



# PERSONNEL POLICIES MANUAL

*Revised April 2018*

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b><u>POLICY NAME</u></b>	<b><u>SECTION</u></b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
Mission Statement and Company Values	<b>1.0</b>
<b>GENERAL EMPLOYMENT POLICIES</b>	
Non-Discrimination / Anti-Harassment	<b>2.01</b>
Employee Classification	<b>2.02</b>
Assignment	<b>2.03</b>
Personnel Records	<b>2.04</b>
Employment Verification	<b>2.05</b>
Health Assessment	<b>2.06</b>
Child Abuse and Criminal Clearances	<b>2.07</b>
Provisional Period	<b>2.08</b>
<b>COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS</b>	<b>3.0</b>
Payroll	<b>3.01</b>
Hours of Attendance/Work Schedules	<b>3.02</b>
Overtime	<b>3.03</b>
Emergency Closing	<b>3.04</b>
Employee Benefits	<b>3.05</b>
Paid Time Off (PTO)	<b>3.06</b>
Retirement Plan Option	<b>3.07</b>
Care of Employee's Children	<b>3.08</b>
Career/Professional Development	<b>3.09</b>

<b>Work Related Expense Reimbursement</b>	<b>3.10</b>
<b>Work-Related Travel</b>	<b>3.11</b>
<b>Holidays</b>	<b>3.12</b>
<b>Bereavement Leave</b>	<b>3.13</b>
<b>Family and Medical Leave</b>	<b>3.14</b>
<b>Jury and Witness Duty</b>	<b>3.15</b>
<b>Military Service Leave</b>	<b>3.16</b>
<b>Other Leaves of Absence</b>	<b>3.17</b>
<b>Resignation</b>	<b>3.18</b>
<b>Former Employees</b>	<b>3.19</b>

## **EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

<b>Confidentiality</b>	<b>4.01</b>
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	<b>4.02</b>
<b>Smoke Free Workplace</b>	<b>4.03</b>
<b>Substance Abuse Control</b>	<b>4.04</b>
<b>Personal Appearance</b>	<b>4.05</b>
<b>Employees Personal Items</b>	<b>4.06</b>
<b>Non-Solicitation</b>	<b>4.07</b>
<b>Outside Employment</b>	<b>4.08</b>
<b>Political Activities</b>	<b>4.09</b>
<b>Accidents</b>	<b>4.10</b>
<b>Workplace Safety</b>	<b>4.11</b>
<b>Universal/Standard Precautions</b>	<b>4.12</b>
<b>Electronic Information Technology Policy</b>	<b>4.13</b>

<b>Team Communication</b>	<b>4.14</b>
<b>Grievance Resolution</b>	<b>4.15</b>

## **PROGRAM PROCEDURES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

<b>Performance Appraisal</b>	<b>5.01</b>
<b>Licensing Requirements</b>	<b>5.02</b>
<b>Keystone STARS Program</b>	<b>5.03</b>
<b>Parent Handbook</b>	<b>5.04</b>
<b>Client Relations</b>	<b>5.05</b>
<b>Limited English Proficiency and Home Language Policy Statement</b>	<b>5.06</b>
<b>Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect</b>	<b>5.07</b>
<b>Supervision of Children</b>	<b>5.08</b>
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>5.09</b>
<b>Inclusion</b>	<b>5.10</b>
<b>Suspension and Expulsion</b>	<b>5.11</b>
<b>Disciplinary Action</b>	<b>5.12</b>
<i>Reprimand</i>	<b>5.12a</b>
<i>Written Warning</i>	<b>5.12b</b>
<i>Investigatory Suspension</i>	<b>5.12c</b>
<i>Suspension</i>	<b>5.12d</b>
<i>Termination</i>	<b>5.12e</b>

## INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to The Discovery Tree. This manual, while not an implied or express contract, states in general terms the policies governing your actions as an employee and the benefits of employment with our organization. You are encouraged to discuss any questions you may have with the Director.

This manual will be amended from time to time. Revisions and changes shall be supplied to you and will be available as soon as possible after adoption. New policies or amendments to existing policies will be effective immediately for all employees unless otherwise noted on the policy.

In addition to reading this Personnel Policy Manual employees are also required to read and comply with all policies stated in the Parent Handbook and PA Child Care Licensing Regulations. From time to time, employees will also be required to read additional documents/publications which have bearing on their job performance.

As a business in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the employer/employee relationship is established "At-will." The "At-will" relationship affords the employee the right to resign for any reason. Likewise, the employer may terminate the relationship at any time, with or without cause and with or without notice. It is further understood that the "At-will" employment relationship may not be altered by any written document or by verbal agreement, unless such alteration is specifically acknowledged in writing and signed by an authorized executive of The Discovery Tree.

### **Our Mission**

To provide peace of mind for working parents with a convenient, efficient, educational child care program.

### **Our Company Values**

We inspire children to make safe and healthy choices,  
love learning, and respect and serve others.

When we perform our job responsibilities,  
we are accountable, proactive, and reflective.

When we interact with others, we are responsive,  
team-focused, and kind.

**POLICY: NON-DISCRIMINATION AND  
ANTI-HARASSMENT  
POSITION STATEMENT**

**SECTION: 2.01**

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The company will not condone, permit, or tolerate any form of discrimination and/or harassment by or against any employee, customer, vendor, independent contractor, or other individual with whom our employees come into contact in connection with their employment with this company based on age, race, color, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, limited language proficiency, or any other protected class or characteristic established under applicable federal, state, or local statute or ordinance. An open and equitable personnel system will be established and maintained.

Program services shall be made accessible to registrants with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment may be defined as, but not limited to:

- ◆ Suggesting to an employee that submitting to sexual favors enhances employment opportunities and/or advancement.
- ◆ Threatening or insinuating that refusal to submit to sexual advance will adversely affect employment appraisal, wages, advancement, assigned duties, shifts, or any other condition of employment or career development.
- ◆ Offering unwelcome sexual advancement or flirtation.
- ◆ Using sexually degrading words.
- ◆ Offering sexually suggestive or erotic comments regarding a person's body or mannerisms.
- ◆ Displaying graphically sexual pictures and/or objects in the workplace.

**Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedure:**

Sexual and impermissible harassment complaints should be reported immediately to the Director. Sexual harassment complaints will be investigated promptly and all information will be kept confidential.

Individuals who believe they have been subjected to discrimination or harassment as described or have questions about whether certain conduct is unlawful should immediately speak to Carrie Zwiercan, Owner/Director, or, if appropriate, Tom Zwiercan, Owner. This is particularly important in cases involving sexual harassment where there can be uncertainty about what is unlawful conduct.

Complaints will be documented and signed by both the company officer receiving the complaint and the individual reporting the complaint. All complaints will be investigated promptly and the existence of the complaint will be disclosed only to the extent necessary to make a prompt and thorough investigation or to take appropriate corrective measures. In all cases, the person who initiated the complaint will be informed of the findings and disposition of the matter at the conclusion of the investigation. Management will ensure that there is not coercion, retaliation, intimidation, discrimination, or harassment directed against any individual who registers a complaint or serves as a witness on behalf of another individual.

**PERSONS WHO ENGAGE IN PROHIBITED DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT WILL BE SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE UP TO AND INCLUDING TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT.**

Any individual who believes they have been discriminated against may file a complaint of discrimination with any of the following:

The Discovery Tree  
4814 Drexelbrook Drive  
Drexel Hill, PA 19026

Department of Public Welfare  
Bureau of Equal Opportunity  
Room 223, Health and Welfare Building  
PO Box 2675  
Harrisburg, PA 17105

PA Human Relations Commission  
Philadelphia Regional Office  
110 N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 501  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

US Dept. of Health and Human Services  
Office for Civil Rights  
Suite 372, Public Ledger Building  
South 150 South Independence Mall West  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111

DPW Bureau of Equal Opportunity  
Southeastern Regional Office  
801 Market Street, Suite 5034  
Philadelphia, PA 19107



## **POLICY: EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS**

## **SECTION: 2.02**

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Employees will be notified of the Employee Classifications into which their position fits on the job description and in their Letter of Appointment. The Discovery Tree reserves the right, in its sole discretion to change an employee classification at any time without prior notice.

1. **Full-Time Employee:** A person who is regularly scheduled for at least [40] hours per week.
2. **Part-Time Employee:** A person who is regularly scheduled for less than [40] hours per week.
3. **Long-Term Substitute:** A person employed for a temporary period exceeding [2] weeks and for a specific purpose. Long-Term substitutes will not be eligible for benefits with the exception of paid holidays, which occur during their assigned employment period.
4. **Short-Term Substitute:** A person employed for a daily and/or weekly period to fill a vacancy created by the absence of an Employee. Short-Term substitutes will not be eligible for benefits.
5. **Exempt:** Employees not eligible to receive overtime pay. Their salary covers all hours worked. Exempt employees are paid to perform a job regardless of the number of hours required to accomplish all aspects of the job as outlined in the job description.
6. **Non-Exempt:** Hourly and salaried employees eligible to receive overtime pay pursuant to Fair Labor Standards Act. Non-exempt employees are paid for the hours worked to complete their job as outlined in the job description.
7. **Classroom/Direct Care Staff:** This includes positions where the employee's primary duties involve direct care and supervision of children.
8. **Administrative Staff:** This includes positions where the employee's primary duties involve supervision of employees, program/curriculum, financial and managerial responsibilities.
9. **Facilities Staff:** This included positions where the employee's primary duties involve maintenance of facilities or preparation of food.

**POLICY: ASSIGNMENT**

**SECTION: 2.03**

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Employees will be assigned to a position for which they are qualified, based on the needs of the agency in an effort to provide services of the highest quality and efficiency, and to maintain compliance with PA Licensing Requirements. The Discovery Tree will make Employee Assignments in its sole discretion. An employee's assignment includes position, pay, scheduled hours and location.

The Discovery Tree reserves the right to change an employee's assignment at any time. Employees will be required to work overtime or alternate schedules as assigned by the Director. Employees will be given as much notice as possible when changes to their normal work schedule are made.

**POLICY: PERSONNEL RECORDS****SECTION: 2.04**

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A confidential file will be maintained on each employee containing all employment related documents such as the employment application, resume, job and salary history, performance appraisals, disciplinary action, general correspondence and other documents that pertain to employment with The Discovery Tree. To comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, The Discovery Tree keeps all medically related information in a separate confidential file.

Any false statements made by employees on their employment applications or personnel records will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

An employee may have supervised access to her or his file during normal business hours upon approval of the Director. Personnel files may not be removed from The Discovery Tree. Employees are prohibited from removing any documents from their personnel file. Employees may only add documentation to their personnel file with the permission of the Director.

Employee requests for copies of the documents contained in the personnel file must be made in writing to the Director. Copies of Personnel Records will only be released to the Employee and/or their Attorney at Law. Attorneys at Law must present a Letter of Representation in order to receive a Personnel Record.

**POLICY: EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION****SECTION: 2.05**

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From time to time employees may request The Discovery Tree to verify employment, position held, salary, address, and other information for credit and other purposes. These requests must be made to the Director in writing. The Discovery Tree will not verify employment by telephone. The request must include the employee's written authorization to release or verify any information.

**POLICY: HEALTH ASSESSMENT**

**SECTION: 2.06**

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Employment at The Discovery Tree is contingent upon receipt of the completed Health Assessment document in which a licensed health care provider indicates fitness for duty. The licensed health care provider may not be an immediate family member of the employee. Employees will be required to obtain a Health Assessment upon hiring and every other year thereafter.

Employees may be required to submit additional Health Assessments/Certifications as needed to reasonably accommodate an employee's disability or to determine eligibility for leave or to return to work from any medical/disability leave.

Health assessments will be maintained as a part of the employee's medical information file, which is a part of her or his personnel record.

**POLICY: CHILD ABUSE & CRIMINAL CLEARANCE**

**SECTION: 2.07**

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State law mandates that all new employees have current clearances. State law and Licensing Regulations stipulate that the clearances show the employee has no open accusations or convictions of child abuse and/or neglect. State law and Licensing Regulations further set guidelines for what convictions and arrests may and may not appear on the clearances.

When an employee is hired, she or he must provide the current clearances or copies of the completed clearance applications. Employees must submit returned clearances immediately upon receipt if clearances are returned directly to them. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. These documents will become a part of the personnel record.

The Discovery Tree may require, in its sole discretion, employees to re-submit clearance applications at any time during their employ.

**POLICY: PROVISIONAL PERIOD**

**SECTION: 2.08**

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Provisional Employee: An employee will be provisional for up to 90 calendar days of employment when initially hired or placed in a new position. During the Provisional Period, the Director will evaluate the provisional employee's performance to determine if she or he meets the standard outlined in the job description and the Personnel Policy Manual as well as child care licensing standards.

The provisional period may be extended up to 30 days where it is deemed necessary and appropriate. Upon successful completion of the provisional period, the employee will attain regular employment status.

Should the provisional employee not be recommended for regular status, the employee will be terminated no later than the last day of the provisional period or any extension thereof.

Employment may be terminated at any time during the provisional period with or without cause.

All employment documentation required must be provided by the employee prior to acquiring regular employment status.

## **POLICY: COMPENSATION PLANS**

## **SECTION: 3.0**

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The Agency recognizes three parts to an employee's compensation package: base wage, increases for merit, and employee benefits. It is the intent of The Discovery Tree to pay wages and provide for merit increases as well as maintain the various employee benefits; however, the ability to do so will depend entirely on what funds the organization receives. These amounts are often not known until well into any fiscal year or are fixed at the previous year's level of funding.

The positions at The Discovery Tree require the employment of individuals with varied skills, background, education and experience. Compensation Plans for one position are not applicable to another position, and are considered confidential. Employees are prohibited from discussing their compensation, or the compensation of other current or former company employees, with coworkers or clients.

## **POLICY: PAYROLL**

## **SECTION: 3.01**

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The Agency work week begins Sunday 12:00 midnight and ends on Saturday at 11:59 p.m. Employees will be paid biweekly on Fridays.

Until a new employee's information is entered into the time clock system, non-exempt employees must complete a biweekly Payroll Record and submit it to the Director on the day assigned. Employees who falsify the Payroll Record will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees who fail to complete the Payroll Record or submit it in a timely manner may have their paycheck delayed.

After an employee's information is entered into the time clock system, he or she is required to clock in at the beginning and clock out at the end of each shift. If the employee takes a break, he or she is required to so the same at the beginning and end of break time. If an employee works additional hours, or wants to apply sick or vacation time on a day when absent from work, he or she is required to complete a Work Record Detail Slip, have a supervisor sign the slip, and submit it to management on the same day or the next day of the same pay period.

Exempt Employees are required to complete a Productivity Report indicating work performed and any leave days used. Exempt Employees responsible for the direct care of children are required to indicate their arrival time so as to determine if ratio requirements are being met. Exempt employees are not required to account for actual hours worked.

When a payday falls on a holiday, paychecks will be issued on the day before the holiday. Any questions about paychecks must be directed to management in writing.

## **POLICY: HOURS OF ATTENDANCE/WORK SCHEDULES    SECTION: 3.02**

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The following policies apply to hourly (non-exempt) employees.

Employees are advised of their regularly scheduled hours at the time of hire. Hours of attendance are carefully planned and employees are required to work the hours and days for which they have been scheduled. Temporary and permanent changes to employee schedules are sometimes necessary to effectively meet the needs of the program.

Consistent attendance contributes to consistent program quality for the children.

In order to clearly define company expectations and track employee consistency, the following definitions, policies, and point system are in effect.

### Definitions:

- An *absence* occurs when an employee misses one full workday.
- A *partial absence* occurs when an employee misses part of a workday.
- A *lateness* occurs when an employee starts work up to 30 minutes late for a scheduled shift. Employees should clock in early enough to be in their assigned classroom, ready to work, on time. If the employee starts work more than 30 minutes after a scheduled shift, the occurrence is considered a partial absence.
- A *change of availability* occurs when any employee is not available to work his or her regular shift and the Director schedules the employee to work the same number of hours at a different time of that same workday.
- *Notification* occurs when an employee communicates in a manner that is acknowledged by both the employee and the supervisor. Therefore, a voice-to-voice phone conversation, or a text-to-text mobile device conversation is acceptable notification. If an employee is going to be absent from work more than one day, notification about plans for the next day is required by 3:00 pm.
- *Delayed notification* occurs when an employee knowingly waits until less than 10 days business day notice to notify his or her supervisor of a certain upcoming absence, partial absence, lateness, or change of availability.

Requests for schedule changes, absences, and partial absences must be submitted in writing with at least 10 business days notice, and will only be approved in accordance with the needs of the program. A change to approved time off requires prior written approval from the Director.

The Discovery Tree has the right to deny an employee's time off request for any reason including but not limited to: other employees have requested the same time off, employee's performance is not satisfactory and time off would disrupt corrective action efforts, special



agency events or activities which would necessitate employee's presence. Employees are discouraged from paying for or scheduling vacations until they have received approval for time off requests.

Employees have the right to appeal disapproved requests by emailing the Owners, Tom and Carrie Zwiercan, at [director@thediscoverytree.net](mailto:director@thediscoverytree.net).

**Requests made with less than 10 business days notice must be accompanied with documentation supporting the reason for the request.** Requests without documentation will be disapproved. Examples of acceptable documentation include but are not limited to: letters from medical professionals, legal professionals, family case workers, human service agencies, etc. Also included in this documentation should be verification that the employee made efforts to schedule the event outside of scheduled work hours, but that such accommodations were not possible, not advised, or not available. All such documents must include signature and contact information of the authorized individual who provides the document.

POINTS	DESCRIPTION
1 point	A lateness without supporting documentation.
1 point	A change of availability without supporting documentation.
1 point	A delayed notification.
2 points	An absence without supporting documentation. Points given for a partial absence shall be calculated as a percentage of a full absence based on the amount of the workday that is missed.
3 points	A sick/emergency absence with less than 12 hours notice, and without supporting documentation.
4 points	A sick/emergency absence with less than 2 hours notice, and without supporting documentation.
5 points	An absence, partial absence, lateness, or schedule change without supporting documentation, which occurs during the same time period as a time-off request which was denied.
POINTS	DESCRIPTION

5 points	An absence, partial absence, lateness, or schedule change without notification. Employees who miss work and fail to notify their supervisor at all may be considered to have abandoned their position, which may result in termination.
Provisional Employment, Suspension, or Termination	<b>Employees are subject to disciplinary action when total points accumulated reach: 3 points during any 30 day period, 4 points during any 60 day period, or 5 points during any 90 day period.</b>

Employees should only come to work if physically able to do so. When deciding whether to come to work, employees should use the same guidelines set forth in our Parent Handbook regarding children's health.

Please do not come to work if the following symptoms are present:

- Fever of 100 degrees or above (within the past 24 hours)
- Need for fever-reducing medication to maintain a normal body temperature
- Any pain, discomfort, or condition which interferes with ability to fulfill job description.
- Vomiting for any reason
- Diarrhea
- Persistent cough
- Excessive mucus coming from nasal passages or eyes
- Needs cold medicine to suppress sneezing, coughing, or runny nose
- Has an unexplained rash which has not been treated by a doctor
- Any other symptoms of communicable disease.

At the Director's discretion, an employee may be required to submit a written statement from a physician indicating status/condition of illness and/or ability to return to work or fulfill the job description.

**POLICY: OVERTIME**

**SECTION: 3.03**

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Employees will be notified on their Job Description and in their Letter of Appointment at the time of hire as to whether they are classified as “exempt” or “non-exempt” as determined by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The nature of the duties and responsibilities of some non-exempt employees may require overtime work from time to time. Overtime work should be considered an exceptional situation.

All overtime must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor prior to working the overtime hours. In cases when obtaining prior approval is not possible, such as situations involving late pick of children, the employee must inform their immediate supervisor of the situation as soon as possible following the overtime hours. Employees who do not seek prior approval for working overtime will not be paid for the time in question.

A supervisor may inform an employee of the need to work overtime with little or no notice. Employees who refuse overtime assignments may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

If a non-exempt employee is required to work overtime hours, the employee will receive monetary compensation for the additional hours worked as prescribed by wage and hour laws.

## **POLICY: EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

## **SECTION: 3.04**

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In any emergency the safety and security of the children and employees is of the utmost concern. Employees are expected to act in a professional and calm manner in the face of any emergency. Further, it is expected that all employees will attend to the safety and security of the children throughout an emergency.

Due to severe weather conditions or other emergency situations, there may be times when the facility may be closed. Emergency closing is at the discretion of the Owner.

### **Severe Weather Conditions:**

In the event of severe weather conditions, The Discovery Tree will generally follow the local and surrounding school districts in determining whether or not to close the center. Employees are instructed to listen to local radio and television stations for emergency closing information in these circumstances.

Employees are also instructed to contact the Director for further instructions by 6:30 am of the same day. This communication must be made “voice-to-voice”. Recorded messages are not considered sufficient effort by the employee to communicate with the Director. Failure to make this contact may result in loss of pay.

### **Other Emergencies:**

Other situations, including but not limited to, electrical power failure, lack of water, lack of heat or air conditioning, hazardous road conditions, or other situations which may endanger the safety or health of children and employees, may result in the facilities being closed at the discretion of the Owner. Employees will be advised of their obligations in these situations.

In the event of emergency closing in the middle of the day, employees will be instructed as to their responsibilities during the emergency. Employees will be required to remain at the agency as long as there are children present. This may require employees to remain after normal closing hours. Employees must be mindful that compliance with Licensing Regulations must be maintained even in emergency situations. Employees will be informed by the Director as to when they are able to go home.

### **Employee Pay during Emergency Closings**

If parents are required to pay tuition when The Discovery Tree is closed due to inclement weather or other emergency situation, all regular staff who are scheduled to work on the day in question will be paid for their regularly scheduled shift (planned overtime does not apply on these days). Similarly, staff who, before the emergency closing announcement, had already communicated with management regarding use of sick/vacation time or a modified schedule will be paid according to the agreed upon plan.

### **Alternate Safe Location**

Each Discovery Tree location has designated an alternate safe location. This location will be used to house the employees and children in cases where the physical site is uninhabitable. Such scenarios include but are not limited to: fire, flood, toxic spill, and/or fumes.

The Director will make the determination to evacuate the center and proceed to the alternate safe location and will advise the employees as such. Employees are required in all emergency situations to have the sign in/out sheet and/or attendance record and emergency contact information for their classroom when exiting the center.

**POLICY: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

**SECTION: 3.05**

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The Discovery Tree will offer benefits to employees based upon available funding. Each employee will be advised at the time of hire of the benefits for which they are eligible or may become eligible at the completion of the Provisional Period. Employees will be notified of additional benefits and their eligibility during the course of employment.

The Discovery Tree does not guarantee any benefits to any employee, and reserves the right to change, cancel and/or deny benefits in its sole discretion to maintain the fiscal soundness of the agency or as other agency needs arise.

**POLICY: PAID TIME OFF****SECTION: 3.06**

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Full-time employees (regularly scheduled to work 40 hours per week) accrue paid time off based on the anniversary date of full-time employment with the agency. Accrued leave time may be used for any approved absence in increments of four hours at a time.

Accrued leave time is carried from one year of employment to the next. However, management strongly encourages employees to use Paid Time Off during the same year it is granted. Management reserves the right to decide when accrued rollover days are excessive, and therefore may require a certain number of days to be used within a designated time frame.

For more details on approved absences and time-off requests, please see Section 4.0, Hours of Attendance/Work Schedules.

After 90 days of employment:	1 hour of PTO for each 40 hours worked Maximum balance per year is 6 days (48 hours)
After two years of employment:	2 hours PTO for each 40 hours worked Maximum balance per year is 12 days (96 hours)
After five years of employment:	3 hours PTO for each 40 hours worked Maximum balance per year is 18 days (144 hours)

Accrued leave time carries no monetary value upon termination.

**POLICY: RETIREMENT PLAN OPTION**

**SECTION: 3.07**

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Employees have the option to enroll in our retirement plan. This is a great way to plan for the future.

Those who choose to participate can defer money each pay period before it is taxed. The chosen amount can be set up to automatically be deducted from the employee's paycheck. Participants can either choose exactly how to invest the money, or have a registered investment advisor choose and monitor the investment.

More information is available in the enrollment guide available for you in the office at each location. If interested in enrolling, complete the enrollment form and submit it to your Director.



**POLICY: CARE OF EMPLOYEE'S CHILDREN**

**SECTION: 3.08**

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The Discovery Tree allows employees to enroll their children in the program. Employees who fail to pay tuition according to the Fee Agreement established upon enrollment will have their child care services terminated/suspended. In addition, employees will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination for failure to pay tuition according to the Fee Agreement established upon enrollment.

The Discovery Tree further reserves the right to disenroll an employee's child(ren) if the employee's performance is affected by having their child(ren) at the center. Employees must remember they are employed to perform a specific job description and must not allow themselves to be distracted by having their child(ren) enrolled in the program. The employee must not interfere with the supervision or authority of their child(ren)'s classroom teacher.

The Discovery Tree will not provide continued care to the children of Terminated Employees. Employees who resign under favorable circumstances and are eligible for consideration for re-hire must discuss the continued enrollment of their child with the Director.

Non-enrolled children of employees are prohibited from entering upon agency property except with the prior approval of the Owner or when the employee's family is invited to participate in agency activities.

**POLICY: CAREER/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT      SECTION: 3.09**

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Employees are required to participate in career/professional development opportunities including in-service training, employee meetings, and online distance learning sessions.

The Discovery Tree reimburses employees for training and workshop fees (training must be approved by the Director in advance, and certificate of completion must be submitted along with receipt).

**POLICY: WORK RELATED EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT SECTION: 3.10**

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Prior to purchasing items to be used in the center/classroom employees must get prior approval from a supervisor. If the employee does not secure prior approval for purchase of specific items, the employee will not be reimbursed and the items will be considered a donation to the program.

When requesting reimbursement for a purchase, employees are required to submit a detailed receipt within two business days following the purchase. Employees must attach a note with name, date, and reason for purchase. Failure to submit receipts in a timely manner may result in delay or denial of reimbursement.

**POLICY: WORK RELATED TRAVEL**

**SECTION: 3.11**

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Employees may be required to travel to and from alternate work sites to complete required training hours, for professional interaction and/or to complete work assignments. Should the employee not attend the training/conference/meeting or complete work assignments which are the purpose of travel, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Further, The Discovery Tree will seek repayment of any funds paid out in relation to such travel including but not limited to, transportation, meals, lodging, registration fees, and/or activities fees.

Employees will not be compensated for time spent commuting to and from work.

## **POLICY: HOLIDAYS**

## **SECTION: 3.12**

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The Discovery Tree will be closed in observation of the following holidays when the holiday falls on a day when the center is typically open:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Black Friday
- Christmas Day
- Christmas Eve Day

When a Holiday falls on a weekend, we do not close on a nearby weekday. "Floating Holidays" are not part of our benefits package.

Employees will be paid for their regularly scheduled hours for the day on which the center is closed for a holiday as "Holiday Pay", provided that the employee works their regularly scheduled hours the business day before and after the designated holiday. Employees who are not regularly scheduled to work on a holiday will not be paid for the holiday.

Hours paid as Holiday Pay are not considered hours worked and therefore are not counted when determining overtime pay for non-exempt employees.

**POLICY: BEREAVEMENT LEAVE****SECTION: 3.13**

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Employees must request Bereavement Leave as soon as possible in advance of the leave. When the death of a member of an employee's family, as listed below, necessitates her or his absence from work, up to three days with pay may be granted by the Director:

Husband	Mother	Grandmother
Wife	Father	Grandfather
Son	Brother	Grandson
Daughter	Sister	Granddaughter

When the death of a member of an employee's family listed below necessitates her or his absence from work, one day without pay may be granted by the Director:

Mother-in-Law	Brother-in-Law	Nephew
Father-in-Law	Sister-in-Law	Niece
Son-in-Law	Aunt	
Daughter-in-Law	Uncle	

If additional time is needed, the employee may be granted leave without pay at the discretion of the Director.

## **POLICY: FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

## **SECTION: 3.14**

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The following family and medical leave policy is designed to comply with the provisions of the federal Family and Medical Leave Act Of 1993 (FMLA).

Employees who have been employed for at least 1 year and for at least 1,250 hours during the preceding 12-month period are eligible for family and medical leave. For employees not eligible for family and medical leave, The Discovery Tree will review business considerations and the individual circumstances involved.

Upon return from Family Medical Leave employees will return to the same or to an equivalent position.

Employees designated as "highly compensated employees" (defined as the top 10% wage earners of the agency) are eligible for Family Medical Leave but are not eligible to return to the same or equivalent position at the expiration of FLMA leave.

Family or medical leave will be unpaid leave. Employees must use all of her or his accrued paid sick and vacation leave in concert with Family or Medical Leave. The remainder of the leave will then consist of unpaid leave.

### **REASONS FOR LEAVE:**

All employees who meet the applicable time of service requirements may be granted a total of 12 weeks of unpaid family leave and paid sick and vacation leave combined (during any 12-month period) for the following reasons:

- (1) The birth of the employee's child and in order to care for the child
- (2) The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care
- (3) To care for a spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition
- (4) A serious health condition that renders the employee incapable of performing the functions of her/his job.

The entitlement to leave for a child's birth or for placement of a child for adoption or foster care will expire 12 months from the date of the birth or placement.

### **APPLICATION FOR LEAVE**

In all cases, an employee requesting leave must complete an Application for Family and Medical Leave and return it to the Director. The completed application must state the reasons for the leave, the duration of the leave, and the starting and ending dates of the leave.

## NOTICE OF LEAVE

An employee intending to take family or medical leave because of an expected birth or placement, or because of a planned medical treatment, must submit an application for leave at least 30 days before the leave is to begin. If leave is to begin within 30 days, an employee must give notice to the Director as soon as the necessity for the leave arises.

## MEDICAL CERTIFICATION OF LEAVE

An application for leave based on the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's spouse, child, or parent must be accompanied by a "Medical Certification Statement" completed by the applicable health care provider. The certification must state the date on which the health condition commenced, the probable duration of the condition, and the appropriate medical facts regarding the condition.

If the employee is needed to care for a spouse, child, or parent, the certification must so state along with an estimate of the amount of time the employee will be needed. If the employee has a serious health condition, the certification must state that the employee cannot perform the functions of her or his job.

## BENEFITS COVERAGE DURING LEAVE

During a period of family or medical leave, an employee will be retained on the agency health plan (if applicable) under the same conditions that applied before the leave commenced. An employee is not entitled to the accrual of any seniority or employment benefits that would have accrued if not for the taking of leave. An employee who takes family or medical leave will not lose any seniority or employment benefits that had accrued before the date leave began.

## RESTORATION TO EMPLOYMENT

An employee eligible for family and medical leave (with the exception of those employees designated as "highly compensated employees") will be restored to her or his old position or to a position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment. The Discovery Tree cannot guarantee that an employee will be returned to her or his original job. A determination as to whether a position is an "equivalent position" will be made by the Director.

## RETURN FROM LEAVE

An employee must complete a "Notice of Intention to Return from Family or Medical Leave" before she or he can be returned to active status. If an employee wishes to return to work prior to the expiration of a family or medical leave of absence, the employee must notify the Director at least 5 working days prior to the employee's return.

## FAILURE TO RETURN FROM LEAVE



The failure of an employee to return to work upon the expiration of a family or medical leave of absence will subject the employee to immediate termination unless an extension is granted. An employee, who requests an extension of family leave or medical leave due to the condition, recurrence, or onset of her or his own serious health condition, or of the serious health condition of the employee's spouse, child, or parent, must submit a request for an extension, in writing, to the Director. This written request must be made as soon as the employee realizes that she or he will not be able to return at the expiration of the leave period.

**POLICY: JURY AND WITNESS DUTY**

**SECTION: 3.15**

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**Jury Duty:**

When a leave of absence must be taken for jury duty, The Discovery Tree will recognize this as approved leave without pay for the period required.

Proof of jury duty must be submitted to the Director by the end of the pay period in which the employee serves.

Employees must notify their immediate supervisor as soon as possible after they receive notice they are called for Jury Duty. A copy of the official request to serve should be provided to the Director upon notification.

**Witness Duty:**

When a leave of absence must be taken to answer a subpoena in court, The Discovery Tree will recognize this as approved leave without pay. Proof of the subpoena must be submitted to the Director as soon as possible following service upon the employee.

**POLICY: MILITARY SERVICE LEAVE**

**SECTION: 3.16**

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In accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Right Act (USERRA), The Discovery Tree will not discriminate against any person in any employment action based upon military service, application for military service and/or other military obligation.

Employees requiring leave under this policy must notify the Director immediately upon receiving military orders that a Military Service Leave will be needed.

Employees returning from Military Service Leave must report for duty within five days of discharge.

Employee returning from Military Service Leave will be returned to their former or comparable position. The returning employees status, pay and benefits will be the same upon return as they would have been had the employee not been called to active duty.

If qualifications for the former position have changed during the Military Service Leave, The Discovery Tree will make a reasonable attempt at re-training the returning employee so they may become qualified for the position.

Under Military Service Leave, an employee may at the employees discretion, use any/all available paid leave time in conjunction with the Military Service Leave.

If an employee is dishonorably discharged from military service they are no longer protected under USERRA and any and all rights guaranteed there under are forfeited.

**POLICY: OTHER LEAVES OF ABSENCES**

**SECTION: 3.17**

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Absences not covered by these policies shall be referred to the Director.

**POLICY: RESIGNATION**

**SECTION: 3.18**

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Employees are required to give ten business days notice, in writing, of the intent to terminate employment. Upon resignation, employees forfeit accrued vacation days. As a professional courtesy to co-workers and clients, employees are expected to be present during the notice period, unless absence is due to illness or injury (written verification from a medical professional is required). Employees are required to return all agency property in their possession.

Employees who fail to meet the above requirements will be considered ineligible for re-hire.

**POLICY: FORMER EMPLOYEES****SECTION: 3.19**

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Former employees are not permitted on the property without prior permission from the Director. Former employees who wish to visit, volunteer and/or attend an agency function must contact the Director in writing, via email or via telephone to ask permission. Granting permission is in the sole discretion of the Director and will be based upon the best interest of the agency.

Current employees may not discuss any matters related to The Discovery Tree with a former employee. Any inquiries made by a former employee to a current employee should be directed to the Director.

Former employees should also be aware that professional codes of conduct and confidentiality still apply even after employment is terminated. The Discovery Tree will seek to hold former employees accountable for any violation of client and or staff's rights of privacy. Further, the organization will pursue all legal remedies available for actions which slander, defame and or impugn the business reputation of the agency.

Former employees will only be eligible for re-hire if they meet the following criteria:

1. Gave appropriate notice prior to leaving employment (this may be waived in cases of emergency medical circumstances that make giving notice impossible)
2. Returned all agency property prior to leaving employment
3. Constructively participated in an Exit Interview prior to leaving employment
4. Presented no issues throughout separation of employment, i.e....maintained professional codes of conduct, maintained confidentiality according to agency's confidentiality policy.

## **POLICY: CONFIDENTIALITY**

## **SECTION: 4.01**

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This Confidentiality Policy has been adopted to ensure confidentiality and protection of individual rights of privacy for children, families, and employees of The Discovery Tree. The individual dignity of children, families, and employees shall be respected and protected at all times in accordance with all applicable laws.

Information about children, families, or employees must not be divulged to anyone other than persons who are authorized to receive such information. This policy extends to both internal and external disclosure of information.

An employee's responsibility to maintain confidentiality regarding information learned about, children, their parents/guardians, families and other employees extends 24 hours per day, 7 days per week regardless of how or where the information was attained. Employees must be diligent in their efforts to maintain confidentiality, and should be aware that there are job related consequences for violations of confidentiality and rights of privacy, and that there is also the potential for civil liability against the individual employee and the agency.

### **Confidentiality of Children's and Families' Information:**

- a. All children's records must be placed in a secure file.
- b. Access to children's records is limited to employees with a "need to know".
- c. Children's records must not be removed from the center.
- d. Children's records must never be left out on desks, tables, etc. where other people may have access to them.
- e. Children's or families' private information must never be discussed among employees except on the "need to know" basis. Employees must be particularly aware of their surroundings when discussing this information. Special caution must be taken to be sure other children, families, or employees do not overhear information, that is confidential.
- f. Discussion of children's or families' information with volunteers, other families, friends, or community members is prohibited.
- g. Information and documents considered confidential include, but are not limited to medical records, educational records, special needs records, family records, financial records, and any other private information about the children or their families.
- h. All requests for release of information shall be directed to The Director.
- i. Information will only be released to persons outside of The Discovery Tree with the express written consent of the child's parent or legal guardian.

### **Confidentiality of Employee's Information**

- a. All employee records must be locked in a secure file.
- b. Access to an employee's records is limited to appropriate supervisory employees.
- c. An Employee's records must not be removed from the center.
- d. An Employee's records must never be left out on desks, tables, etc. where other people may have access to them.
- e. An Employee's private information must never be discussed among employees except on a "need to know" basis. Employees must be particularly aware of their surroundings

when discussing this information. Special caution must be taken to be sure other children, families, or employees do not overhear information, that is confidential.

- f. Discussion of an employee's information with volunteers, families, friends, or community members is prohibited.
- g. Information and documents, which are considered to be confidential include, but are not limited to medical records, educational records, employment records, financial or pay records, and any other private information about the employee.
- h. All requests for release of information to persons outside of The Discovery Tree shall be directed in writing to The Director.
- i. Information will only be released to persons outside The Discovery Tree with the express written consent of the employee.

### **Confidentiality Related to Proprietary Information**

The Discovery Tree has developed unique techniques, curriculum, and tools for evaluation, which make our program more competitive in the industry and are not to be revealed to sources outside of the company. Anything which the company designs, produces, implements, and markets is treated as proprietary information, also called trade secrets. This includes, but shall not be limited to, the agency's client list, employee list, curriculum, philosophy, mission statement, personnel policies, and parent handbook.

No employee should discuss proprietary information with other employees in any public place where it is possible they could be overheard. Employees must understand that it is not only their duty to protect the organization's proprietary information during their term of employment, but the legal obligation continues even after separation from employment. Employees are required to return any and all documentation that contains proprietary information at the time of separation. The Discovery Tree is ready and willing to enforce this obligation through all available legal remedies, as necessary.

### **Violation of Confidentiality Policy**

Any employee/volunteer who violates the Confidentiality Policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. In addition to job related consequences, the employee/volunteer may face possible civil liability for their actions.

## **POLICY: CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

## **SECTION: 4.02**

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A conflict of interest is defined as an activity or interest which is inconsistent with or opposed to the legitimate best interest of The Discovery Tree. Employees are required to avoid personal transactions or situations in which their personal interest will or will appear to conflict with those of the organization. For the purpose of this policy a member of an immediate family shall include any of the following persons:

Husband	Mother-in-Law	Niece
Wife	Father-in-Law	Nephew
Mother	Son-in-Law	Brother-in-Law
Father	Daughter-in-Law	Sister-in-Law
Sister	Step-Child	Grandmother
Brother	Step-Parent	Grandfather
Daughter	Aunt	Granddaughter
Son	Uncle	Grandson
Any person residing in the employee's immediate household		

A conflict of interest occurs whenever an employee permits the prospect of direct or indirect personal gain to influence her or his judgment or action when acting on behalf of The Discovery Tree. The following examples are representative but not inclusive of potential conflicts of interest:

- a. No employee shall do business with a member of her or his immediate family on behalf of The Discovery Tree, unless the circumstances of the proposed relationship have been clearly reviewed by the Director and has been deemed to have no potential or inherent conflict of interest qualities.
- b. All employees must deal with suppliers, contractors, customers, and all other persons doing business with The Discovery Tree in the best interest of The Discovery Tree without favor or preference based on personal consideration.
- c. No employee shall misuse privileged information or reveal confidential data to outsiders for the purpose of personal gain or for any reason other than agency purposes.
- d. No employee shall deal with The Discovery Tree or with the organization's clients or suppliers as a representative of another firm or for her or his own account.
- e. No employee shall participate in the selection, award or administration of a contract where to her or his knowledge she or he or her or his immediate family has a financial interest.



- f. No employee shall solicit, accept or offer gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from other employees or persons receiving benefits or services or from contractors or potential contractors for personal gain or inherent conflict of interest.

## **POLICY: SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE**

**SECTION: 4.03**

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All facilities, grounds, and vehicles of the The Discovery Tree are **Smoke-Free Environments**. Smoking is prohibited in any of these areas.

In addition, employees are prohibited from becoming nuisances to neighbors by loitering on their property while smoking.

## **POLICY: SUBSTANCE ABUSE CONTROL**

**SECTION: 4.04**

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The Discovery Tree shall take necessary measures to assure that the use of alcohol or unauthorized substances by employees does not endanger the health, safety, and security of our children, employees, volunteers, and the entire operation. The following are absolutely prohibited:

- The unlawful distribution, dispensation, possession, concealment, transportation, sale or use of unauthorized substances on agency premises or while conducting program business off site.
- The presence of an unauthorized substance(s) in an employee's system while on agency premises, vehicles, or while conducting agency business off premises.
- Unauthorized substances include illegal drugs, unauthorized drugs and drug paraphernalia.
- The abuse or misuse of alcohol, prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs which have been legally obtained.

## **EMPLOYEE TESTING**

If there is a reasonable suspicion of substance abuse or misuse, the Discovery Tree will require testing of the employee. Confirmed positive tests of urine, blood or expired air, or refusal to submit to testing or refusal of permission to release substance testing information to appropriate management, will be basis for termination of employment. Substance testing is not a part of The Discovery Tree's ongoing evaluation program. Substance testing may be required (1) where reasonable suspicion exists to warrant such testing; or (2) where necessary to comply with federal, state, or local regulations.

Refusal to comply with a request for testing is considered a violation of this policy and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **NOTIFICATION OF AN INDICTMENT OR COMPLAINT**

Employees are required to notify the Director of any criminal drug statute indictment no later than 24 hours after such an indictment.

## **POLICY: PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

## **SECTION: 4.05**

\*\*\*\*\*

All employees are expected to present a neat and clean appearance and to dress appropriately for their position and duties. Employee's dress should reflect the professional nature of their position as well as be functional within the expectations and responsibilities of their job. All articles of clothing must be of adequate size (not tight-fitting) and should be worn in a manner that covers the employee's midriff, chest, and back while performing all required job duties. Further, all clothing must be clean and wrinkle-free.

Program staff who work directly with the children are required to wear a Discovery Tree T-shirt, pants or shorts, and closed-toe comfortable shoes or sneakers (no heel). Layers of clothing should be worn under the uniform shirt so that it remains visible.

Discovery Tree shirts cost \$10 each and employees are responsible for purchasing them. At the time of hire, each employee receives three shirts, which may either be paid for immediately or the employee may request for the amount to be deducted from the next paycheck. Additional shirts can be purchased in the same ways as needed. Upon the Director's discretion, employees may be required to replace shirts that are damaged or faded.

Employees should refrain from wearing perfumes and other fragrances as other employees and/or children may be allergic to them or may find them offensive.

Tattoos must not be visible. Piercings (on areas of the body other than the earlobe) must be removed or covered.

Employees working directly with children should not wear jewelry that presents a safety risk to the employee as well as to the children.

Please remember that we should always be in uniform. On party days or special occasion days, it is acceptable to add accessories. Some examples would be hats, jewelry, scarves. Another good example would be wearing a robe, slippers, or a night cap on pajama day.

The Discovery Tree is not responsible for damage to or loss of an employee's articles of clothing, jewelry and/or accessories.

## **POLICY: EMPLOYEE'S PERSONAL ITEMS**

## **SECTION: 4.06**

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The Discovery Tree is not responsible for an employee's personal items brought to the facility or to any work-related field trip or training session.

Employees are discouraged from bringing personal items to the workplace. Work space is provided for the employee to successfully complete the requirements of her or his position. It is not intended to be treated as a storage or display area for an employee's personal possessions.

According to PA Licensing Requirements, all prescription and/or over the counter medication must be kept in the agency's designated medication location out of reach of children. Employees are strictly prohibited from carrying any prescription and/or over the counter medication on their person, in their purse or any work bag and/or keeping prescription and/or over the counter medication in their classrooms. Employees requiring medication during the work day must secure their medication in the designated medication location. The only exception would be for rescue inhalers. Employees must inform the Director that they are carrying a rescue inhaler throughout the facility. If any other medical condition requires an employee to keep emergency medication on their person at all times, the employee **MUST** present the Director with medical certification detailing the need for medication to be immediately available. The Director will evaluate these circumstances on a case by case basis, and will speak with the employee and their certified health care provider to see if a reasonable accommodation can be reached so as not to violate the above referenced licensing regulation while maintaining the employee's and children's health and safety.

### **INSPECTION AND SEARCHES**

The Discovery Tree has the right to require employees, while on duty or on agency premises including parking lots, to agree to inspections of personal property, vehicles, as well as the offices, desks, and file cabinets assigned to them. If an employee withholds consent to such an inspection, the employee will be immediately terminated.

The Discovery Tree reserves the right to remove an employee's personal possession(s), which it deems inappropriate for the workplace.

An employee who is terminated will not be given an opportunity to "clean out her or his desk." Any personal property which may be in the work space will be packed and shipped to the employee at the employee's expense.

**POLICY: NON-SOLICITATION**

**SECTION: 4.07**

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Employees of The Discovery Tree are strictly prohibited from solicitation of any kind while on agency property.

**POLICY: OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

**SECTION: 4.08**

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Employees of The Discovery Tree are prohibited from accepting employment from any client of the organization (see the Director for exceptions to this policy).

**POLICY: POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

**SECTION: 4.09**

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During hours of employment, or while on agency property, or with the use of agency funds, employees of The Discovery Tree are prohibited from the following:

- ◆ Participation in any partisan or non-partisan political activity or any other political activity associated with a candidate, or contending faction or group, for an election for public or party office.
- ◆ Participation in any activity to provide voters or prospective voters with transportation to the polls or similar assistance in connection with any such election.
- ◆ Participation in any voter registration activity or advocacy/political action.

**POLICY: ACCIDENTS / INJURIES**

**SECTION: 4.10**

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In order to protect your claim for compensation and/or minimize The Discovery Tree and its employees' liability, all injuries or accidents occurring during employment, no matter how minor, must be reported to the Director immediately.

All employees are covered by Workers Compensation Insurance and must seek treatment for accidents and injuries as required by the plan. Employees will be required to complete and submit an incident report within 24 hours of the injury.

Employees who are placed on Workers Compensation will be notified in writing of the status of the position, status of health insurance benefits, and their responsibilities while on Workers Compensation.

Accidents or injuries involving children must be reported immediately to a Supervisor. Employees will be required to complete accident/injury reports for these incidents. Employees will be advised to call the child's parents to apprise them of the incident/accident as necessary. A parent is required to sign the accident/injury report within 24 hours following the incident/accident. A copy of the signed accident/injury report will be given to the child's parent and a copy should be given to the Director. These documents will become a part of the child's record.

Accidents involving parents or visitors must be reported immediately to a Supervisor. Employees will be required to complete accident/injury reports for these incidents. These documents will become part of the agency's record.

**POLICY: WORKPLACE SAFETY****SECTION: 4.11**

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The Discovery Tree strives to provide a safe workplace for all employees. Employees will be held to the highest standards regarding following and enforcing Safety Policies and Procedures. Employees are expected to set the best possible example and to be proactive regarding safety issues.

Employees must be keenly aware of their environment and persons who have entered any facility. Anyone who is not recognized should be questioned regarding the nature of her or his visit. Strangers should be escorted to the door. If you are uncertain or feel unsafe seek the assistance of a supervisor or a co-worker. **NEVER LEAVE THE CHILDREN UNATTENDED WITH A VISITOR/STRANGER.**

Former employees are not permitted on the property without prior permission. If a former employee returns to the property, notify a supervisor immediately. Former employees will be asked to leave the premises.

Local police will be called, if necessary, to deal with safety issues.

All employees must be familiar with and adhere to the rules for releasing children contained in the Parent Handbook.

Any unusual incidents should be documented and brought to the attention of your supervisor immediately.



**POLICY: UNIVERSAL/STANDARD PRECAUTIONS****SECTION: 4.12**

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Employees are required to use Universal/Standard Precautions when handling blood and other potentially infectious materials (OPIM), or when it is reasonably anticipated that contact with blood or OPIM will occur. Other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) include any bodily fluids which visibly contain blood, semen, and vaginal secretions.

Universal/Standard Precaution Procedures involve the use of protective barriers (latex or vinyl gloves and CPR guard) when it is reasonably anticipated that an employee may have contact with blood or other potentially infected materials (OPIM). Examples of when Universal/Standard Precautions should be used include but are not limited to: cleaning up blood, OPIM or unknown substances or spills, cleaning broken glass and/or other sharps, giving first aide to another person, changing a diaper or assisting in toileting routines and when using a needle to administer medication or test blood sugar.

**Employees who fail to use Universal/Standard Precautions EVERY TIME it is warranted will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.**

The following preventive measures are to be used to reduce the spread of all infectious and contagious diseases.

1. Wash hands regularly. Hand washing is the best way to protect both child and caregiver. Use the recommended hand washing technique:
  - ◆ Use antibacterial liquid soap and scrub hands for 1 minute.
  - ◆ Scrub tops of hands, palms, between fingers and under nails.
  - ◆ Rinse under water with hands pointed down.
  - ◆ Dry hands with paper towels.
  - ◆ Turn off the water faucet with a towel before disposing of it.
2. Wear disposable vinyl gloves while cleaning up blood, bloody saliva, urine, feces, or vomit, especially if there is a skin rash or open cut on your hands. If skin contact is made with these substances, wash the affected areas with soap under running water and immediately report the Exposure Incident to the Director.
3. Follow the Diaper Changing Procedure each and every time a child's diaper is changed.
4. Change gloves after contact with each child. Throw away disposable gloves after each use. Wash hands after wearing the gloves.
5. Place soiled diapers immediately into a hands-free, lined diaper pail.
6. Supervise toilet trained/training children to ensure that they wash their hands well after using the rest room.

7. Wear disposable gloves when assisting a toilet trained/training child during toileting routines.
8. Clean up blood, OPIM and unknown spills on surfaces with bleach solution (one tablespoon of bleach per quart of water). The bleach solution should be fresh and used on the day it is made. Isopropyl alcohol, Lysol disinfectant, and hydrogen peroxide can also be used.
9. Use CPR guards to minimize direct contact during mouth-to-mouth resuscitation in an emergency.

## **POLICY: ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

## **SECTION: 4.13**

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All electronic and telephonic communication systems and all communication and information transmitted by, received from, or stored in these systems are the property of The Discovery Tree and as such are to be used for job-related purposes. The use of any software and business equipment (including, but not limited to facsimiles, telecopiers, computers, and copy machines) for private purposes is strictly forbidden.

Individuals are not permitted to use a code, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication unless authorized to do so or unless they have received prior clearance from an authorized company representative. All pass codes are the property of The Discovery Tree. No person may use a pass code that has not been issued to that person or that is unknown to our company. Passwords, user names and PINs should be written down and submitted to the Director. Those who violate this policy may be disciplined, up to and including immediate termination.

To ensure that the use of electronic communication systems and business equipment is consistent with our company's legitimate business interests, authorized representatives of our company may monitor the use of such equipment from time to time.

### **Phone**

Employees are not permitted to send or receive personal telephone calls or personal text messages during work hours unless authorized to do so by the Director, or in the case of an emergency.

Every time you make or receive a business telephone call, you are representing not only yourself, as a professional, but The Discovery Tree. Good telephone manners are required and include the following:

- ◆ Answer promptly and courteously.
- ◆ Identify yourself and your position.
- ◆ Keep your conversation business-like and brief, avoiding prolonged chats.
- ◆ Transfer incoming calls to the appropriate party courteously and quickly.
- ◆ Take messages accurately and relay them to the person as soon as possible.
- ◆ Answer questions thoroughly to ensure that the caller has received the information requested.
- ◆ Close your conversation with a pleasant "Good-bye."

### **E-Mail**

When communicating with fellow employees, professional colleagues, parents, vendors, and/or independent contractors, employees are required to be professional, courteous and respectful at all times. E-mail messages must be composed using proper grammar, complete sentences, appropriate punctuation and must avoid the use of slang. E-mail correspondence should be dated

and signed with the employee's full name, position and agency name. All correspondence should be archived on the computer and/or printed for inclusion in the appropriate agency file.

Our company assumes no responsibility for the content of emails or for maintaining their privacy, and our company's people have no expectation that such privacy should be maintained. Our company reserves the right to review, audit, interpret, access, and disclose any messages created, received, or sent over the email system for any purpose. Confidentiality of e-communications should not be assumed.

No e-mail messages should be created, sent, or forwarded which may be deemed to be intimidating, hostile, offensive in nature, or which is discriminatory on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, handicap, or military status, or any other status protected by law. Nor should any obscene, profane, abusive, or offensive language be transmitted or displayed.

Any person who violates this policy or uses the email system for improper purposes, as determined in management's sole complete discretion, may be disciplined, up to and including termination.

### **Internet**

As with e-mail, our company provides internet access solely to facilitate the conduct of our company's business. Access to the internet may be limited to our company's sole discretion. People are expected to use the internet at all times in a manner that benefits our company and not for personal use. People should have no expectation of privacy in their use of the internet, and our company may monitor a person's use to ensure compliance with this policy. Use of the internet in a manner which violates this policy as determined by management may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Examples of conduct which is specifically forbidden include, but are not limited to:

Using the internet for personal gain or for commercial activity unrelated to our company.

Sending, reviewing, or viewing material or information that is threatening, intimidating, hostile, harassing, offensive, or discriminatory on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, handicap, or military status or any other status protected by law. In addition, the receipt of such material and/or showing such materials to co-workers is strictly prohibited.

Using the internet for any activities not specified here that are in violation of federal, state, or local laws.

### **Social Media, Blogs, and Other Internet Publications**

The following applies to use of all media sites, networks, tools and destinations (such as personal blogs, message boards, public forums, and sites and applications such as Facebook and

LinkedIn). These are referred to in this policy as “Social Networking Sites.” This policy applies to all company personnel at all times, whether on or off duty, as well as to activity conducted on non-company computers and systems.

If you are uncertain about how your use of Social Networking Sites may be affected by this policy, or if you have any questions about the application of this policy, please consult with the Director for guidance. Violation of this policy and the guidelines herein may lead to discipline, up to and including termination.

The following guidelines apply to employees’ use of all Social Networking and Internet Sites:

- All personnel should use good judgment and act prudently when using Social Networking Sites.
- Company personnel are counseled against using the company’s name when interacting on Social Networking Sites, other than when talking about their employment or partnership, including title and duration, with the company. Company and /or client names, logos and trademarks or any reference to your dealings with clients may never be used on any Social Networking Sites without specific written permission of the company or as expressly provided below.
- No statement, comment, or publication may be posted that in any manner appears to be made on behalf of or in connection with the company without obtaining express written permission of the company prior to such publication.
- You may never post to the internet any information that you have learned via your employment at the company. This also applies to former employees.
- Employees should use caution when publishing in any medium commentary regarding issues related to the interests of the company and/or its clients, in order to ensure they make no published statements that are, or appear to be, in conflict with or are adverse to the interests of the company or its clients.
- All publications by company personnel on Social Networking Sites are subject to and must comply with your duty to preserve client confidences and must also comply with the company’s policies on confidentiality and non disclosure of confidential, proprietary and/or client/data information. If you have questions about confidentiality policies, please contact the Director for guidance.
- The company’s policy against harassment applies with respect to the use of Social Networking Sites by company personnel.
- If you become aware of any misuse of the company’s name or property, any misuse of a company client’s name, or any breach of confidence relating to company information or the company’s clients or contacts, please contact the director in the first instance.

## **POLICY: TEAM COMMUNICATION**

## **SECTION: 4.14**

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Employees are required to communicate in a way that contributes to a cooperative work environment. We must set an example for the children with our willingness to listen, to engage in helpful conversation with one another, and to seek full resolve to conflict.

If you are offended or negatively affected by the words/actions of a coworker, you are required to address the matter with that coworker privately, calmly and thoroughly.

It is unprofessional and unacceptable to ignore the matter entirely. It is also unprofessional and unacceptable to discuss the matter with another employee, a former employee, or anyone outside the organization. Even though these choices may seem harmless at the time, they inevitably affect company morale and therefore, negatively affect the children.

If, after taking the above steps, you believe the offending coworker has not responded to your reasonable requests, speak with the Director to schedule a meeting. The Director will meet with both parties and function as a neutral mediator. Both parties will be heard and the Director will produce an action plan for change. If you believe that you are being treated unfairly by management, submit a written statement to the attention of owners, Tom and Carrie Zwiercan (see Section 9.0 (b) – Grievance Resolution).

The following will not be tolerated:

- gossip (rumor or talk that reveals personal, sensational, or private facts about others)
- destructive sarcasm
- venting frustration
- giving the “cold shoulder” or “silent treatment”
- heavy sighing, eye-rolling, poor eye contact or other physical cues that express disapproval or frustration
- negative/destructive comments or complaints about coworkers or company decisions

If you find that you are handling a situation inappropriately or are confused about the above expectations, inform the Director to ask for resources to assist you in your training goals.

## **POLICY: GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION**

## **SECTION: 4.15**

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An employee who is discontent with their work environment and/or decision(s) made by management shall take the following steps to resolve the grievance:

1. Discuss the situation verbally with the Director. If a satisfactory solution is not reached, submit to the Director a written description of the grievance along with a requested remedy, action plan, and/or policy change.  
If you do not feel comfortable approaching your Director, submit your written grievance to the Owner, Carrie Zwiercan.
2. A written response by the Director (or owner) shall be given to the employee within five working days of the receipt of the written grievance.
3. If a satisfactory solution is still not reached, the employee may request in writing a formal meeting with the Owner and Director.
4. A second written response shall be given to the employee within five working days of the meeting.
5. If the employee is still discontent in the work environment after management has made every effort to satisfy the grievance, it is the recommendation of the company that the employee resign in search of a more suitable work environment.

**POLICY: PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL****SECTION: 5.01**

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The Performance Appraisal should be a positive growth experience for the employee and supervisor. Performance Appraisals will be used to evaluate the entire period of employment since the employee's last appraisal. Performance Appraisals will be used as a foundation to establish goals for the employee. The Director will also present to employees the goals of the agency and their role in the successful attainment of these goals. Employees will be informed of the agency's progress and any changes in the agency goals.

Performance Appraisals will be based upon job performance. Job descriptions will be utilized as the basis for the appraisal. The Director will also solicit input from other employees who work closely with the employee being appraised.

Performance Appraisals will be conducted at least annually for each employee. Employees must acknowledge receipt of the Performance Appraisal by signing that they have received a copy. Performance Appraisals will be placed in the employee's personnel record.



**POLICY: LICENSING REQUIREMENTS**

**SECTION: 5.02**

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In Pennsylvania, a facility that is licensed to provide child care is awarded a “Certificate of Compliance” from the Department of Human Services. Our regulatory department within the Department of Human Services is the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL).

We are held accountable to the provider requirements set forth by OCDEL, which may change on occasion. A copy of the provider requirements is available is posted on the wall at each location and in paper form in the policy binder in each classroom. Any questions or concerns about compliance to the provider requirements should be brought to the attention of the Director immediately.

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*The Discovery Tree* willingly participates in the Keystone STARS Program and strives to reach and maintain STAR 4 Quality at all locations.

**Keystone STARS – *Improving the quality through:***

Standards  
Training/Professional Development  
Assistance,  
Resources and  
Support

**Keystone STARS** is Pennsylvania’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). A QRIS is a continuous quality improvement systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs. Keystone STARS is a program of Pennsylvania’s Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL).

**Guiding Principles**

Keystone STARS is a responsive system to improve, support, and recognize the continuous quality improvement efforts of early learning programs in Pennsylvania. The system is guided by three core principles:

- A whole child approach to education is essential to meeting the holistic and individual needs of each and every child and family.
- Knowledgeable and responsive early care and education professionals are essential to the development of children and the support of families.
- Building and sustaining ongoing positive relationships among children, families, early care and education professionals and community stakeholders is essential for the growth and development of every child.

Inclusion, diversity, equity and respect are foundational values embedded in these principles.

**Keystone STARS has four primary goals:**

- To improve the quality of early care and education;
- To support early care and education providers in meeting their quality improvement goals;
- To recognize programs for continuous quality improvement and meeting higher quality standards; and

- To provide families a way to choose a quality early care and education program.

OCDEL's Keystone STARS Program supports all early care and education programs to improve program quality. We encourage programs to think about the Keystone STARS Performance Standards as a tool to support continuous quality improvement (CQI) that impacts services to the children and families in your care.

More information about the Keystone STARS Program can be found online at [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org).

**POLICY: PARENT HANDBOOK**

**SECTION: 5.04**

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When parents choose our program for their children, they are presented with the description of services in the form of a Parent Handbook, which is revised on a regular basis. Employee job descriptions include the deliver the services described accordingly.

Copies of the Parent Handbook are available in each classroom in the policies binder and also online on our website. Questions about the expectations outlined in the Parent Handbook should be brought to the attention of the Director.

## **POLICY: CLIENT RELATIONS**

## **SECTION: 5.05**

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Clients are our organization's most valuable asset. Every employee represents The Discovery Tree to our clients and to the public. The manner in which we perform our jobs presents an image of our entire organization to our clients and to the community. Clients judge all of us by how they are treated by each and every employee. Nothing is more important than being respectful, courteous, friendly, helpful, and prompt in the attention given to clients.

Our personal contact with the public, our manners on the telephone and the communications we send to clients are a reflection not only of ourselves, but also of the professionalism of The Discovery Tree. Positive client relations not only enhance the public's perception or image of our organization, but also pay off in increased enrollment.

As a requirement of your employment it is expected that all employees will interact respectfully, courteously, and promptly with our clients.

### **PARENT COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE**

#### **Greet each parent at both drop-off and pick-up time.**

- Maintain an orderly cubby and mailbox area and have a pen available for sign-in and sign-out.
- Make every effort not to keep parents waiting outside in the cold.
- Smile, make eye contact, say hello and, whenever possible, stand near the parent.
- Be still for a few moments, in order to be available for questions and comments.
- If you're on the phone, hang up. If you're talking to a coworker, continue the conversation another time. If it's an urgent phone conversation (regarding Discovery Tree business), say hold on, greet the parent, explain that you'll be available to talk in a moment if they have questions, then end the phone conversation and return to the parent as soon as possible.

#### **At pick-up time...**

- If a parent is having trouble finding the child's belongings, help him/her locate the correct cubby or mailbox.
- Say something factual, specific, and positive about the child's day. Examples...  
"Mary was pretending she was a gardener with her friend Andrew."  
"Jacob really liked dancing to music today."
- Be frank, clear, and timely about behavior issues. Examples...  
"You'll see a note on Jack's daily report. He pinched his friend while playing leggos. We talked about it with him and wanted to you to know so you can also talk with him at home."

**Very important stuff to remember....**

- Refer parent questions to the Lead Teacher or Director/Assistant Director.
- If a parent expresses a concern or suggestion, let them know you will let the Lead Teacher or Director know. Write it down and pass it along in a confidential manner.
- If parent is upset and insists on your attention, show your sincere interest and explain that someone will contact him or her to make sure their concern is fully addressed. Explain that their feedback is very important and that you have to supervise the children. Inform a supervisor immediately. An angry parent should be contacted by the Director as soon as possible, even if it's after closing time.
- Use daily reports and touch reports – they are a means of documentation for future reference.
- Address behavior issues promptly – the same day. If you did not inform a parent about a past event in a timely manner, do not bring it up in connection with a current event.
- Avoid offering your opinions, advice, or assumptions about the child or about the child's life at home. Give the parent the facts and trust that it will be handled appropriately. If it becomes evident that a family needs guidance, the Lead Teacher or Director will speak with the parents after careful consideration and discussion with team members.
- There is nothing wrong with telling a parent that someone will get back to them. It's better to investigate and respond professionally at another time than to pass along misinformation.
- As our licensing representative stated, "A parent is your friend until a parent is not your friend." If a mom or dad believes their child has been treated poorly, by anyone, we are quickly reminded that this is a business relationship. We are being paid to keep people's children physically and emotionally safe. Treat every interaction with this in mind.

## **POLICY: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY/HOME LANGUAGE SECTION: 5.06**

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It is our responsibility to ensure that all clients have meaningful and equal access to services. This responsibility encompasses the most basic of human needs, the need for communication and understanding.

The Discovery Tree staff will make every effort to ensure communication and understanding for those clients or their immediate families who are identified as having limited English Proficiency.

Once a client or their family has been identified as needing translating or interpretive services, The Discovery Tree staff will communicate through a third party who is bilingual in English and the family's native language. If an effective third party is not employed by The Discovery Tree or available within the child's family, an outside agency will be contacted accordingly.

The Bloomz app, which is our main method of written communication with parents, has settings to automatically translate all content to the preferred language of the user. There are 84 languages offered on the app. The Director will assist parents in activating this option and will follow up with the parents to assess the efficiency of the automatic translator.

Teachers will actively see effective strategies to support English Language Learners in the classroom, including adding a variety of materials, books and labelling in the child's home language. Family members will be welcomed in to the classroom to share familiar words, songs, and family traditions in their own language.

Cultural and linguistic differences will be appreciated, celebrated and encouraged. Parents will be encouraged to continue to communicate at home in their native language, and will not be pressured or expected to speak English at home.

As each English Language Learner approaches the start of Kindergarten, the Director will contact the child's future school to access and implement resources to support the child's transition to the new learning environment.

**POLICY: MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**      **SECTION: 5.07**

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Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

**ALL EMPLOYEES of The Discovery Tree are considered mandated reporters, under this law.**

Employees are required to discuss any suspicions of child abuse/neglect with the Director. Employees are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report, under the Act. Mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at The Discovery Tree take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

**GUIDELINES ON CHILD ABUSE**

The following pages contain information relating to child abuse. It is extremely important to make yourself familiar with the information, especially the parts pertaining to the characteristics of battered children and the indicators of child neglect. If you have any suspicions or concerns regarding a child, please get in touch with the Director and begin to keep an anecdotal record of the child.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF BATTERED CHILDREN**

Abused children endure life as if they are alone in a dangerous world, with no real hope of safety. Feeling unprotected, an abused child tries to protect himself in all the ways he can.

When a child has been injured and is brought for treatment, the child usually appears to:

*Have no close feelings or affect with parents or other people.*

*Be fearful. Be quiet.*

*Show no reaction to pain or expectation of being comforted.*

Having had violent physical contact with adults in the past, the child is often:

*Wary of physical contact initiated by an adult.*

When admitted to a hospital ward, the battered child:

*Seems less afraid than other children and settles in quickly.*

When other children cry, the battered child:

*Becomes apprehensive and watches them with curiosity.*

The battered child will also become:



*Apprehensive when an adult approaches the crying child.*

While in a new situation, the child:

*Seeks safety in sizing up the situation and being alert for danger.*

Children who have been battered do not behave as typical children do.

*They display many adult-like reactions.*

### **INDICATORS OF CHILD NEGLECT**

There are various characteristics that can describe child neglect in general, but for clarity, neglect can be divided into two subgroups: physical and emotional neglect. These two aspects contribute to each other and rarely occur separately. The following are characteristics that may indicate physical neglect:

1. *Malnourished*
2. *Ill-clad or dirty*
3. *Overcrowded or unhealthy sleeping arrangements*
4. *Receiving inadequate supervision*
5. *Totally unsupervised*

Many of the above mentioned characteristics are also indicative of emotional neglect, along with the following:

1. *An insecure child, seemingly withdrawn or overaggressive*
2. *Failure to attend school regularly*
3. *Constant friction in the home*
4. *Exposure to unwholesome and demoralizing circumstances*
5. *Denied normal nurturance*

### **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE IN PA**

According to PA Licensing Requirements, an operator or staff person who suspects that a child enrolled in the facility has been abused is required to report suspected child abuse to Childline at 1 (800) 932-0313.

### **IMMUNITY FROM CIVIL OR CRIMINAL LIABILITY AND/OR EMPLOYMENT ACTION:**

Any person who reports abuse or neglect, pursuant to the law or testifies in a child abuse hearing resulting from such a report, is immune from any criminal or civil liability as a result of such action. As mandated reporters, employees of The Discovery Tree cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith." Further, the employee is immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for reporting under the Child Protective Services Act unless it is proven that the report is malicious.

### **PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO REPORT**

**Any person who knowingly fails to report suspected abuse or neglect, pursuant to the law or to comply with the provisions of the law is considered a disorderly person and subject to a fine of up to \$500.00 or up to six months imprisonment or both.**

**Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:**

- ◆ Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- ◆ Severe verbal reprimands
- ◆ Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- ◆ Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts)
- ◆ Dropping off/Picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs/alcohol
- ◆ Not providing appropriate meals for a child
- ◆ Leaving a child unattended
- ◆ Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- ◆ Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

**EMPLOYEES ACCUSED OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT:**

If an employee is accused of child abuse or neglect, whether the abuse or neglect is reported to have occurred at the facility or not, they will be placed on investigatory suspension pending the outcome of Child Protective Services investigation as well as any criminal charges filed against the employee.

The Discovery Tree will cooperate fully with any investigations into accusations of child abuse and/or neglect and all employees will be required to cooperate as well.

The Discovery Tree will maintain strict confidentiality regarding information involving both the accused employee and the child/children involved in the report.

Employees indicated/founded and/or convicted of any crime against a child will be immediately terminated.

Employees cleared of the accusation by Child Protective Services and/or found innocent of criminal charges will be returned to their position on the first business day following receipt of documentation proving charges/investigations are closed.

## **POLICY: SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN**

## **SECTION: 5.08**

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Effective supervision is about more than watching children, it is about using techniques that promote effective supervision practices and create safe care environments.

### **Supervision of children according to Licensing Regulations.**

- Children on the facility premises and on facility excursions off the premises shall be supervised by a staff person at all times. Outdoor play space used by the facility is considered part of the facility premises.
- Each staff person shall be assigned the responsibility for supervision of specific children. The staff person shall know the names and whereabouts of the children in his assigned group. The staff person shall be physically present with the children in his group on the facility premises and on facility excursions off the facility premises.
- The requirement for supervision on and off the facility premises includes compliance with the staff:child ratio requirements.

### **Supervision during daily activities:**

- Whenever possible, avoid carrying out activities that may draw their attention away from active supervision. Examples of such activities include administrative tasks, cleaning, reading, or using the phone.
- Count children regularly (name to face on a scheduled basis, at every transition and before leaving one area and after arriving at another), going indoors or outdoors, to confirm the safe whereabouts of every child at all times.
- Record the counts on the sign-in sheet along with notations of any children joining or leaving the group. Corresponding children's information cards must remain with the group at all times, so that you have immediate access to the sign-in sheet and children's emergency contact information if needed.
- Be able to state which children, and how many children, are in your care at all times.
- Directly supervise toddlers, and preschoolers by sight and hearing at all times, even when the children are going to sleep, napping or sleeping, are beginning to wake up, or are indoors or outdoors. According to ITERS/ECERS supervising staff must be AWAKE and ALERT with primary interest in ensuring the safety and comfort of the napping or resting children.
- Secure the area you are supervising by keeping doors and/or gates closed. This includes doors to storage areas, hallways, staff lounge, etc.

- Sit and interact with children during mealtimes to assure that they are safe at the meal table and are properly supervised.
- Scan the room frequently. Effective scanning involves moving around, making eye contact with each child and getting involved in children's activities. Frequent scanning not only helps prevent problems, but also shows if a child is aimlessly wandering around or not actively involved.

**Supervision of toileting:**

- Be ready to provide help and guidance when children are ready to use the toilet correctly and independently.
- Make sure children correctly wash their hands after every use of the toilet, as well as monitor the bathroom to make sure that the toilet is flushed, the toilet seat and floor are free from stool or urine, and supplies (toilet paper, soap and paper towels) are available.

**Cell phone usage:**

- The usage of cell phones for talking and/or texting during regular work days creates a distraction and a potential unsafe child care environment. Restrict personal calls and texts during work time, and use personal cell phones only during scheduled breaks or lunch periods in non-working areas.
- Inform your friends and family members that personal calls and texts should only be made during non-work time. Family should be instructed to contact the center office in case of emergency.
- While out on the playground, or on a walk, bring a company cell phone with you in case you need to contact the main office. Emergency phone numbers are listed on the phone.

## **POLICY: CURRICULUM**

## **SECTION: 5.09**

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Using the Kaplan Learn Every Day Curriculum as a resource, we provide a developmentally appropriate educational environment in accordance with the PA Learning Standards. We intentionally plan our classroom arrangement, daily routine, and activities in a manner that meets the physical and emotional needs of the whole group and each individual child.

Teachers curriculum books to assist them with planning. Thirty minutes per week of paid planning time away from supervision of children is provided for each team member. A floating staff member is scheduled to cover the classroom accordingly. Planning time is provided based on the needs of the program.

Monthly themes and weekly topics are broad enough to allow for choosing activities targeting children's developmental needs and interests. Weekly lesson plans are distributed to parents and posted for reference.

Staff observe and record children's experiences in order to decide which learning activities to initiate and facilitate. Observations are continued year-round and are summarized in the form of a child development record, which is a report distributed to parents every six months. Parents are also offered the opportunity to request a conference to discuss the child development record or any other area of the program.

The Discovery Tree follows the quality standards set forth in the ERS Environmental Rating Scales. Teaching teams self-assess all areas of the program in an effort to reach the highest possible score. Low scores are immediately targeted for improvement with an action plan. Team meetings with the Director facilitate progress in continual quality improvement.

Family feedback and participation in activities and events is welcomed, but not required. New Family Orientation, Open School Night, and Holiday Parties are some opportunities to encourage family involvement. Parent surveys are completed at least once per year. Survey results are considered, applied to program decision-making, and communicated to staff through Lead Teacher meetings, team meetings, and in-service trainings.

**POLICY: OUR POSITION STATEMENT ON INCLUSION      SECTION: 5.10**

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The Discovery Tree embraces OCDEL'S vision for providing an inclusive learning environment for all children in Pennsylvania. OCDEL is an acronym that stands for the Office of Child Development and Early Learning. This is the office within the Department of Human Services which is our regulatory agency.

We plan to enthusiastically implement the Guidelines to Support Implementation of OCDEL Announcement on Inclusion. During 2018, we plan to do the following:

- Form an Inclusion Committee comprised of representatives of the following groups: classroom staff, management, parents, and technical support professionals.
- Seek and accept technical assistance from various resources on inclusion, including Early Childhood Mental Health Consulting, Early Intervention, Include Me PA, etc.
- In collaboration with program staff and families, review and modify existing policies, practices, and procedures to ensure barriers are removed that would prevent including children with disabilities
- Complete the PA Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool and create a strategic action plan accordingly.
- Revisit this statement annually to evaluate progress and set future goals.

We welcome your thoughts and comments as we move through this process. As per our company values, our intention is to be accountable, reflective, and proactive.

## **POLICY: SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

## **SECTION: 5.11**

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*The Discovery Tree* recognizes that young children go through various stages of development. Certain behaviors are indicative of age. In some cases, however, an individual child may respond to our learning environment or to others in a manner that is not typical of children in the same age group.

If a child has an IEP (Individual Education Plan), or an IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan), we request a copy of the plan and permission to speak with the professionals assigned to work with the child. Such communication is highly recommended and encouraged by our company, since it is our hope to provide an inclusive environment where all children have the opportunity to thrive.

It is our responsibility to make every reasonable accommodation to include all children. We will work with parents, team members, and resource professionals to ensure that we are providing the least restrictive environment possible.

Specifically, we will take the following steps:

- Observe the child throughout the daily routine and complete an observation chart.
- Review the child's completed Ages and Stages Questionnaire.
- Meet with team members and the Director in an effort to better understand how staff can support the child. Make adjustments as needed to the daily schedule, room arrangement, primary caregiving roles, and curriculum plans.
- Meet with the child's parent(s). Inquire about the child's temperament, interests, and cultural influences, and discuss how they may affect the child's response to a group learning environment. Share observations and action plan in a manner that is positive, factual, and productive. Plan for follow-up communication with the parent.
- Follow the instructions on the Ages and Stages score sheet. If needed, refer the family to professional resources to gather more information about their child's needs.

*See the Family Resources page of our website for contact information.*

- Continue to observe the child and make adjustments to the action plan as needed.
- If the staff and parents need technical assistance designed for challenging situations, consider requesting help from ECMH, an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant.

Removal of a child from the learning environment will only occur if after all of the above steps have been followed, it is clear that education of the child or the other children in the group cannot be satisfactorily achieved in accordance with the PA Learning Standards.

**POLICY: DISCIPLINARY ACTION: Reprimand**

**SECTION: 5.12a**

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A reprimand may be given to any employee when a minor violation of agency policies or procedures has occurred. A reprimand may not be preceded by any other disciplinary action.

Employees are required to sign for receipt of a reprimand. Signature of receipt does not indicate that the employee agrees with the reprimand, it simply indicates that they have received a copy of the document. Failure or refusal to sign the reprimand will be considered insubordination and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**POLICY: DISCIPLINARY ACTION: Written Warning**

**SECTION: 5.12b**

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Employees may be given a written warning for violations of agency policies and procedures. The written warning will clearly describe the deficiency in the performance or conduct and will cite the policy, licensing regulation or procedure violated. The written warning will contain a corrective action plan, which will outline the necessary action to correct the deficiency(ies) and a time table under which the corrective action must occur.

Employees are required to sign for receipt of a written warning. Signature of receipt does not indicate that the employee agrees with the written warning, it simply indicates that they have received a copy of the document. Failure or refusal to sign the written warning will be considered insubordination and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**POLICY: DISCIPLINARY ACTION: Investigatory Suspension SECTION: 5.12c**

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The Director may suspend an employee for Investigatory purposes. The Investigatory Suspension can be with or without pay and will result in either full reinstatement with back pay, if appropriate, or further disciplinary action, including termination.

Examples of situations which would warrant use of Investigatory suspension include, but are not limited to:

1. Charges of driving while intoxicated.
2. Report of child abuse or neglect.
3. Accusations of theft.
4. Violation of Substance Abuse Policy.
5. Other similar situations.

Employees are required to sign for receipt of an Investigatory Suspension. Signature of receipt does not indicate that the employee agrees with the Investigatory Suspension, it simply indicates that they have received a copy of the document. Failure or refusal to sign the Investigatory



Suspension will be considered insubordination and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**POLICY: DISCIPLINARY ACTION: Suspension**

**SECTION: 5.12d**

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Suspension of an employee may occur at the discretion of the Director for infractions of the Personnel Policies. Suspension of an employee will not require prior verbal or written disciplinary action.

Suspension will be without pay. The employee will be notified in writing of the policy violations and the length of the suspension and any corrective action required upon return to work. The employee is required to sign a copy of the suspension notification acknowledging receipt. Failure to sign for receipt of the suspension notification will be considered insubordination and will result in further disciplinary action including termination.

When circumstances permit, an employee will be suspended upon receipt of the notification. However, an employee may be suspended verbally if immediate suspension is in the best interest of The Discovery Tree.

**POLICY: DISCIPLINARY ACTION: Termination**

**SECTION: 5.12e**

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Termination shall not require prior verbal or written disciplinary action. The Discovery Tree is an “at-will” employer and may terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without cause and without notice. This policy is to be used as a guide for employees, but is not inclusive of the reasons or causes of termination from employment. Notification of Termination may be written or verbal.

Causes for involuntary termination include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ◆ Unsatisfactory provisional period
- ◆ Falsifying or misusing records, including application
- ◆ Violation of confidentiality rules
- ◆ Theft or misuse of Agency funds, equipment, or property
- ◆ Absence from work without notification and/or approval as per related policies
- ◆ Discourteous treatment of the public, clients, co-workers
- ◆ Violation of the Team Communication Policy
- ◆ Inappropriate behavior
- ◆ Non-performance of duties resulting in injury to the Agency, children, families, sub-contractors, vendors, or employees.
- ◆ Being harsh, abusive or neglectful to children, parents, or employees.

- ◆ Violation of the Substance Abuse Control Policy
- ◆ Failure to submit required documentation within mandated time frame
- ◆ Neglect of duty or refusal to comply with directives of supervisor
- ◆ Misuse of leave policies
- ◆ Insubordination
- ◆ Receipt of 2 suspensions for the same infraction during any 12 month period.
- ◆ Failure to implement job specifics
- ◆ Receipt of 3 warnings for any violations during any 12 month period; the date of the third warning will be the employee's last day of employment
- ◆ Failure to return to work following a leave of absence
- ◆ Failure to meet deadlines as presented by supervisor
- ◆ Failure to maintain compliance with child care licensing regulations and/or other applicable federal, state or local statutes or Professional Development Organization Standards.