Staff Handbook

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CHILD CARE & PARENT INSTITUTE

**MISSION STATEMENT**

We are committed to striving for the highest possible standards in childcare and early education programs and, in so doing, supporting the children, families, students and professionals of the Nest Child Care and Parent Institute. At Nest, children are encouraged to explore the world around them and we are motivated to help them discover their world by providing a space that is emotionally secure, physically safe and fun!

**VISION**

We strive to be a dynamic, professional force dedicated to improving the lives of young children through providing consummate care and early education for children, support systems and resources for families, model training, and development opportunities for early childhood educators.

**Table of Contents**

General Policies 5

Employment Policies 5

Employment Practices 5

Hiring Practices 5

Equal Opportunity Employment 5

Anti-Harassment Policy 6

Sexual Harassment Policy 6

Conceal & Carry Policy 7

Zero Tolerance for Workplace Violence 7

Drug and Alcohol Policy 7

Code of Ethical Conduct 7

Ethical Responsibilities to Children 7

Ethical Responsibilities to Families 7

Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues 8

Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society 8

Staff Expectations 8

Professionalism 8

Dress Code 8

Confidentiality 8

Child Abuse and Neglect 8

Cell Phones 8

Computers 9

Social Media Policy 10

Unmonitored Contact 10

Visitor Policy 10

Solicitation 10

Personal Belongings 11

Handwashing 11

Safety 11

Attendance Policy 11

Attendance 11

Absenteeism and Tardiness 12

Absence Due to Illness 12

Schedules 13

Voluntary Resignation 13

Work Schedules and Rest Periods 13

Break Periods 14

Food/Meals 14

Timesheet and Payroll 15

Direct Deposit 15

Outside Employment Policy 15

Benefits 15

Daily Duties for Classroom Staff 16

Performance Disciplinary Procedure 17

Staff Orientation, Professional Development & Training 19

Orientation 19

Required Training 20

Continuing Education 20

CDA Certification 21

Tuition Reimbursement Policy 21

Tuition Reimbursement – Default Policy 21

Staff Meetings 21

Performance Management and Evaluation 21

Personnel File 22

Staff Record 22

Employment Eligibility Verification 22

Criminal Background Check 22

Physical Examination/TB Testing 22

MiRegistry/Certifications/Transcripts 22

Changes in Personnel Records 22

**Welcome**

We are pleased to have you join our professional teaching staff. We strive to create a sense of community amongst ourselves as well as with the families we serve and hope you will soon find yourself comfortable among new friends and colleagues here at the Nest Child Care and Parent Institute.

You and your work are very important to accomplish the mission of Nest Child Care and Parent Institute – providing the highest possible standards in childcare and early education programming. Your contribution is essential to our success.

Your surroundings, your co-workers and the way in which Nest’s work is conducted will be unfamiliar to you at first. This handbook is designed to provide you with information about your employment and setting guidelines for employee behavior and responsibilities.

Please familiarize yourself with the information in this handbook. It should give you a clear understanding of our guiding philosophy while detailing policies and procedures that you will use on a daily basis. Feel free to ask lots of questions and, once again, WELCOME!

**General Policies**

**Employment Policies**

Nest Child Care and Parent Institute (Nest) expects all employees to work together in harmony for the good of the families that we serve. This employee handbook is given to you to outline your responsibilities, your benefits, and enhance your employment. Written personnel policies are made available to all center staff upon hire and are available to all staff while at the center.

**Employment Practices**

Nest retains the right to recruit, select, and hire employees and to determine the necessary qualifications for employment. To insure effective employee performance, Nest retains the right to promote, to classify, determine the size and composition of the work force, to assign and allocate work, to transfer employees from job to job and from shift to shift, to determine schedules, hours worked, and to effect layoffs or terminations.

Selection of employees will be made according to Administrator’s assessment of their ability to provide quality care for the children of Nest. These assessments will be made on a basis of ability, skill, experience, character, dependability, and the ability to meet the requirements of the job description. Processes concerning hiring, recruiting, interviewing and selection of potential employees align with appropriate employment law practices.

Nest is committed to providing a working environment which treats its employees with courtesy, respect, and dignity. In return, it is expected that employees exercise the same values toward children, parents, other staff members, and management. Nest reserves the right to conduct pre-employment investigations of the employee’s educational and work experience and to require a physical screening by a licensed health professional.

**Hiring Practices**

The Administrator will oversee the hiring process, including recruiting, interviewing, and selection of new employees and/or requests for internal position changes.

Current Nest employees may apply for positions as they become available. Any current employee who applies for an internal position must submit a written request. In most cases, any position that becomes open at Nest will be considered internally prior to possible solicitation from outside. However, in some cases, the Administrator/Program Director and/or Board may determine that it is appropriate to advertise a position simultaneously with the internal posting. To ensure fairness of pay, we use a salary scale that determines pay based on applicable experience and education required for that position.

**Equal Opportunity Employment**

Nest Child Care and Parent Institute is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Its employment practices are intended to be consistent with both State of Michigan and Federal laws concerning discrimination. Nest is committed to employing personnel who are qualified to meet the assigned responsibilities in their job positions. It is the intent and desire of Nest that equal employment opportunity will be provided in employment, wages, benefits, and all other privileges, terms, and conditions of employment. State and federal EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) laws are posted on employee bulletin boards.

**Anti-Harassment Policy**

Nest is committed to providing a professional work environment free from any type or form of harassment. Harassment of any employee based on his or her race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, or the presence of any physical, mental or sensory disability is a serious violation and will not be tolerated.

Harassment can occur as a result of a single incident or a pattern of behavior where the purpose or effect is to create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating work environment. Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical or verbal behavior which may include slurs, comments, jokes, innuendoes, unwelcome compliments, pictures, cartoons, or pranks. Some examples may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Physical or verbal abuse
2. Racial, ethnic, or sexual insults
3. Ethnic or sexual jokes
4. Religious slurs or other slurs directed toward the group set forth above
5. Unwelcome sexual comments, advances or innuendoes
6. Taunting, intended to provoke an employee
7. Requests for sexual favors used as a condition of employment or affecting any personnel decisions such as hiring, promotion, compensation, etc.

**Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is a type of harassment and occurs when the verbal and physical conduct is sexual in nature or is gender-based, that is, directed at a person because of gender. Sexual harassment, whether committed by supervisory or non-supervisory personnel, is specifically prohibited as unlawful and against Nest policy.

Sexual harassment includes: unwelcome verbal behavior such as comments, suggestions, jokes or derogatory remarks based on sex; physical behavior such as pats, squeezes, repeatedly brushing against someone’s body, or impending or blocking normal work or movement; visual harassment such as posting of sexually suggestive or derogatory pictures, cartoons or drawings, even at one’s work station; unwanted sexual advances, pressure for sexual favors and/or basing employment decisions upon the employee’s submission to sexually harassing behavior in the workplace.

Employees who feel they have been or have witnessed other employees subjected to harassment of any kind are encouraged to immediately identify the offensive behavior to the harasser and request that it stop. If the employee feels uncomfortable in addressing the matter directly with the harasser, or if they have done so and the behavior does not stop, the matter should be immediately discussed with the Administrator/Program Director with whom the employee feels comfortable.

All complaints will be investigated promptly, impartially, and discreetly. Upon completion of the investigation, the appropriate parties will be notified of the findings. All employees found to have harassed an employee will be subject to appropriate corrective action, ranging from disciplinary action to termination. **No employee will suffer retaliation in any form for reporting instances of harassment.**

**Responsibilities Include:**

1. Employees: Bring to the attention of the Administrator/Program Director and/or a Board of Director Officer, perceived or actual incident of harassment or witness of such.
2. Administrator/Program Director: Maintain a work environment free of intimidation and harassment and respond immediately and appropriately to any complaints or indications of such behavior. Investigate all initial complaints and report them to the Board of Directors.
3. Administrator/Program Director: Administer the necessary disciplinary action toward any individuals proven guilty of such an act or who, knowingly, falsely accuse another of sexual or other form of harassment.

**Conceal & Carry Policy**

Nest Child Care and Parent Institute prohibits the possession of any dangerous items including, but not limited to, firearms, ammunitions, knives, and explosive devices on its premises regardless of the individuals license to conceal or carry a weapon.

**Zero Tolerance For Workplace Violence**

Nest will, within reason, do whatever is necessary to protect the lives and health of employees and provide a workplace free from verbal abuse, threats, or assaults that could cause or result in harm to those who are employed. Nest has a definitive “zero tolerance” for violence of any kind, including threats of violence.

**Drug and Alcohol Policy**

Nest advocates that our institution be free from the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of controlled substances by employees. Additionally, employees are to work free from the effect of alcohol and other performance-impairing substances.

Drug testing may be required by any employee, who while on duty, demonstrates signs of being under the influence, and demonstrates inappropriate behavior suggesting impairment or who is observed consuming alcoholic beverages or drugs. Refusal to cooperate with drug testing and/or rehabilitation will result in immediate discharge. Violations of this policy will subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

Because prescription medication (including medically prescribed marijuana) can also affect an individual’s demeanor and job performance, it is the employee’s responsibility to notify the Administrator/Program Director if he or she is taking legal prescription drugs. Such prescription drugs must be given under medical supervision and may not interfere with the performance of job duties. Depending on the seriousness and circumstances of the offense, and at the company’s sole discretion, an employee who tests positive for drugs and/or alcohol may be referred to a counseling, rehabilitation, or employee assistance program. Refusal to cooperate may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

**Code of Ethical Conduct**

*Aligned with NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children)*

**Ethical Responsibilities to Children**. Childhood is a unique and valuable stage in the human life cycle. Our paramount responsibility is to provide care and education in settings that are safe, healthy, nurturing, and responsive for each child. We are committed to supporting children’s development and learning; respecting individual differences; and helping children learn to live, play, and work cooperatively. We are also committed to promoting children’s self-awareness, competence, self-worth, resiliency, and physical well- being.

**Ethical Responsibilities to Families.** Families are of primary importance to a child’s development. Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child’s well-being, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about communication, cooperation, and collaboration between the home and early childhood program in ways that enhance the child’s development.

**Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues**. In a caring, cooperative workplace, human dignity is respected, professional satisfaction is promoted, and positive relationships are developed and sustained. Based upon our core values, our primary responsibility to colleagues is to establish and maintain settings and relationships that support productive work and meet professional needs. The same ideals that apply to children also apply as we interact with adults in the workplace.

**Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society**. Early childhood programs operate within the context of their immediate community made up of families and other institutions concerned with children’s welfare. Our responsibilities to the community are to provide programs that meet the diverse needs of families, to cooperate with agencies and professions that share the responsibility for children, to assist families in gaining access to those agencies and allied professionals, and to assist in the development of community programs that are needed but not currently available. As individuals, we acknowledge our responsibility to provide the best possible programs of care and education for children and to conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity. Because of our specialized expertise in early childhood development and education and because the larger society shares responsibility for the welfare and protection of young children, we acknowledge a collective obligation to advocate for the best interests of children within early childhood programs and in the larger community and to serve as a voice for young children everywhere. The ideals and principles in this section are presented to distinguish between those that pertain to the work of the individual early childhood educator and those that more typically are engaged collectively on behalf of the best interests of children—with the understanding that individual early childhood educators have a shared responsibility for addressing the ideals and principles that are identified as “collective.”

**Staff Expectations**

Professionalism

Each Nest staff member is a childcare professional and is expected to act as such. The following guidelines for professionalism should be maintained at all times:

* Arrive on time and stay entire shift, if needed.
* Is not absent from work on a regular basis and finds a substitute when necessary.
* Dress appropriately for interaction with children.
* Take directions, suggestions and criticisms, and follow through to improve performance.
* Respect confidential information regarding children, families, and co-workers.
* Display a positive attitude toward the entire center (the program, children, families and co-workers).
* Attend staff meetings and other Center events.
* Complete required training courses in a timely fashion.

Dress Code

Staff members are expected to observe the 3 C’s for appropriate attire at work as follows:

COMFORTABLE – Staff is expected to play with the children and be down at their level whenever it is appropriate. To do this, staff must be dressed in comfortable clothes that allow free movement and activity. Staff members should wear clothing they feel comfortable getting dirty or stained, as staff members are expected to participate alongside the children during all daily activities. **Flip-flops and open-toe shoes are inappropriate footwear.**

CLEAN - All clothing should be clean with no stains, rips or tears, and must smell appropriate. This also applies to personal hygiene.

COURTEOUS - Staff members interact with children and parents on a daily basis and should dress professionally. Clothing may not contain alcohol, drug, or cigarette references. Vulgar sayings or suggestions are forbidden. Certain articles of clothing are never appropriate for the work environment.

**Do not wear any of the following: halter tops, strapless “tube” tops, short skirts/miniskirts/shorts, sweatpants, yoga pants, jeggings, excessively torn jeans/shorts, low-rise jeans/shorts which expose undergarments, hoodies, t-shirts with graphics, sweatshirts with graphics.**

It is expected that all staff members will present themselves and the Nest Child Care and Parent Institute in a professional, respectable manner. Any staff member not adhering to the dress code may be asked to leave and return dressed appropriately.

Confidentiality

**It is important that all staff members be discreet in sharing information regarding the children and their parents in public areas.** Names and identifying characteristics of children and families should not be shared with anyone other than staff members working in the classroom and the Executive Director and/or Director and/or Assistant Director. Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances arise; staff members who discuss issues with individuals not directly related to the situation may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.

**Staff should also be careful in discussing details of the center operation, particularly problem areas, with others in public.** Staff members may not distribute or post children’s last names, address, phone numbers, etc. with the exception of distribution to Nest employees. Michigan law specifically prohibits the sharing of information about children or staff members within a childcare setting without written consent from the parent, guardian, or individual. This applies to outside professionals as well. **You must seek written parental consent before consulting with an outside agency about a child.** Any breach of the confidentiality of any information is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Child Abuse and Neglect

All Nest staff members are mandatory child abuse reporters. Suspected cases of child abuse or neglect must be reported to the Department of Human Services/Child Protective Services (CPS) at:

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES, **855-444-3911**

Staff members may directly report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect to the Michigan Department of Human Services and complete all necessary paperwork. **The staff member should inform the Executive Director and/or Director of the report and together decide whether to inform the parents of the report.**

If a Nest staff member is accused of abuse and/or neglect by a parent or co-worker, such an accusation will be reported to the Director and a determination will be made as to whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse and/or neglect. If there is reasonable cause, a report must be made to the Department of Human Services (DHS). Nest will cooperate with any DHS investigation. In addition, the accused staff member will be informed of the allegations and be given an opportunity to respond to those allegations. Termination of employment after a child abuse allegation is at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Cell Phones

It is important that every staff member’s attention remains on the children at all times. A second’s lapse in attention could result in a serious accident, which, with appropriate supervision, would have been prevented. Therefore: Cell phones are not permitted in any of the program rooms. **Cell phones should remain turned off and stored in a purse, bag, coat, etc. while a staff member is clocked in.** Cell phone use is permitted only during an approved break, and never in a classroom. It is never appropriate to make a personal phone call, send a text message, check voicemail, etc. while in the presence of children, even while on an approved break.

It is expected that when leaving the center for any reason (walk, field trip, playground, etc.), one staff member will carry with them a cell phone. In this circumstance, the cell phone should only be used in the event of an emergency and not for personal calls/text messaging.

In the event of an emergency, the staff member must inform both the Lead Teacher and Director. In this case, cell phones must be set to vibrate. Calls may be answered only after a substitute has arrived to replace the staff member, and outside of the classroom. Ratios must be maintained at all times.

Computers

All Nest-owned computers are to be used for work purposes only. Under no circumstances may software be installed without the prior permission of the Director and/or Executive Director. Staff members may bring in a personal computer to use during naptime only. The wireless network password may be obtained from the Director. Computer use is forbidden during all times other than nap/rest time.

Social Media Policy

This policy provides guidance for employee use of social media, which should be broadly understood for purposes of this policy to include blogs, wikis, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, social networking sites, and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others in a contemporaneous manner.

* Employees need to know and adhere to the Code of Ethical Conduct, Staff Handbook, and other company policies when using social media in reference to Nest Child Care and Parent Institute.
* Employees should be aware of the effect their actions may have on their images, as well as that of Nest. The information that employees post or publish may be public information for a long time.
* Employees should be aware that Nest may observe content and information made available by employees through social media. Employees should use their best judgment in posting material that is neither inappropriate nor harmful to Nest its employees, or customers.
* Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment.
* Employees are not to publish, post or release any information that is considered confidential or not public.
* If employees encounter a situation while using social media that threaten to become antagonistic, employees should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of a supervisor.
* Social media use shouldn't interfere with employee’s responsibilities at work. Nest computer systems are to be used for business purposes only.
* Subject to applicable law, after-hours online activity that violates the Nest Code of Conduct or any other company policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action or termination.

Unmonitored Contact

**For the protection of each staff member, we always work in teams.** No staff should ever be alone with a single child. Another staff member should be within sight/sound at all times.

Visitor Policy

All visitors are to sign-in and report to the office. Staff will then be contacted and visitation is to be done in the hallways. Visitation should only occur in case of an emergency.

Solicitation

Employees may not solicit campaign, collect contributions, or distribute literature to children or families for any purpose. Employees may not solicit campaign, collect contributions, or distribute literature to other employees except when all employees involved are not on work time.

Personal Belongings

Coats, backpacks, purses, etc. must be safely put on hooks, in closets/cabinets, lockers and out of reach of children. Nest is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Handwashing

Staff members must wash their hands at the following times:

* Upon arriving at the center
* After each diaper change
* After helping a child use the toilet
* After wiping a nose, coming into contact with saliva or any other bodily fluid.
* Before preparing meals
* Before and after mealtimes
* Before and after using the sensory table
* After removing gloves
* After using the restroom
* After returning to the center from a break
* After coming indoors from the playground

*\*\*Frequent hand washing with soap and warm running water for at least 20 seconds is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illnesses like diarrhea, the flu, and conjunctivitis (pink eye).*

Safety

Safety is an ongoing process that seeks to avoid, reduce, or eliminate unsafe acts or conditions that may result in injury to children, parents, or employees. Employees are to immediately communicate any recognizable hazards to the Administrator/Program Director.

**Attendance Policy**

Attendance

Consistency is crucial to creating a successful program. We make every attempt to put as few staff members as possible in each classroom. Therefore, **all staff members are expected to be in regular attendance, in order to meet ratios and provide a consistent environment and routine.**

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential for the smooth operation of the center. We want to establish uniform guidelines that will ensure a consistent and fair approach to solving attendance problems. Instances of absenteeism and/or tardiness will be documented in the staff member’s personnel file. Recurring absences or tardiness are subject to the Disciplinary Procedure. Therefore, we have developed the following attendance policy.

A. **Definitions**

1. **Incident:** An incident is a term used to tabulate deviations from a perfect attendance record.
2. **Perfect attendance:** No absences or tardies in any twelve (12) month period.
3. **Absence:** An absence from work is defined as the failure of any employee to report to work when scheduled.

This applies to any assignment, be it a regular shift, overtime work, work related meetings, lunch, training, etc. One day of absence will be considered one (1) incident. A second day of absence is considered a second incident, and so on. If, however, a physician releases the employee from work in writing, the entire time of absence is only counted as one (1) incident.

1. **Tardy:** Tardiness occurs when an employee is not present, and ready to begin working, at his/her workstation at their scheduled time. Tardiness also occurs when an employee leaves work prior to the end of their scheduled shift without prior approval. Tardiness of less than two (2) hours will be considered one- half (1⁄2) incident. Tardiness of two (2) or more hours will be considered one (1) incident.
2. **No Call/No Show:** Employees must report their absence each day; failure to do so is considered a no call/no show. Also, failure to report one’s absence at least one-half (1⁄2) hour prior to the start of the scheduled shift will be regarded as a no call/no show which is considered one and one-half (11⁄2) incidents. A no call/no show for three days or more will be considered a voluntary resignation.

**Exception:** Approved time off, job related injuries, lack of work, military leave, suspension and lay-off will not count as incidents.

B. **Reporting Requirements:** Employees must notify their supervisor at least 30 minutes prior to the start of their scheduled shift if they are going to be absent or late.

C. **Guidelines for Attendance Control:** Based on the number of incidents in a twelve-month rolling period, an employee will be subject to disciplinary action under the following guidelines:

1. Two incidents in any 30-day calendar period result in a documented Friendly Reminder.
2. Three incidents in any 60-day calendar period result in a documented Verbal Warning.
3. Two additional incidents within the next 90-day calendar period, following the verbal warning, will result in a Written Warning.
4. Any additional (full) incidents within the next six months after the written warning will result in suspension and/or termination of employment, pending investigation and review by management.

**Any employee who fails to call in and/or report to work for three (3) consecutive workdays can only return to work with a doctor’s note otherwise it will be considered VOLUNTARY termination.**

Absenteeism and Tardiness

Nest values stability and consistency of quality childcare services provided by our employees, which relies on staff adhering to their scheduled hours. Nest requires regular attendance by all employees. All time off must be approved by the Administrator/Program Director. Unscheduled time off should be used only in cases of illness and emergency. We hold employees accountable for non-scheduled absences while at the same time remain sensitive to family, medical, and personal emergencies. Excessive unscheduled absences will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Absence Due to Illness

**If a staff member is ill and unable to work, the Director should be notified immediately, by phone**. If the Administrator/Program Director is not immediately available, the employee should leave a message and a number where she/he can be reached. Electronic communications such as text message and email are not acceptable methods of contact when reporting sick. When possible, a staff member must assist in planning for a substitute. In some cases, the Director may request a note from the staff member’s physician indicating the type of illness and when said staff member may return to work.

Employees will receive a notice indicating that you are late according to scheduled hours. Exceptions may be granted due to actions beyond the employee’s control such as inclement weather or an emergency situation. Three (3) late notices will result in a one day suspension without pay. Three (3) suspensions due to lateness will result in termination. Employees that adhere to scheduled hours for six months without an infraction have the opportunity to remove prior late occurrence action from their record via documentation (it will not be stricken from their file).

If an employee is off work because of illness for more than three days, the employee may be requested to bring in a release from a health care professional certifying that the employee is able to return to work. Two consecutive days of unauthorized or unreported absence is considered a voluntary resignation by the employee.

*Communicable Disease***:** Any employee exhibiting evidence of an infectious disease (rash, fever, etc.) will, at the discretion of the Administrator/Program Director, be required to submit to medical evaluation to determine if a communicable disease condition exists which threatens the health or well-being of the children or other staff. The affected employee will be required to furnish a statement from a licensed health professional attesting to freedom from a communicable disease before being allowed to return to work.

The assigned caregivers are expected to always be in the classroom. **Situations in which both the primary caregivers/teachers of a classroom are gone must be avoided.** Staff members are expected to communicate with each other to ensure both primary caregivers/teachers of a classroom are not absent on the same day.

Schedules

Nest is open Monday through Friday; actual hours of operation vary per location. **All scheduling requests should be submitted in writing to the Director.** Schedules will be created based upon the needs of Nest and the children, as well as staff member availability.

Occasionally, staff members may be required to dedicate time outside their regular work schedule to satisfactorily complete Nest responsibilities (parent-teacher conferences, staff meetings, trainings, lesson planning, etc.). In this case, it is at the discretion of the Executive Director to determine if staff members will receive additional pay for work performed outside their normal work schedule.

Voluntary Resignation

Lead Teachers and Teachers should submit a letter of resignation to the Director when resigning from a position. **Nest appreciates and prefer four weeks’ notice but at minimum a two weeks’ notice if you choose to resign.** This will ensure an appropriate replacement can be hired and adequately trained

**Work Schedules and Rest Periods**

The Work Schedules and Rest Periods Policy ensures adequate staffing during working hours and provides you with the understanding of what is expected of you during your shift. **The purpose of a work schedule is to ensure that the center is not understaffed or overstaffed for any part of the day and to provide adequate rest and planning time to keep the classrooms flowing as smoothly as possible.**

Work schedules will be made in accordance with meeting licensing requirements in the room. When child ratios decrease, staff will end shift. We will not hire employees to work specific days; they should expect to work the days assigned by the Administrator/Program Director as needed. Employees may be hired for a specific room; however, they should be aware that they will be trained for more than one room and will be expected to work in other rooms as needed.

Work schedules will be done weekly and will be posted before the beginning of the week. Employees are expected to work the hours assigned. Time off requests must be submitted the Monday prior to schedule being posted. Hours of work/shifts may be adjusted in response to enrollment changes and/or to meet mandated staff/child ratios.

Policy

**Employees must follow established work schedules.** The usual work schedule is 40 hours per week, Monday through Friday (as child attendance and child to teacher ratios allow). Work schedules at Nest are 9 hours between 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. An employee will be informed of work schedules by the immediate supervisor.

Work schedules for hourly paid staff normally include an unpaid lunch break of at least 30 minutes. Work schedules provide for one paid 15-minute rest period for each consecutive four hours worked. At supervisor discretion employees may receive additional rest breaks.

If conditions warrant, employees may be asked to work through the normally scheduled rest period. At such times employee cooperation is expected. An employee who believes the supervisor is abusing the rest period policy should contact Executive Director.

Guidelines

* **Employees are expected to be in their classrooms ready to implement the day’s lesson plan and daily schedule at the start of their shift.** If you are going to be late or if you are unable to report to work, you must notify your Director.
* **Rest periods are an employment privilege.** Rest periods may not be "saved" to shorten the employee's workday, to extend lunch breaks, or to alter the work schedule in any way. Rest periods not taken will be forfeited. Abuse of rest periods may result in loss of the privilege.
* Lunch breaks are required to break up the employee shift to allow time for a meal or to rest. Lunch time may not be used to shorten the workday.
* If the employee wishes to use their lunch break to run errands you are allowed half an hour or an hour (whichever is applicable) to do so. It is important that you consider how much time is needed for the errand as to not exceed thirty minutes or an hour. Any additional time will be unpaid. Repeated lunch break violations are an attendance violation and you will be written up.
* There should be at least two staff in the center at all times. This includes the opening and closing of the center. **It is important to never leave a person alone with children in the center.**
* Classroom staff need time away from children and the classroom to plan, complete reports or other administrative duties**. Planning time should be scheduled every week for every staff person for at least 30 minutes but not more than one hour.** Planning time cannot be used to extend rest periods, lunch breaks or to extend the workday. If the time scheduled conflicts with staffing ratios or other events that may require the teacher to be present in the classroom; planning time will be rescheduled.
* Employees are expected to be flexible and may be called upon to fill in for an employee that has called off to meet ratio requirements.

Break Periods

A break period is a privilege, not a right. It is intended to provide a brief break in the scheduled workday. The break is a non-productive paid time and shall be limited to 15 minutes for every four hours worked. If essential to provide service or meeting licensing requirements, the Administrator/Program Director may withdraw the break. Employees should not leave the premises during their break.

Food/Meals

Staff will eat Nest prepared meals with a group of children when working during breakfast, lunch or snack. Mealtimes are considered a teachable time and staff are expected to sit, assist and participate in an appropriate manner. Dietary restrictions/substitutions will be taken into consideration as per physician’s recommendations and upon preauthorization from administration.

Staff members may store a small amount of food in the break room refrigerator. All food should be clearly labeled with the staff member’s name and date. Food should be removed or discarded after one week or when spoiled. Meals should be eaten and prepared only during nap/rest time or during an approved break. Considerations must be given to all children and all allergy situations.

**Timesheets and Payroll**

Timesheet and Payroll

**Each hourly staff member is responsible for signing in and out each scheduled workday** in addition to tracking their hours worked using a bi-weekly timesheet. Staff members may not sign in more than 15 minutes before their scheduled shift and are expected to clock out immediately after their shift ends. If a staff member forgets to sign in or out, the Director should be notified promptly when this situation arises for approval of time for that day. Failure to follow the above guidelines may delay processing of a staff member’s payroll check until the following pay date. Payday is every two weeks.

Staff are expected to always maintain appropriate staff-to-child-ratios, this would justify working before or after scheduled hours.

Direct Deposit

Direct deposit of payroll checks is available to all staff members. Interested staff should submit their bank and routing information to the Director to enroll. Processing may take one to two weeks; staff members will receive a paper check until direct deposit is processed.

**Outside Employment Policy**

**As a general rule, employees may not obtain outside employment that creates interference with their primary job or that creates a conflict of interest.**

The Nest Child Care and Parent Institute has no objection to an employee holding outside employment so long as they can meet the performance standards of their job with Nest. **Secondary jobs are permissible only if the employee can continue to perform their normal duties and work requirements within the regularly scheduled workweek.** Work assignments and schedules will not be modified to allow the employee to perform duties or services that are not related to the Nest Child Care and Parent Institute.

Unless otherwise agreed to, employment with Nest Child Care and Parent Institute is deemed to be full time. The Nest recognizes that an employee may be justified under certain circumstances to accept casual outside employment to be performed after working hours if no conflict with Nest Child Care and Parent Institute interest is involved.

**Employees shall not engage in or accept any activity, business, or employment during or after working hours that could be considered in conflict with Nest Child Care and Parent Institute interests or diminish the ability of the employee to render to the company the full, loyal and undivided service which is contemplated in his or her employment by the Nest.**

Should an employee wish to obtain outside employment, it should be discussed with the employee’s supervisor/program director prior to accepting the job. Any questions related to the content of this policy or its interpretation should be directed to Executive Director.

**Benefits**

Eligibility for benefits is determined by employment status. Full-time staff members are eligible for:

* Paid Holidays
* Individual or family health and dental coverage through HealthChoice of Michigan
* Discounted childcare

Benefits will be offered to employees without discrimination to any person on the basis of race, color, age, creed, sex national origin, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, physical/mental disabilities or marital status.

Holidays

Nest recognizes (8) eight days during the year as paid holidays for its regular, full-time employees. Those holidays are New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

**Guidelines:**

* Employees who are regularly scheduled to work 30 or more hours per week are eligible for holiday pay.
* **Holiday pay is the regular straight time rate for the number of hours an employee is regularly scheduled to work.**
* **An employee must work the day before the holiday and the day following the holiday to be eligible for holiday pay.**
* When the regular holiday falls on Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be considered the Company holiday. When the regular holiday falls on Sunday, the following Monday shall be the Company holiday.
* Employees are not allowed holiday pay while in an out-of-pay status such as leave of absence or layoff or suspension or while receiving short-term disability payments.
* Teacher In-Service Holidays, means the center is closed in observance of the holiday but staff is required to report to work. As such, it is considered a regular workday. To request a Teacher In-Service Holiday off (refer to Time Off Request). Teacher In-Service Holiday is excluded from Holiday Pay.
* **Holiday pay is not to be considered hours worked in the computation of overtime.**

**Important Note:** *The Center will close the last week of the year December 25 – January 2. December 25th (Christmas) and January 1st (New Year’s) are paid holidays. All the other days are unpaid days. Employees must apply for temporary/seasonal shut-down through the unemployment agency. Eligibility for unemployment is not a given and is based on the individual’s work history and employment length with Nest. The Unemployment agency will make the final determination for eligibility and payment.*

Health Insurance

Medical, dental and vision insurances are available for enrollment for Nest Child Care and Parent Institute through HealthChoice of Michigan. Please review and select the group health benefits and coverage options that meet your needs.

*Who Qualifies?*

* Active employees of Nest Child Care and Parent Institute
* Working at least 20 hours per week for at least 12 consecutive weeks
* Be without health care benefits at time of enrollment
* Be a resident of the State of Michigan

Child Care

All staff members have access to childcare if they meet the eligibility requirements. The Director will provide additional information to eligible staff members upon hire.

**Daily Duties for Classroom Staff**

Each classroom has a set of opening, nap time, closing and weekly cleaning tasks. Below are some general things that must be completed each day. Staff members are expected to familiarize themselves with the classroom specific duties.

Morning Duties

Make sure all program room doors are unlocked; mix new bleach water; put away sanitized toys; straighten toys and shelves; re-stock supplies such as soap, paper towels, toilet paper, diapers, wipes, etc.; and complete room set-up for the day’s lesson plan.

Noon/Nap-Time Duties

Straightening of shelves; sanitizing toys; cleaning tables/chairs/floors; curriculum planning; wash dishes; complete daily activity sheets for children; and prepare for afternoon.

Afternoon Duties

Wash or spray toys that have been mouthed by children with bleach solution and air dry; take trash to dumpster, sanitize trash can, and replace trash bag; put toys and equipment away; check outdoor play area for equipment that needs to be put away; sanitize tables, chairs, and shelves; wash dishes; empty bleach solution; vacuum carpets; lock all program room doors after the last parent leaves for the day.

Opening Teacher (s):

* Opens the main entrances.
* Receives phone calls.
* Unlocks doors, turns on the lights and air/heat, if necessary.
* Is in the classroom ready to greet children and families by center opening time.
* Creates a welcoming environment with available activities for the early arrivals. There may be additional early morning cleaning or set up depending on the classroom / age group. Morning classes can be combined from 6:30 – 8:30 for Early Birds.
* Evaluates each child’s health and accepts *or not* according to Institute and licensing guidelines.

The Closing Teacher (s):

* Leaves classroom clean – tables and chairs wiped, materials put away and chairs placed on tables.
* Closes and locks all classroom doors and windows.
* Turns off lights and turns heater down.
* Ensures all trash is taken to dumpster.

* Exit though the main entrance, ensuring the door is locked and alarms are set.

**Performance Disciplinary Procedure**

Unacceptable Job Performance

Nest uses progressive discipline as a positive way to correct unacceptable job performance. This is not a contractual obligation because all Nest employees are “at will” which means an employee can be terminated at the will of Nest for any reason or no reason. The following are the steps, which are taken using progressive discipline.

**STEP 1 Verbal Warning**

If a staff member’s job performance is not meeting Nest standards, or if a staff member is in violation of any policy stated in this handbook, he/she will be informed of the problem and the possible penalties if performance does not improve. Suggestions on ways to improve job performance are discussed. Verbal warnings may be given for violation of Nest policies, failure to follow procedures, unsatisfactory performance, absenteeism or tardiness.

Verbal warnings will be recorded, discussed, and signed by both the staff member and Director and/or Executive Director. After three (3) verbal warnings have been issued for any reason within a period of six (6) months, a written warning will be issued.

**STEP 2 Written Warning**

A written warning is given if a problem/s identified by multiple verbal warnings has not been corrected. Written warnings will be recorded, discussed, and signed by both the staff member and Director and/or Executive Director. A staff member may receive only one (1) written warning during a six (6) month period. After one (1) written warning has been issued, any further issues or actions subject to the Disciplinary Procedure may result in suspension or termination.

Written warnings will be issued immediately for refusal to follow lawful instructions or any other serious policy violation, which endangers the safety or integrity of a child or staff member.

**STEP 3 Termination**

Termination may result when using progressive discipline if steps have not produced satisfactory and acceptable performance. Termination may be immediate without using progressive discipline. Reasons for immediate termination may include, but are not limited to:

* Committed act(s) of child abuse under Michigan law
* Abuse of a parent/guardian of a child or another staff member
* Harassment
* Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while at work
* Theft
* Possession of a weapon
* Sleeping on the job or otherwise leaving children unattended and unsupervised
* Violation of any policy which states that violation of such policy may result in termination

The above violations are only examples and are not meant to be all-inclusive. These steps are meant to establish consistent guidelines to consider in conjunction with the severity of the offenses and the employee’s personnel and performance records when administering discipline. We are not required to go through the entire four step process and discipline may begin or continue at any step depending on the severity of the infraction. The nature and severity of any violation can be of such a degree as determined by management to eliminate any and all steps and discharge immediately. An employee may be subject to discipline or discharge for any reason, whether or not set forth in this Handbook. In all cases, determination of appropriate discipline, including discharge, rests solely in the discretion of the employer and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. All steps are documented in writing regardless of the phase of process.

Grievance Procedure

As childcare professionals, all staff members are expected to make reasonable attempts to resolve conflicts directly with the individual(s) concerned. If a solution cannot be reached, staff members should then seek assistance from the Director and/or Executive Director in resolving the conflict.

Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances arise. Staff members who discuss issues with other staff members not directly related to the situation may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedures. This policy applies both during paid hours as well as on a staff member’s personal time.

**Staff Orientation, Professional Development & Training**

Orientation

All new staff members will be asked to read the Nest’s staff and parent handbooks. Prior to working in the classroom, the Director will schedule an orientation meeting to complete required paperwork, and review center operation and policies. Additionally, all new full-time staff, under the supervision of the Director will complete the Nest New Staff Orientation Checklist within 90 days of hire.

The orientation period provides the Nest a period to evaluate the qualifications of a new employee during the first three months of service. New Staff will be given a tour of the facility and introduced to key personnel. New staff will be assisted with meeting children, families, and co- workers during the orientation period.

A complete orientation to policies, procedures, childcare, and safety will be provided for you during your first three months of employment. The orientation for new staff will include observations in the classroom and meeting families and coworkers prior to assuming responsibilities. The employee will be required to complete the “new hire” packet of forms before the first day of employment. These forms will be kept in the employee’s personnel file. Evidence of the following training must be recorded and/or completed BEFORE coming in contact with children or being placed in the classroom:

* Abuse and Neglect: Reporting Requirements
* Anti-Harassment and Non-Discrimination Employee
* Cultural Competence/Diversity
* HIPAA Basics
* Recipient Rights
* Medication Administration Refresher
* [Health & Safety Training for Licensed Child Care Providers Course 1](https://go.miregistry.org/v7/trainings/111100/detail)
* [Health & Safety Training for Licensed Child Care Providers Course 2](https://go.miregistry.org/v7/trainings/111101/detail)
* [Complete Michigan Ongoing Health and Safety Training Refresher 202X (Current Year, Online)](https://go.miregistry.org/v7/trainings/101160/detail)
* Complete required CACFP Training
  + - * [CACFP - Civil Rights Training](https://misponsortraining.com/courses/michigan-150-2022/)
      * [CACFP - Nutrition Basics for Better CACFP Menus](https://misponsortraining.com/courses/michigan-502/)
      * [Michigan Food Allergen Awareness Class](https://courseforfoodallergens.com/states/MI?gclid=Cj0KCQjwpeaYBhDXARIsAEzItbElgiGAInff2wTt21Z7EgfWGgiQIDH4OezpK1Ptw1pianMm7PVdPacaAnW4EALw_wcB)

Orientation of new staff to be completed within 90 days of working with children includes:

1. CPR and First-Aid Certification
2. Review of the licensing administrative code
3. Policies included in Nest Parent Handbook and Staff Handbook.
4. Review of contingency plans including fire and tornado evacuation plans and the operation of fire extinguishers
5. First aid procedures
6. Job responsibilities in relation to the job description
7. Training in the recognition of childhood illnesses and infectious disease control including hand washing procedures and universal precautions for handling bodily fluids
8. Schedule of activities of center
9. Review of child abuse and neglect laws and reporting procedures
10. The procedures for ensuring that all childcare workers know the children assigned to their care and their whereabouts at all times including during center-provided transportation
11. Child management techniques
12. Procedure for sharing information related to a child’s special health care needs including any physical, emotional, social, or cognitive disabilities with any childcare worker who may be assigned to care for that child
13. Review of procedures to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) & Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) prior to employee’s first day of work
14. The procedure to contact a parent if a child is absent from the center without prior notification from the parent
15. Information on any special needs a child enrolled in the center may have and the plan for how those needs will be met

The Licensing Orientation Checklist Form will be signed and dated upon completion of the orientation and placed in the personnel file. Staff will be given a copy of the Staff (Personnel Policy) and Parent Handbooks during orientation. Training staff will be appointed to new staff to provide guidance and feedback during their first 90 days of employment. In the event of a lengthy absence of a regular staff member from the center, a substitute staff will be assigned from within the center and will have met the requirements of a regular staff.

Required Training

Research indicates that formal education or training that increases the knowledge of providers has been shown to be the greatest determinant of safe and quality programming for children. Therefore, at the Nest Child Care & Parent Institute education and training is a continual process. At a minimum:

* 8 hours of pre-service training must be completed by new staff without previous experience in a regulated childcare facility.
* All new staff must be oriented in the requirements in the minimum standards outlined in the staff handbook, the facility’s childcare policies, the procedures to follow in handling emergencies and exits, and the use and location of all fire extinguishers. Emergency Maps and Exits are displayed throughout the Institute.
* All staff must obtain at least 25 clock hours of training annually, exclusive of CPR and First Aid, selected from the following areas:
  + Child Development
  + Care of Children with Special Needs
  + Adult and Child Health
  + Nutrition and Safety
  + Curriculum-Planning
  + Risk Management
  + Identification and Care of Ill Children
  + Recognition of Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Abuse and the Responsibility of reporting any incidents
  + Cultural Diversity
  + Professional Development

Note: It is the responsibility of each employee to pay for any costs that may result from these trainings (full or part-time).

Training of teacher assistants, volunteers and interns is primarily ‘on the job’. Training of staff will be mainly through modeling with explanations and feedback as necessary. The Center Manager will find a private moment to review any situations that should have been handled differently. The Management Team will continuously share articles with staff that will give them a better understanding for the age group with which they are working and for the style of interaction which is required.

Continuing Education

All teachers are certified or in process of certification in Early Childhood Education and are highly qualified individuals. They are required to be certified in CPR and First Aid. Staff will receive training in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) and Child Abuse/Neglect (CAN). All Nest staff are also required to obtain 25 hours annually of continuing education through classes, seminars, workshops, conferences, and other related early childhood events. Monthly staff meetings are mandatory. The teachers strive to create a warm, fun-loving atmosphere for each child enrolled at Nest.

Continuing education hours which are obtained through credit courses resulting in transcripts may be used to meet the continuing education requirement during the year in which the hours are earned and for the two years following the year.

Nest may provide continuing education hours during the mandatory monthly staff meetings. New staff are required to obtain an equivalent of approximately 2 hours per each month of employment in their first year of employment.

CDA Certification/Continued Education

All teachers must have at least 12 credits in Early Childhood Education or a CDA certification to perform the duties of a teacher in our Early Childhood and Preschool Classrooms. Employees who do not meet these minimum requirements will be given the opportunity to enhance their training by attending an online CDA certification program paid for by the Nest and must be reimbursed if employee defaults on the program or terminates. At the time of enrollment in the CDA program, the Director will discuss expectations for completion as well as complete a professional development plan. Nest requires all teaching staff obtain at minimum a CDA certification in order to deliver high-qualify Early Childhood programming to families. Upon completion of CDA program, employees must apply to TEACH scholarships to receive CDA accreditation. Employees are encouraged to continue their education and pursue even higher learning to achieve their educational goals.

Tuition Reimbursement Policy

The TEACH Scholarship program provides eligible employees with the opportunity to obtain, maintain, or improve job-related or career-related capabilities through participation in academic courses of study at accredited colleges and universities. Employees must provide a copy of their receipts and final grades each semester. Successful completion requires a grade of “C” or above. Nest reserves the right to accept/reject the scholarship model. Employees who receive a TEACH Scholarship will be required to work for Nest for two years after their completed course.

Tuition Reimbursement – Default Policy

Employees who do not work the minimum two-year requirement will be responsible for repayment to Nest. Repayment will be subject to interest at 12% APR. Interest is calculated from the date participation in an educational program ceases or employment is terminated, the repayment will begin immediately and/or is subject to collections.

Staff Meetings

All Nest staff members are required to attend all staff meetings. Important information, procedures, and policies are introduced and reviewed at these meetings; it is important to have 100% attendance. Additional staff meetings may be held throughout the year on or offsite and will be paid. Attendance at such sessions is seen as an important avenue for staff development and is mandatory unless excused for good cause by the Administrator/Program Director.

Additional time may be added at the discretion of the Administrator/Program Director. Staff who miss training, and do not make up the missed time, will be subject to termination. All trainings must be pre-approved by the Administrator/Program Director.

Performance Management and Evaluation

Employees receive their first performance evaluation at the end of a three-month orientation period. Thereafter, your performance and salary will be reviewed once each year using the professional development plan. The professional development plan will be reviewed, assessed, and updated annually during the Quality Improvement Planning phase in October. Employees will meet with the Director and Executive Director to review performance and set goals. Informal evaluations will be performed throughout the year during scheduled and unscheduled classroom observations. Parent surveys will be passed out shortly before a staff member’s evaluation meeting and feedback will be included in the staff member’s evaluation. Staff members will be required to complete a self-evaluation prior to meeting with the Director and/or Assistant Director. Evaluations are used solely as assessment of performance and does not suggest or imply pay raises.

Nest reserves the right to terminate your employment at any time.

**Personnel File**

Staff Record

The employee’s name, address, date of birth, education, position, previous work experience in childcare including reason for leaving previous positions, and the name, address and telephone numbers of persons to be notified in an emergency are all necessary requirements for staff records. We capture this information by having employees complete an employment application, provide a current resume as well as applicable transcripts/diplomas/degrees.

Employment Eligibility Verification

Federal law mandates all persons hired must be able to verify their eligibility for employment in the United States. Section I of the Employment Eligibility (I-9) form must be completed by the employee and the manager within 72 hours (3 days) of date of hire.

Criminal Background Check

Fingerprint checks are required by State Licensing for all childcare employees and will be completed in accordance to the law. Child Care workers must obtain a one-time fingerprint background check and/or submit evidence that they have already completed the process. Instructions are included in the Employment Packet for new hires. Staff are not considered “hired” unless they are deemed “eligible” to work in childcare setting by LARA.

Physical Examination/TB Testing

All employees must have a physical examination six months prior to beginning work or within 30 days of hire. The examination must include a test for tuberculosis.

The report dated and signed by a licensed health professional, shall be on file in the center and certify that:

1. The person is free from illness detrimental to children, including TB.
2. The person is physically able to work with young children.

MiRegistry/Certifications/Transcripts

Documentation that the person has met the educational qualifications for the position is required for all positions and shall be on file. MiRegistry transcript showing appropriate and mandatory classes taken and passed; High School diplomas, Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate or college degree showing completion of program study or transcripts showing credit hours in applicable Early Childhood Education program studies are considered appropriate documentation to determine the completeness, timeliness and appropriateness of meeting the educational requirements for the position.

Change in Personnel Records

It is important that you report in writing to the Administrator/Program Director any change in the information that was originally given on your application, such as change of address, telephone number, marital status, change in number of dependents, etc.

Employees must notify the Administrator/Program Director immediately of any pending charges, investigations, findings, etc. that arise during employment to be reported to licensing by the next business day. Notification is required when any of the following occur:

* The person has been convicted of any crime.
* The person has been or is being investigated by any governmental agency for any other act, offense, or omission, including an investigation related to the abuse or neglect, or threat of abuse or neglect, to a child or other client, or an investigation related to misappropriation of a client’s property.
* The person has a governmental finding substantiated against them of abuse or neglect of a client or of misappropriation of a client’s property.
* In the case of a position for which the person must be credentialed by the department of regulations and licensing, the person has been denied a license, or the person’s license has been restricted or otherwise limited.

**Staff Handbook Acknowledgement**

Welcome to the Nest Child Care and Parent Institute. We are pleased that you have chosen to work with us and hope that your association with Nest will be a long and mutually rewarding experience. You and your work are very important to accomplish the mission of Nest – to provide quality childcare for Medford and the surrounding communities. Your contribution is essential to our success.

Nest is committed to providing a working environment which treats its employees with courtesy, respect, and dignity. In return, it is expected that employees exercise the same towards the children, parents, other employees, and administration.

Nest strives to make your orientation & employment experience pleasant, informative, and comfortable. You can look forward to the following information when you join our team at Nest.

* Review Mission, philosophy, and history of the program
* Job Description
* Organizational outline of the team
* Personnel policies
* Operation procedures
* Parent Handbook
* NAC Standards
* Employment Forms
* Licensing & Regulatory Standards
* Curriculum
* Tour of the Facility
* Introduction to key personnel
* Meeting children, families, and co-workers
* Observation in classroom
* Review of Teacher qualifications/requirements

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the **Nest Child Care and Parent Institute Staff Handbook**. I understand that it is my continuing responsibility to read and know its contents and any revisions made to it. I also understand and agree that the Staff Handbook is not an employment contract for any specific period of employment or for continuing or long-term employment nor a legal document. The handbook describes important information about Nest. Therefore, I acknowledge and understand that unless I have a written employment agreement with Nest that provides otherwise, I have the right to resign from my employment with Nest at any time with or without notice and with or without cause, and that Nest has the right to terminate my employment at any time with or without notice and with or without cause.

I have read, understand and agree to all of the above. I have also read and understand the Nest Staff Handbook. I agree to return the Staff Handbook upon termination of my employment.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*\*Questions should be referred to Director or Executive Director.*

**Must be signed and placed in employee file – REQUIRED Document**