment fee, up to 3 days. If fees remain unpaid after that, your child cannot be admitted until the balance is paid in full.

How to pay

- **Zelle** — 971-701-8620
- **Check** — payable to Firefly Family Collective or Rashin Hekmat
- **Cash or money order** — in the secure payment drop box on site

Tuition rates assume payment by the due date. Late payments may be subject to fees or alternative tuition arrangements, and repeated late payment may result in suspension or termination of care. Please talk to us *before* a due date if something has come up — we'd rather help than charge.

✦ HOLIDAYS & CLOSURES

We close in recognition of several holidays each year. These are **paid holidays** — tuition is not reduced or credited for them. When a holiday falls on a Saturday it is observed the Friday before; on a Sunday, the Monday after.

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Presidents Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth — June 19
- Independence Day — July 4
- Labor Day
- Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- Winter break — Christmas Eve through January 1, reopening the first business day after January 1

We may also close for severe weather, emergencies, or anything else affecting the safety of children and staff. Weather closures generally follow the **Beaverton School District**. Tuition is not reduced for these closures.

Absences

- ✦ **No charge** for approved excused absences — illness, medical appointments, schedule changes communicated in advance, or family emergencies.
- ✦ **No charge** when the provider's illness, emergency, or scheduled vacation prevents care and no back-up is available.
- ✦ **Regular charges apply** during a family's vacation for consistent part-time and full-time schedules.

✦ SUBSTITUTE CARE

We'll tell you as early as possible if we can't provide care on a given day — usually with at least a week's notice, unless it's an emergency. On those days it's the family's responsibility to arrange substitute care if our staff can't cover. You are not charged for that day. Occasionally we run errands during quiet time and arrange coverage with trained assistants who have also passed a criminal background check and hold CPR and first aid certification.

✦ WITHDRAWAL & TERMINATION

We require a minimum of **30 days' written notice** of withdrawal, because we need to give another family 30 days' notice about the opening. Your final 30 days of payment are due whether or not your child attends. Terminations are not accepted during a family's or the provider's vacation time.

Firefly Family Collective reserves the right to end a child's enrollment when necessary. We will work with you and your child as much as we possibly can, but we can't put our business, the other children, or our family in a compromising position. Reasons for termination include:

- ✦ Failure to pay fees on time
- ✦ Failure to abide by the contract and policies
- ✦ Failure to attend the regular hours in the signed contract

- ✦ Lack of parental cooperation, communication, or respect for our business or family
- ✦ Continued unacceptable or harmful behavior by a child
- ✦ Repeated late pick-ups without explanation
- ✦ A child who is a continuing threat to themselves, other children, or staff

✦HEALTH & ILLNESS

Children need to be well enough to take part fully in the day, indoors and out. Our full **Illness & Sick-Child Policy** is a separate document in your packet and it governs when a child must stay home and when they may return — please keep it somewhere handy. In short:

- ✦ Keep your child home for fever above **100.4°F**, vomiting, diarrhea, severe cough, difficulty breathing, eye infection, open or draining sores, unexplained rash, chickenpox, head lice, jaundice, or any symptom that keeps them from participating comfortably.
- ✦ Return is **24 hours fever-free** without fever-reducing medication, and **48 hours** after the last episode of unexplained vomiting or diarrhea, per Oregon's current child care rules.
- ✦ A child with a contagious bacterial illness must generally be on antibiotics for **24 hours** before returning.

Tell us right away if your child is diagnosed with or exposed to a communicable disease. We're required to notify Washington County Public Health and to let other families know about possible exposure, always protecting your child's confidentiality. If your child becomes ill or is injured here, we'll call you immediately; if we can't reach you, we'll call your emergency contacts. Please come as soon as you're notified, and keep addresses, phone numbers, emergency contacts, and medical information current. It helps enormously to have a back-up care plan for sick days.

✦MEDICATION

Medication is given in accordance with state regulations and our separate **Medication Administration Policy**. Briefly:

- ✦ We will **not** give Tylenol, ibuprofen, or any fever reducer to lower a fever so a child can stay in care. Please don't medicate a fever before drop-off either — it's against policy, and the fever will return.
- ✦ Any medication requires a completed **medication authorization form** and written instructions from your child's health care provider.
- ✦ All medication must be in its **original, unexpired container** labeled with your child's name, the medication name, dosage, and frequency. We store it out of children's reach.
- ✦ **Never** send medication in your child's bag. Hand it directly to us at arrival. Children may not take any medication we haven't administered, including cough drops and lozenges.

✦IMMUNIZATIONS

We must have a copy of your child's immunization card for their file by their first day, and all shots must be up to date. As a certified provider, the law allows us to care only for children who are immunized, or whose parents provide a copy of the exemption training they completed. Please bring us a new copy whenever shots are updated.

✦EMERGENCIES & SAFETY

In a medical emergency, fire, or natural disaster, we take immediate steps to keep your child safe and contact you as quickly as possible. An emergency plan with numbers and procedures is posted on site. Please make sure we have a number that **reaches you**, not just one that takes a message — and if that isn't possible, an alternate contact you trust to make decisions for your child.

Accident reports

Even with many precautions, incidents happen. If one does, we administer first aid and give you a **Child Accident Report** describing what happened and the follow-up provided. In a serious accident we call 911 and then you or your emergency contacts. Families are responsible for the cost of transportation to the hospital and medical treatment.

Mandatory reporting

As certified child care providers, we and our staff are **required by law** to report any questionable markings, signs of abuse or neglect, or exploitation — even minor ones — to the proper authorities. We don't take this lightly, and neither does the state. If your child has an unusual injury, please tell us at drop-off so there's no confusion.

✦GUIDANCE & DISCIPLINE

We believe discipline is achieved through patience, consistency, and positive reinforcement. We teach manners, kindness, and respect largely by modeling them — our actions and reactions speak much louder than our words. Children hear the rules often, so they know what's expected.

Once a child is old enough to understand the rules and chooses not to follow them — hitting, aggression, profanity, yelling at staff, hurting people or property — we use these developmentally appropriate techniques, in order:

- 1 **Positive reinforcement.** The child is praised when demonstrating acceptable behavior.
- 2 **Redirection.** The child is redirected to another activity and given a chance to try again later.
- 3 **Thinking break.** The child goes to our Problem-Solving Solutions area, apart from the group, for an age-appropriate length of time (one minute per year of age). We use this only when a child repeatedly won't follow directions, is having a tantrum, or is hurting themselves, others, or equipment. When they show they're ready, they rejoin the group and try again.
- 4 **Last resort.** When behavior is continually dangerous, we call a conference with parents and develop a behavior contract together. If the problem can't be resolved, arrangements will need to be made for care elsewhere.

If a child is inconsolable for more than **90 consecutive minutes**, we'll call you for pick-up.

We have zero tolerance for physical aggression toward a teacher. It results in immediate expulsion for the day and parents are called for immediate pick-up. Teaching staff never use physical punishment or restraint with a child.

When a parent and a provider are both in the room — usually at drop-off and pick-up — children sometimes forget the rules or test boundaries. Please help by reminding your child that the rules still apply when you're here. We'll gently remind them too.

Our approach, in a sentence

We take a preventive approach that teaches positive behavior rather than punishing misbehavior. Unacceptable behavior is corrected by teaching the appropriate behavior, using positive words. In extreme situations and only as a last resort, brief separation from the group may help a child regroup; they rejoin when they feel ready. **Separation is never used with infants and toddlers, and punishment in any form is absolutely forbidden here.** Preventative discipline builds self-esteem and problem-solving skills, and our environment is deliberately rich enough to head off the boredom that causes most behavior problems in the first place.

What we ask of children

- Be a good listener
- Share
- Help clean up
- Walk inside
- Be a friend
- Laugh, smile, play, and be happy

✦BITING

Biting isn't common, but it can be a frustrating problem when it happens. Our approach:

- ✦ For infants and toddlers, we offer positive teething activities to soothe sore gums.
- ✦ When children bite out of frustration or during a conflict, we redirect and show them another way to get what they want, encouraging them to use language for their wants and needs.
- ✦ If a child bites frequently, we observe carefully to find what precedes it and keep a log to track the behavior. We may hold conferences with parents to discuss what's happening at home and look for outside resources.
- ✦ Parents of a bitten child are always notified, and so are the parents of the child who bit, so we can work on it together.

To keep everyone safe, if all attempts to stop the biting fail, we reserve the right to remove the biting child from our program.

✦TOILET TRAINING

Toilet training goes best when teachers, parents, and children work together, with consistent positive encouragement at home and here. It usually starts around age two, or whenever a child shows interest — we begin when you tell us you'd like to start. Please keep several complete changes of clothes here during the process, and dress your child in clothing that's easy to manage from the waist down. We encourage children to do as much as they can themselves and we're always there to help. **We never shame or punish a child for an accident.**

✦REST TIME

Adequate rest is an important part of a young child's day. Children rest in the afternoon for one to two hours, or longer depending on the child. Mats and cots are provided. Children who don't sleep after a half hour of rest may quietly read, do puzzles, or color. If your child falls asleep, we let them sleep the whole nap time. Infants sleep according to their own needs, **on their backs**, following the individual plan you and we prepare together.

✦NUTRITION

Food here is more than balanced meals and nutritious snacks — it's a vital part of the day and a wonderful time for manners and conversation. We sit with children during meals and snacks, encourage positive conversation, and let children help by setting the table, serving themselves, and cleaning up. Child-sized plates, cups, and flatware are always within reach on our lunch cart, and water is always available.

We provide **two meals and two snacks daily** when families accept the weekly menu. Meals meet USDA food guidelines in quality and quantity, and

we serve fresh fruit and vegetables every day. Please note any allergies or dietary restrictions on the enrollment forms.

Please don't send your child in with high-sugar foods — chocolate milk, juice, candy, chips, cookies, cake, ice cream. Diet affects mood, behavior, and the ability to function; if challenging or disruptive behavior results from these items, we'll call for pick-up.

✦ INFANT & TODDLER SUPPLIES

- ✦ Firefly Family Collective does **not** provide diapers and wipes.
- ✦ Parents provide formula if their infant doesn't take the generic formula we keep on hand.
- ✦ Please label everything, and let us know when supplies are running low.

✦ TOYS & BELONGINGS

We have a wide variety of toys, games, and activities: neighborhood walks, the park, arts and crafts, outdoor play in a fenced back yard, sports, music, and educational videos. If your child insists on bringing a toy from home, it becomes community property while it's here and must be shared. We aren't responsible for damage to or loss of a toy from home. A favorite blanket or stuffed animal for snuggling is the exception — that one doesn't have to be shared.

Toy guns and weapon play are not permitted. Families are responsible for serious damage to our home, furnishings, cars, or toys caused by their child.

✦ TECHNOLOGY & SCREEN TIME

Teachers use personal phones or tablets for business tasks such as messaging parents. We want an environment that nurtures social development and imagination, and we also recognize that media has real value when chosen carefully and used with intention. For preschoolers age two and older, technology is used in three ways:

- ✦ To enhance a lesson during circle time (tablets)
- ✦ As a 30-minute reward for positive behavior before nap (tablets)
- ✦ A monthly movie and pajama party (rated G, on television)

Independent tablet use never exceeds **30 minutes at a time or 60 minutes total per day**, including teacher-directed activities. All tablets carry preselected, age-appropriate apps focused on language, literacy, and math that require active involvement. Screen content is always age appropriate, nonviolent, and culturally sensitive, with no advertisements or brand placements. No screens during meals.

✦ LEARNING, SCREENING & ASSESSMENT

Learning should be natural and joyful. Children flourish when discovery is lovingly encouraged and gently reinforced. Activities vary by age, but the principles don't: children learn through active exploration, they initiate their own learning, learning comes from open-ended experiences, and adults are facilitators. Learning is much more than reciting letters and numbers — every child needs chances to be responsible, make choices, and be treated with respect.

Developmental screening

The **Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)** and **ASQ: Social-Emotional** are completed for every child **twice a year** — within 45 to 90 days of enrollment and six months later, or as needed — and updated annually. Screening confirms that development is within the typical range and builds our partnership with you. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends regular screening because children change so quickly in these years. You can complete the ASQ online at **osp.uoregon.edu**, or ask us for a paper version.

If a child is identified as having a developmental delay, we send a referral to the appropriate service. Following up is the parent's decision and responsibility. We build individual lesson plans around approaching milestones or identified delays, with the goal of every child being kindergarten ready across all developmental areas.

Assessment

Child assessments help teachers plan curriculum, set goals, design activities, and monitor progress. We complete them **three times each school year** using **Teaching Strategies GOLD**, with parent-teacher conferences offered in fall and spring. Assessment results and anything shared in conferences are kept strictly confidential.

✦ THE VALUE OF PLAY

Play is learning for life. Almost everything children learn in their first six years, they learn through play — and they work very hard at it. From birth, with no one telling them how, children stretch, pull, push, and move from place to place. Play develops skills, teaches children how to relate to their peers, and shapes personality. Children have a profound need to play, climb, run, imagine, test themselves, challenge others, and above all enjoy themselves.

Parent Handbook acknowledgement

Please return this page with your enrollment application on the first day of care. By signing, you acknowledge that you have read the Parent Handbook and understand the policies and terms of care at Firefly Family Collective.

CHILD'S NAME

PARENT OR GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE

PARENT OR GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE

Thank you for choosing Firefly Family Collective. We can't wait to care for your child.

