



The YWCA of Boulder County Children's Alley Parent Handbook

**eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca**

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Table of Contents

- A. Philosophy**
- B. Hours of operation/Closures**
- C. Services offered for special needs children**
- D. Admission and registration**
- E. Scheduling children**
- F. Cancellation or rescheduling policy**
- G. Pick-up and drop-off policies**
 - 1. Authorized/Unauthorized Pick Up of Children
 - 2. Late Pick-up policy
 - 3. Early Pick-up policy
 - 4. Late Arrivals
- H. Signing children in and out**
- I. Ages, ratios and class size**
- J. Daily routine and meal times**
- K. Contract Care**
- L. Fee Schedule**
- M. Procedure for identifying children**
- N. Guidance**
- O. Procedure for illnesses, accidents, and injuries**
- P. Health**
- Q. Emergencies**
- R. Field Trips, Video viewing, and special activities**
- S. Administering and Storing Medication**
- T. Personal Belongings/ Clothing**
- U. Meals and Snacks**
- V. Infant Care**
- W. Diapering and Toileting**
- X. Visitors**
- Y. Parent and Staff Communication**
- Z. Parking**
- AA. Complaints**
- BB. Child Abuse**
- CC. Dropping your child off at Children's Alley**
- DD. Emergency Policies**

A. Philosophy

The mission of The YWCA of Boulder County Children's Alley is to provide affordable, flexible, quality childcare on a temporary, and/or emergency drop-in basis. We offer a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment that encourages the emotional, physical, behavioral, and cognitive development of the children we serve. Children's Alley welcomes *all* children and we look forward to working with parents to provide the care your family needs.

B. Hours of Operation

Children's Alley is open:

Monday - Thursday	7:30 AM to 9:45 PM
Friday	7:30 AM to 5:45 PM
Saturday	9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Sunday	Closed

Closures:

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday following)

Christmas Eve/ Christmas Day

New Year's Eve/ New Year's Day

File day and cleaning days (TBA)

**Children's Alley may add other closures due to weather or other events;
We will give families prior notice when possible.**

Children's Alley closes at 4:30 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month for our staff meeting. The exact day will be posted on the Parent Bulletin Board at least 3 days prior. A list of closures is available at the front desk and posted on the Parent Bulletin Board.

C. Services offered for special needs children

We are happy to accommodate children with moderate special needs (developmental, physical, emotional, or behavioral). We strive to provide all children with a positive and play filled experience. Please spend some time with the Director/ Assistant Director discussing any special needs your child may have, including medications your child takes (even if they will not be administered at the center). We strive to work together with the family to enhance the strengths of all children and to ensure their success. Please know that if a child's behavior at any time endangers the safety of the child, other children, and/or staff, we must contact the parent and have the child picked up immediately.

D. Admission and Registration

Registration of children at Children's Alley requires completion of **several forms including:**

1. Enrollment Form
2. Registration Form and one-time registration payment
3. Health Appraisal (**to be completed by Health Care Provider within 30 days**)
4. Income Eligibility Form (IEF) related to the Federal Food Program
5. Immunization Card or copy or signed waiver
6. Emergency Medical Care Form
7. Proof of income – W-2, pay stub, or letter from employer
8. Authorization to administer medication form. This form could be kept in the car or purse in case medication needs to be given at Children's Alley (needs to be completed by health care provider)

Infants require 2 additional forms:

1. Daily Infant Routine
2. Formula Decision Form

These forms must be completed upon your child's first visit.

Registering children under the age of 2 requires a formula permission form and an infant information form which are provided in the enrollment packet.

E. Scheduling Children

Scheduling children begins every day **beginning at 2 PM for the following day.**

Children are scheduled on a first call, first serve basis. Parents may call the same day that childcare is needed; however, you are more likely to get space if you call the day before, beginning at 2 PM. **Saturday care can be scheduled any day and time of that week.**

If a spot is unavailable, you may opt to add your child to the waitlist.

F. Cancellation or Rescheduling Policy:

Children's Alley previously allowed parents to cancel or reschedule one hour before their child's reserved time. This policy made it difficult for Children's Alley to fill the cancellations on such short notice. **Children's Alley recognizes that changes occur, but we request that you do not think of Children's Alley as a back up.** When we reserve a slot for your child (or children), we often have to turn away many other families who are in need of care.

- **Effective April 1, 2008** parents must give **four hours notice for cancellations or rescheduling.** Without four hours notice, parents will be charged for the entire scheduled time. This applies to early pick ups. Parents may pick up their child (or children) before the scheduled pick up time, but without four hours notice, parents will be charged for the entire scheduled time. The four hour notice will allow Children's Alley sufficient time to fill those slots.
- For Saturday cancellations or reschedules, **parents must make changes by 1 pm on Friday.** Changes made after 1 pm will be charged for the entire scheduled time.

Monday-Thursday evening hour changes must be made prior to 6:00 pm

- If your child is scheduled for evening care, please let the staff know of any pick up time changes prior to 6:00 pm that evening. This allows the staff enough time to accommodate your request.
- Changes requested after 6:00 pm may not be possible due to staffing and ratios.

G. Pick Up and Drop Off Policies

1. Authorized Pick-up of Children

Children will only be released to those adults listed on the enrollment form. In the event a person picking up children is someone **other** than those listed on the enrollment form, the parent or guardian must inform the center director/assistant director of the person's name and relation and write the person's name on the sign-in/sign-out sheet as the person picking up your child. The director/ assistant director will inform appropriate staff of the change. All persons authorized to pick up children, including those listed on the enrollment form and those given verbal consent by the parents, will be asked to provide photo identification at the time of pick up. **Children will not be released otherwise.**

Unauthorized pick-up of children

If a person not authorized to pick up children attempts to do so, staff must notify the director/ assistant director immediately. Authorized adults must be contacted to obtain verbal consent to release the child. Staff must also explain to the person attempting to pick up that only those people listed on the enrollment form are authorized to pick up children. Only the parents or guardians can give permission to release the children to other adults.

2. Late pick up policy

Parents and/or authorized guardians must pick up their children at the scheduled pick up time. If you are going to be more than ten (10) minutes late collecting your children please notify us by phone. In the event that you are delayed more than fifteen (15) minutes without notifying us, we will proceed to call you first and then your emergency contacts. If we are unable to reach you or your emergency contacts and you are more than forty-five (45) minutes late, your child will be considered "abandoned" by Colorado state law. At this point the director/ assistant director of Children's Alley as well as the YWCA Executive Director or her designate will be informed of the situation. Children's Alley reports cases of abandoned children to Social Services as required by law.

Children's Alley closes at 9:45 PM, Monday through Thursday, at 5:45 PM on Friday, and at 5 PM on Saturday. Our staff will wait for late parents for fifteen (15) minutes after closing time. If parents have not arrived after these fifteen (15) minutes, parents and emergency contacts will be called. If no one responds within five (5) minutes, the director/ assistant director will return to the center to resolve the situation. We ask that parents please respect our closing times and not constrain our staff to stay past closing with your child.

We charge \$1 for every minute late after closing.

Children's Alley charges per hour per child on the half hour. Parents are charged for the total time your child stays at the Center. Please respect our ability to facilitate care for a maximum of **30 children only** at any one time. **If you are late to pick up your children, we may be unable to admit other scheduled children, creating a childcare crisis for the next family. We reserve the right to charge a fee for late pickups.**

3. Early pick-up

Parents must notify Children's Alley staff **4 hours prior** to an early pick-up time of their children to receive a payment adjustment to their original scheduled time of visit. If

children are picked up early without proper (4 hr) notification, the balance due will reflect the **entire time** your child was originally scheduled. Children may already be on a field trip when you call to adjust the scheduled time of visit.

4. Late arrivals

If parents anticipate arriving later than your scheduled drop off time, please call to notify us. If you call **4 hours in advance** to notify us of the updated drop off time, you **will not be charged for more than the time your child is actually at the center**. If you have not arrived at the scheduled time of drop off and one hour has passed without notification, we will give your scheduled time slot to a family on our wait list. **Parents will be responsible for payment of the visit scheduled if you do not call to cancel.**

If a child arrives late and their class is away from the center on a field trip, the child may either stay in the office until the class returns, go into another classroom if there is room, or the parent may drop the child off at the site of the field trip.

H. Signing children in and out

According to state licensing regulations parents/guardians are **required to sign children in and out on the sign-in/sign-out form** (located at the Children's Alley front desk). Please proceed to write in the following information:

1. Your child's name, first and last. One child per line please
2. Your child's age
3. The time you arrived at Children's Alley
4. The name and telephone number of an emergency contact whom we can call during your child's visit. This person **must** be available in the event of an emergency (no voice mail, etc.)
5. The legible signature of the person dropping off your child
6. The name of the person who will pick up your child at the end of their visit and their phone number
7. The scheduled pick-up time
8. The signature of the actual person picking up your child that day
9. The actual time your child is picked up from the center
10. If you are not recognized by any staff member who has contact with you, **please expect to show ID**

I. Ages, ratios and class size

Ages of Children Accepted

The YWCA of Boulder County Children's Alley accepts children ages six (6) weeks through twelve (12) years.

Ratios and class sizes

- Infants: 6 weeks-18 months; 8 infants : 2 teachers Total of 8 infants
- Toddlers: 18 months-3years; 10 toddlers : 2 teachers Total of 10 toddlers
- Preschool/School age: 3 years-12 years; 12 children : 2 teachers Total of 12 children

J. Daily Routine and Meal Times

If possible, we request that you help us create smooth transitions in our daily routine by scheduling your child appropriately around nap and meal times.

Each classroom maintains their own schedule and routine depending on the age/ability of the children and the degree of structure that is developmentally appropriate. Example: Infants generally have individual nap schedules but toddlers nap from 12:30-2:30 pm. Many of the preschool/school aged children do not take naps. Please consult your child's teacher for a posted schedule of activities. All classrooms are served meals at the same time.

Snacks are served at 10:00 am, 3:00 pm, and 8:00 pm

Lunch is served from 12:00 noon until 12:15 PM

If your child will not be eating lunch with us, please pick them up just before 12:00 pm – if you would like your child to eat lunch with us, please drop off a few minutes before 12:00 pm.

Dinner is served from 6:00 PM until 6:15 PM

If your child will not be eating dinner with us, please pick up just before 6 pm– if you would like your child to eat dinner with us, please drop off in time for dinner.

Please note that food is prepared for the exact number of children present during meal times. We are unable to serve meals after the scheduled times. We have no extra meals to send with children.

K. Contract Care

Children's Alley is a temporary, drop in child care therefore our contract policies are made on a short-term, case by case basis. Contracts are offered based on classroom availability. The infant room has 4 contract spaces and four drop-in spaces. The guidelines for contract care are as follows:

1. Contracts are generally awarded for 6 weeks. Some longer term contracts may be available. **Contracts must be scheduled with the Director.**
2. No contracts can be made for evenings (after 6) or Saturdays.
3. It is helpful for contract times to remain consistent. You are responsible for payment of this time whether your child attends or not.
4. Payment for contracts is due each Monday for that week. All contract fees are non-refundable.
5. Any additional hours of childcare needed beyond what has been contracted must be scheduled and paid for according to Children's Alley drop-in guidelines.
6. If a child has not arrived within one hour of the scheduled contract time and we have not received prior notification, the child will be removed from the day's schedule and the parent will be billed for the full time that had been reserved.
7. If two days pass without notification, the child's contract can be cancelled.
8. Only one contract per family is allowed per year. Exceptions and/or extensions will be made if special circumstances arise.
9. Because contracts are guaranteed reservations, payment is due whether or not the child is present at the center.
10. For special circumstances, please check with the Director who may be able to modify these guidelines.

Each family is normally allowed up to 10 visits per month. This policy may be modified according to availability in the classroom or by special arrangement with the Director. The goal of Children's Alley remains temporary, drop-in care.

L. Fee Schedule

All new families will be charged a one-time enrollment fee of \$10. Daily childcare rates are based on **total** gross family income. Children's Alley offers a sliding scale ranging from \$3.00 to \$10.00 per hour per child on weekdays. **Saturday care is offered at a flat rate of \$5.00 per hour per child.** There is a price break for families with three or more children (1/2 off the third child and any child after that). The following is a breakdown of total annual income and the corresponding fee for childcare.

Children's Alley Sliding Scale

2009

Annual Family Income

\$0- 5,999	3.30
\$6,000- 9,999	3.60
\$10,000- 14,999	3.95
\$15,000- 19,999	4.30
\$20,000- 24,999	5.10
\$25,000- 29,999	5.75
\$30,000- 34,999	6.15
\$35,000- 39,999	6.60
\$40,000- 44,999	7.15
\$45,000- 49,999	7.70
\$50,000- 54,999	8.25
\$55,000- 59,999	8.80
\$60,000-69,000	9.35
\$70,000-89,999	9.90
\$90,000 +	11.00

Saturday fees:

\$5.00/hr

We also accept payment from the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (C/CCAP). Please let us know if you need assistance to pay for childcare.

◆ Paying for Childcare at Children's Alley

Payment for your child's visit to Children's Alley is **due at the time of pick-up.** If you are unable to make payment in full, families do have the option of carrying a balance. The guidelines are as follows:

- 1. The maximum carried balance allowed is \$30.00.**
- 2. A balance may only be carried for a total of 2 visits maximum or \$30.00, whichever occurs first.**
- 3. On the third visit, a portion of the balance must be paid or the total balance can be paid. NOTE: the total balance carried may not exceed \$30.00**

4. The director/ assistant director reserves the right to revise the above-mentioned guidelines on a case-by-case basis.

M. Procedure for identifying where children are at all times

Drop off and pick up times for children are recorded in our daily scheduling book. Any changes (early or late drop off/pick up, cancellation, or no show) to a child's scheduled time of visit to Children's Alley are recorded in this schedule book. Staff members review the daily schedule and the class roster on a routine basis to be aware of children visiting for the day and to keep any changes updated. The teachers do a head count before and after going outside, as well as periodically throughout the day using their updated class list, which reflects all changes that are made throughout the day.

N. Guidance

Children's Alley approaches guidance with a learning focus. We believe that children can learn to make positive choices for themselves when given appropriate guidance from adults. Redirection, positive choice making, anticipating conflict, and ongoing teacher contact are methods used at Children's Alley. We also acknowledge, encourage, and reinforce positive behaviors while discouraging mistaken behaviors through problem-solving methods, distraction, and involvement, to name a few. We do not use a punitive approach of any kind. Time outs are used as a last resort with a one-minute per year-of the child's age ratio. We have a cozy area where children can go to process and manage their emotions in lieu of a time-out. The cozy corner is different than a time out and is used as a preventative guidance measure. The methods and techniques chosen are relevant to the age and development of each specific child. When appropriate, we will also involve parents in the process.

O. Procedure for illnesses, accidents, and injuries

In the event that a child becomes ill or incurs an accident while at Children's Alley the following steps will be taken:

1. If a child shows signs of illness, a staff member will complete a symptom record form. Parents will be contacted depending on the severity of the illness.
2. If the child has a fever, is vomiting, experiencing diarrhea, or has more serious symptoms, parents will be contacted immediately and instructed to pick up their child **within the hour**. If a staff member is unable to reach the parents, emergency contacts will be telephoned.
3. If a child has a mild accident or injury, an accident report will be completed by a staff member. Upon pick-up the parents will be asked to sign the report, as will the director or assistant director and the child's teacher. Depending on the severity of the injury, or if the child sustains head trauma, the parents will be **notified immediately**. If a child experiences extreme discomfort resulting from an accident, parents will be contacted immediately and instructed to pick up their child. If a staff member is unable to reach the parents emergency contacts will be telephoned. **If necessary, Children's Alley will call 911.**

Parents: Please inform staff members at time of scheduling if any child of yours has incurred an injury at home or has had an illness or symptoms of an illness.

CHILDREN'S ALLEY CANNOT ACCEPT SICK OR CONTAGIOUS CHILDREN.

P. Health

The health and safety of your children is the primary concern of all Children's Alley staff. If your child is not feeling well, please keep them at home. Even if children have mild symptoms of illness, being around a large group of children and a lot of stimulation does not allow their bodies to rest and may aggravate symptoms. They may also be in a contagious state.

If children become ill at the center and they are not well enough to stay, parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child. During this time your child will be isolated from the other children. Children do not always have a fever when they are ill; sometimes the best indicator of illness is the child's inability to participate in normal activities i.e. outside play.

In the case of a communicable disease such as strep throat, pink eye or RSV, please notify staff immediately so we may post a notice for other parents.

Q. Emergencies

Children's Alley has clearly posted policies for handling emergencies and safety concerns (such as a fire). These policies are clearly posted by each entrance and exit to the classrooms. In the event of an emergency, law enforcement, safety services and/or the fire department are contacted once the children are out of the building. Parents will be notified once the situation is contained. **(Policies are stated at the end of the handbook.)**

R. Field trips, video viewing, and special activities

Field Trips

Field trips taken by staff and children are to places within walking distance of Children's Alley (Barker Park, Pearl Street Mall). Infants and children younger than age 2 are transported in strollers, wagons, or infant backpacks. **Parents are required to complete the field trip permission statement located on the reverse side of the enrollment form.** Please be aware that if you come to collect your child earlier than your scheduled time the children may still be out on a field trip. Please let us know if you need to change your scheduled time so that your child will be at the center when you arrive to pick them up. Children not participating in a field trip remain at Children's Alley in another classroom. First Aid kits and emergency contact forms always accompany the group.

Video Viewing

Video viewing is seldom used but may be reserved for the evening hours (when children begin to rest in preparation for bedtime) or for that occasional rainy Saturday afternoon. Children's Alley has a varied selection of short, educational, and age appropriate videos. We encourage parents to observe our video selection and to speak with staff if you have any concerns or personal restrictions regarding video viewing. **Parents are required to complete the video viewing permission statement located on the reverse side of the enrollment form.**

Special Activities

Occasionally Children's Alley offers special activities on holidays such as Halloween and Christmas. Special activities are advertised with signs posted at the center prior to the event.

S. Administering and Storing Medication

Children's Alley staff **cannot** administer **any** medications without a doctor's note and consent form (this includes over the counter medications and homeopathic remedies) All types of medications can only be administered between the hours of 7:30 AM and 5 PM Monday through Friday **only**. To administer medications we require the following:

- 1. A signed doctor's note that clearly describes the appropriate quantities of the medication and the times it should be given.**
- 2. A copy of the prescription (if it is prescribed medication) or a doctor's note for over the counter medication.**
- 3. A signed authorization to dispense medication from the parent or guardian**
- 4. Medication must be in the original labeled bottle or container. The label must correspond to the prescription and doctor's note.**

NOTE:

Prescription Medications must come in a container labeled with: child's name, name of medicine, time medicine is to be given, dosage, the date medicine is to be stopped, and licensed health provider's name. Pharmacy name and number must also be included on the label.

Over the Counter Medication (including homeopathic remedies) must be labeled with child's name. Dosage must match the signed health care provider authorization, and medicine must be packed in original container.

Children's Alley staff will record the administration of medication in our medication logbook.

All medications brought into the center are kept out of reach of children in a locked storage unit. Medications must be signed in and out of the center each time they are brought and administered to your child.

Please do not keep ANY medications in your child's bag. Please alert staff if your child has any allergies requiring an EPI-pen or emergency medication. The same requirements (doctor's note, prescription, and labeled medication) apply to EPI-pens or emergency medications, as well as some additional authorization forms and care plans.

T. Personal Belongings/ Clothing

Personal Belongings

We prefer that valuable items (including toys) remain at home; however, we do have cubbies for children's special belongings from home. Personal belongings must be stored and labeled in a cubby designated for your child.

Standard belongings such as coats and diaper bags may be stored in the cubbies in your child's appropriate classrooms. Unclaimed items are placed in our lost and found box at
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the end of each day. We hold items in the lost and found for up to **30 days** after which they will be disposed. **Children's Alley is not responsible for lost or stolen items.**

Please label all belongings from home with your child's name.

Clothing

Children must be fully clothed when attending Children's Alley for sanitation and safety reasons.

Please dress your children appropriately for indoor and outdoor play. Shoes, socks, hat and a jacket of some type are good preparation. For cold and snowy days, please bring snow boots, a snowsuit, or other waterproof clothing, a jacket, gloves, hat, and a spare change of dry clothes. We will not take the children outside if the temperature falls below 30 degrees.

In the summer and for warmer days, please dress children in lighter clothing so they do not overheat. A short-sleeved shirt, shorts or lightweight pants are appropriate. A light jacket or sweatshirt may be needed. Swimsuits for water play are greatly appreciated, but children must have a dry change of clothes as well. Sunscreen will be applied to children with written permission.

U. Meals and Snacks

We are a **Peanut/Nut Free** facility. Please do not bring peanut/nut foods to Children's Alley. Children's Alley provides 3 meals a day and 3 snacks a day excluding dinner on Friday and Saturday. We can accommodate any allergies, special diets, and food restrictions. Please document your child's needs on the enrollment form and alert staff members of any changes or requests. **We discourage bringing food and beverages from home unless your child's diet requires it.** Please alert staff of any food that may be in your child's bag so that we can place it out of reach of other children.

V. Infant Care

Children ranging from six (6) weeks to 18 months are classified as infants at Children's Alley. Our ratio for infants per teacher is 4:1. Infants generally need a lot of one-on-one care and we provide that by meeting their needs for feeding, rocking and napping throughout the day. We offer a variety of infant toys including bouncers and saucers that give them an opportunity to work on their developing skills. **We ask parents to please provide diapers, bottles (labeled with your child's name and already prepared) and formula or breast milk. We do have extra diapers and formula in case parents forget these items; however, our supply is minimal.**

We are happy to provide an assortment of jarred-organic foods when your child is eating solid foods. Parents may also want to include something of comfort for your child such as a blanket or stuffed animal. These items may help your child to transition smoothly. We generally recommend that infants start with small increments of time at childcare and work up to lengthier visits, as they grow more comfortable here.

W. Diapering and Toileting

Specific staff members are assigned to diapering duty during different shifts each day.

Our policy is to change diapers routinely every hour and a half to two hours and as needed. Each diaper change and use of the potty will be documented daily on the log sheet located in the bathroom. Preschool diaper changes will not be documented. Please

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alert staff to any toilet training routines children use at home and we will do our best to integrate this routine into their day at Children's Alley.

Children's Alley is not able to accommodate the use of cloth diapers. Please plan to provide disposable diapers during your child's stay at Children's Alley.

Please provide ample diapers, training pants, extra underwear, and changes of clothes in case of accidents.

We are unable to administer creams and medications to open, raw or bleeding diaper rashes.

X. Visitors

We ask all visitors to our center to introduce themselves and inform staff members of the purpose of their visit. Visitors are required to sign-in and sign-out on the visitor log at the front desk of the YWCA. We reserve the right to ask any visitor to leave the premises for any reason. Typically a visitor is accompanied by an administrator and may not be left alone with children.

Y. Parent and Staff Communication

Due to the drop-in nature of our center, we do not have structured parent-staff conferences. However, you may be invited to a conference if Children's Alley staff has any concerns regarding your child's behavior, progress, and social and physical needs. If your child has a diagnosed illness, any developmental delays, or behavioral needs, please inform the staff. Parents should review a behavior plan and/or medication authorization form with the director/ assistant director if necessary. Our goal is to collaborate with families and employ strategies that are already effective so that we can manage any behavior issues successfully. By working together, we can do our best at Children's Alley to provide your child with a happy and successful visit.

Occasionally we will provide **newsletters and surveys** to parents. Please read the newsletters, as they may contain valuable information as well as upcoming parent/child activities. We also greatly appreciate parents input in the form of the occasional survey.

Z. Parking

Parents are welcome to use the available drop-off parking space located on Mapleton Ave. north of the YWCA. **However, the parking time must not exceed 15 minutes as a courtesy to all other families using our services. Metered parking is also available in front of the building.** Parents will enter through the main doors facing 14th Street. Please do not park in the parking lot on the south side of the building

If your drop-off/pick-up time will take longer than 15 minutes, please park along Mapleton Ave. between the unloading signs. Sacred Heart parking lot is off limits for our clients.

AA. Complaints

Please speak with the Program Director regarding any concerns you may have about your child's well being during his/her visit to Children's Alley. Complaints about the safety and adequacy of the program may be made additionally to the Colorado

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Department of Human Services at (303) 866-5958. We request you talk to us first so we may benefit from your input.

BB. Child Abuse Reporting

As childcare providers we are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect to the Colorado Department of Human Services. The department will determine if further investigation is warranted. The telephone number to report child abuse is (303) 441-1000

CC. Dropping your child off at Children's Alley

Dropping your child off at childcare can be a stressful, emotional event for both children *and* parents. We would like to offer a few helpful tips to support you in this important transition.

- **Try to visit the center with your child prior to the first visit.** You can call to set up an appointment to drop by for fifteen (15) or twenty (20) minutes. Your child can play, meet the teachers and get a feel for this new setting.
- **Talk with your child about the first visit.** Prepare them that you are going to leave them to play with new friends. You can remind them about all of the fun things they will be doing – indoor and outdoor play, using dress-ups, cars, puzzles, play-dough, maybe doing some art work or painting, perhaps going on a walk, or having snacks or meals. **Let them know that you will be coming back and help them understand when you will return** (check our daily schedule – for example, if you will return around 3:30 PM you can let your child know you will be back to get them right after snack).
- **Saying goodbye will take between five (5) and fifteen (15) minutes** depending on your child, his or her age, and their comfort level with being away from you. Please plan ahead so that you have time to help your child transition without the stress of being late. **DO NOT** sneak out of the room while the child is occupied; it may make you feel better but the child will become distrustful. When a drop off is calm and casual it will go more smoothly and save you time in the long run. The same applies for pick-up. It can be difficult for children to interrupt their play and rush off – they often want to play with you and show you what they have been doing all day.
- **Bringing a special toy or blanket from home** provides a transitional object that helps your child feel safe in a new environment. For very young children, we recommend bringing a blanket that you have slept on so that your baby can be comforted by your scent while they are here.
- **It can be helpful to develop a “goodbye ritual”.** Each time you drop off follow the same steps – ex: sign-in, read a story together or do a puzzle, and then say goodbye. **Consistency** with this ritual helps your child feel safe and secure.
- When you arrive at the center **check in with the staff** and let us know how your child's day is going. Help us get to know your child and we will do our very best to help them feel at home. The teacher will do a well child check – looking for signs of illness or fatigue. The teacher may question you on the child's previous night.
- Staff members gauge their responses to your child based on your child's behavior. We prefer to take things at the child's pace. Usually we will welcome your child by trying to engage them in play with other children and toys.
- **Once your child is beginning to settle, say goodbye and only say it once, then leave immediately.** Prolonging the goodbye can be confusing for the child. It is important for you to leave even when your child begins to cry. Teachers will lovingly

help them self-soothe as they begin their time at Children's Alley. Sometimes parents are tempted to *sneak-out* to avoid the crying that can happen at drop-off. Although it may be more complicated, an honest approach helps build a positive and trusting relationship between you and your child.

- **Please feel free to speak with any staff** about any concerns you may have with drop off – we're happy to help!
- **It is a normal and healthy part of development for children to experience separation anxiety.** Your child may cry when you leave. It usually only takes a few minutes for children to be consoled before they begin to play. We encourage you to call about ½ hour after you drop off so that you can check in and know that your child has begun to play and feels safe. Likewise it is a healthy developmental sign for children to cry upon your return, to refuse to go home, or sometimes to act as though you are not there. Children are simply trying to process the strong emotions they experience separating and reuniting with the most important person in their lives – you!

DD. Emergency Policies:

Inclement Weather

In case of a blizzard or excessively hot weather, staff may contact parents to pick up their children, and staff will be required to remain at Children's Alley until all children have been picked up. Children's Alley may close due to weather related building malfunctions if we are not able to provide water, heat, food, or circulating air. We will also close if staff is not able to get to our facility due to weather. If the weather conditions become severe, such as a blizzard or other harsh winter conditions, parents will be notified to pick up their children as soon as possible.

Fire Safety

Children's Alley has an automatic, fire department approved, operating fire alarm system to warn occupants of the existence of fire or to facilitate the orderly conduct of fire exit drills. Every exit is clearly visible and each escape path is clearly marked. Children's Alley has obtained written permission from the local fire department for the use of a security lock on the exit doors. Children's Alley does not use the lock while children are present at the center. Children's Alley holds fire drills on a monthly basis.

Infant room (North Classroom)

In case of fire: Children and staff will exit through the south exit, go south across the playground to the alley proceed down 14th St. to Pine. They will turn left and go to the steps in front of St. John's Church.

In case of tornado: Children and staff will go to the Men's Restroom outside the Infant Room door.

Toddler room (East Classroom)

In case of fire: Children and staff will exit through the east doors and go through the east playground, out into the alley. Proceed down 14th St. to Pine. Turn left and go to the steps in front of St. John's Church.

In case of tornado: Children and staff will go out into the hallway (north door) and proceed into the women's restroom located outside the Infant Room.

Preschool room (West Classroom)

In case of fire: Children and staff will exit through the north entrance door in the classroom and proceed down 14th St. to Pine. Turn left and go to the steps in front of St. John's Church.

In case of tornado: Children and staff will go into the downstairs area away from windows. This area includes the hall, part of the Edge room, and the bathroom. We will remain there until it is safe to go out.

Lost Child Policy:

When children go on neighborhood adventures, each child wears a Children's Alley label. Staff follows strict security procedures with each venture out of the building. Each child must have a completed Emergency Card (in your enrollment packet) that teachers can put in their traveling back pack. We take cell phones with us.

If a child were to become lost, staff would follow these procedures:

1. Do a head count and make sure the other children are safe and with another staff member.
2. Notify the Director
3. Do a search of any building and grounds that may be involved.
4. If not found, we will notify the parents and the proper authorities.

Medical Emergency

All staff members are First Aid/CPR certified. Children's Alley posts medical guide charts and keeps First Aid kits easily accessible. If professional medical attention is required, parents and 911 will be contacted.

