

ECO BABY CHILDREN’S CENTER, LLC
AT-WILL EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK
UPDATED AUGUST 2016

THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK IS NOT A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT. YOU ARE AN AT-WILL EMPLOYEE WHO MAY BE FIRED FOR ANY OR NO REASON.

I. ABOUT US

WELCOME:

Welcome to Eco Baby Children’s Center, LLC! We have hired you as part of our “family” because above having the proper skills and credentials, we believe that you share our passion for child development. We are making a difference in the lives of so many families each and every day! Your local community is also benefiting from your employment at Eco Baby Children’s Center, LLC through our commitment to purchasing local foods/products, supporting local farms, reducing our waste, recycling, etc.

Though your employment at Eco Baby Children’s Center, we hope that your life becomes richer knowing the positive impact you will make in the lives of so many children. Thank you for sharing our philosophies and becoming a part of our staff. We look forward to a long relationship with you!

MISSION STATEMENT:

At Eco Baby Children’s Center, it is our mission to provide high-quality care for your child in a safe, healthy, holistic environment. We believe in creating a peaceful environment that allows each child to learn through hands-on experiences with the world around them. We believe we have a responsibility to nurture feelings of trust and security through warm and respectful interactions with each child. We commit the energy, patience, and love required to meet the needs of children socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively. We seek to do this through a calm, clean, child-centered environment that encourages self-discovery.

This mission statement was developed by Robyn Scotland and will be reviewed with the staff annually for suggestions/amendments.

WHAT MAKES US ECO-FRIENDLY?

- ✓ Certified Eco-Healthy through the Eco-Healthy Childcare Program
- ✓ VOC Free Paints
- ✓ MyKidsDay App reduces paper use
- ✓ Cloth Diapering Supportive
- ✓ All Natural-Foods, many Local and/or Organic Foods
- ✓ Local, Hormone Free Milk
- ✓ BPA Free, Eco-Friendly Dishware
- ✓ Shoe-Free Facility
- ✓ Many Eco-Friendly Toys

- ✓ Bamboo Sheets and Blankets
- ✓ Seasonal Organic Vegetable Garden Outside
- ✓ Indoor Organic Green Plants Add Oxygen to the Air
- ✓ Green, Non-Toxic, Cleaning Supplies
- ✓ No Artificial Air Fresheners
- ✓ Towels for Hand Drying
- ✓ We Re-use and Recycle
- ✓ Connecting with Local Businesses

II. BASIC GUIDELINES

BASIC INFORMATION:

Name: Eco Baby Children's Center
Address: 1915 5th Avenue, Troy, NY 12180

E-mail: info@ecobabydaycare.com andrea.gansky@ecobabycc.com

Owner: Robyn Scotland Mobile: (518) 542-4640
Director: Andrea Gansky Mobile: (518) 321-9744

Hours of Operation: Eco Baby Children's Center, LLC is open year-round. We are open Monday through Friday from 7:00 am – 5:30 pm.

Holidays: Eco Baby Daycare, LLC will be closed each year on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, the 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. We may be closed for additional days, such as the day before or after a holiday, if we believe there will be very low attendance. We will inform you of any additional days at least 2 weeks in advance if possible. We may also schedule staff training days in which you will be required to attend, even though the center will be closed. Again, you will be informed of these days at least 2 weeks in advance.

HIRING PROCEDURES/POLICIES:

1. Submit Application and/or Resume, & Cover Letter
2. Interview Process
3. Complete Necessary Paperwork
4. Orientation/On-the-Job-Training
5. Two Week Trial/Probationary Period

ORIENTATION PROCEDURES/REQUIRED PAPERWORK/TRAINING:

- STEP ONE: Fill out and submit required paperwork:
 1. Eco Baby Children's Center, LLC Employment Application and/or Resume
 2. Fingerprint Request Form
 3. Criminal Conviction Statement
 4. SCR Form
 5. Medical Statement
 6. SEL Check
 7. Reference Checks (2 Professional and 1 Personal)

8. Copies of CPR and/or Emergency Medication Administration (if you have them)
 9. Copies of confirmation of any valid, completed training hours (if you have them)
 10. NYS Department of Labor Notice of Pay Rate
 11. W-4 and I-9
 12. Register with ASPIRE and send all required documentation to ASPIRE
- **STEP TWO: Orientation Procedures**
 - ✓ All employees shall attend a paid orientation/on-the-job training on their 1st day of employment. The Director and/or Lead Teacher will lead the orientation. They will also have the opportunity to shadow other employees, getting to know the staff, the children, and the procedures.
 - ✓ Two Week Probationary Period: When all paperwork is completed, the employee will begin a 2 Week Probationary Period. During this period, the employee will receive on-the-job training from the Director(s) and other staff members on our team. The employee is expected to learn the NYS OCFS regulations, center philosophies, expectations of their position, interact with families, etc.
 - ✓ At the conclusion of the 2 Week Probationary Period, the employee will be evaluated by the Director and/or Lead Teacher. The employee will have access to review the evaluation form prior, so that they know how their performance will be assessed. Strengths and areas of need will be addressed.
 - ✓ Following the 2 Week Evaluation, an official job offer may be made, or employment could be terminated.
 - **STEP THREE: Maintaining mandatory training**
 - ✓ Eco Baby Children's Center, LLC requires at least 2 mandatory training days per year when the center is closed. All employees are required to attend and it is paid training.
 - ✓ Eco Baby Children's Center, LLC also posts local trainings in our office that you can sign up for to attend. Eco Baby Children's Center, LLC offers to pay for these trainings, unless noted on the sign-up sheet otherwise.

Training (per 418-1.14 of the NYS Regulations):

(a) Each person responsible for developing, directing and supervising the daily activity programs for children (director) and each employee must complete a minimum of thirty (30) hours of training every two years. Fifteen (15) hours of such training must be received during the first six months of the program's first year of licensure or during the person's first six months of employment by the program. This initial fifteen (15) hours applies towards the total thirty (30) hour minimum requirement for each license period. Such training requirements shall also apply to any volunteer in such day care program who has the potential for regular and substantial contact with children.

Training must address the following topics:

- (1) principles of childhood development, including the appropriate supervision of children, meeting the needs of children enrolled in the program with physical or emotional challenges and behavior management and discipline;
 - (2) nutrition and health needs of children;
 - (3) child day care program development;
 - (4) safety and security procedures, including communication between parents and staff;
 - (5) business record maintenance and management;
 - (6) child abuse and maltreatment identification and prevention;
 - (7) statutes and regulations pertaining to child day care; and
 - (8) statutes and regulations pertaining to child abuse and maltreatment.
- (b) Training received after the application has been submitted but before the application has been approved and the license granted may be counted towards the initial fifteen (15) hours required in subdivision (a) above.
- (c) For the thirty (30) hours of training that must be received every two years after the first year of licensure, any person responsible for developing, directing, and supervising the daily activity programs for children who can demonstrate basic competency in a particular topic to the Office may determine in which of the specified topics he or she needs further study. The Office also may exempt any person responsible for developing, directing, and supervising the daily activity programs for children from participating in training on a particular topic upon demonstration of substantially equivalent knowledge or experience related to that topic. All persons with such exemptions must still complete a minimum of thirty (30) hours of training during each licensing period.
- (d) Each person responsible for developing, directing, and supervising the daily activity programs for children, employee, and/or assistant of the day care center program must submit verification of completion of the training requirements to their program's designated licensing office on forms provided by the Office.
- (e) At the time of admission, the director must furnish parents with appropriate instructional materials that will assist them in evaluating the facility, the program and the staff. Such material must include information concerning child abuse and maltreatment, and guidance on the steps they may take if they suspect their child has been abused or maltreated.

STAFF ROLES:

Director:

- Summary: The Director of Eco Baby Children's Center, LLC is in charge of the overall management of the center. The Director will work full-time.
- Responsibilities:
 - Completing admissions process for all families
 - Hiring/Termination of employees

- Complete staff observations/evaluations
- Managing all financial aspects of the business
- Suggesting beneficial staff trainings
- Creating and posting employee schedules
- Planning and executing fire/evacuation drills
- Ordering of supplies
- Creating menu
- Meal and snack preparation
- Laundry
- May be required to stay with a sick child in the quiet room until family arrives to pick up that child
- First Aid & CPR
- Emergency Medication Administration

Lead Teacher:

- Summary: The Lead Teacher is responsible for planning and implementing daily activities in their assigned classroom which promote the social, emotional, physical and intellectual well-being of every child in their care. This is a full-time position and the lead teacher is expected to work five days/40 hours per week.
- Responsibilities:
 - Create and adhere to a developmentally appropriate daily schedule to include times for: structured activities, free/imaginative play, group time (circle, morning meeting, etc.), meal time, diapering/potty, outdoor/physical activities and nap.
 - Develop and implement age-appropriate lesson/activity plans for the assigned classroom in the areas of art/creative expression, sensory, music, language/reading, math, science, gross motor, and social-emotional health. These activities should be planned with a holistic approach that focuses on the overall health and well-being of each individual child.
 - Collaborate with other lead teachers to ensure consistency within the classrooms throughout the center.
 - Provide day-to-day supervision and support of teacher assistants, floaters, volunteers and substitutes within your classroom. This includes: informing them of the daily activities, delegating tasks and responsibilities as necessary, communicating any issues with the Director and assisting the director in completing staff evaluations.
 - Maintain an open, inviting, clean and organized classroom environment at all times. Continuously evaluate the layout of the classroom to determine areas it may need to be adjusted to suit the needs of the current student population in your care.
 - Maintain open communication and cultivate positive relationships with all parents, caregivers and staff at Eco Baby.
 - Ensure each child's profile is updated daily on the MyKidzDay app in a timely manner (before the close of business each day).
 - Complete all necessary paperwork including, but not limited to: daily attendance records, daily child health checks, scoring and sharing results of the ASQ-3 with all newly-enrolled families, and incident reports.
 - Conduct a minimum of 2 parent/teacher conferences per year, per child and additional conferences as necessary.

- Acquire First Aid & CPR certification and complete 30 training hours every two years, as required by New York State Regulations.
- Adhere to all OCFS regulations, Eco Baby policies, and Eco Baby procedures and ensure all staff/volunteers in your classroom are in compliance with OCFS regulations at all times.

Assistant Teacher:

- Summary: The Assistant Teacher is responsible for assisting the lead teacher with planning and implementing daily activities in the assigned classroom. The Assistant Teacher promotes the social, emotional, physical and intellectual well-being of every child in their care. This is a full-time position and the assistant teacher is expected to work five days/30-40 hours per week.
- Responsibilities:
 - Adhere to a developmentally appropriate daily schedule with included times for: structured activities, free/imaginative play, group time (circle, morning meeting, etc.), meal time, diapering/potty, outdoor/physical activities and nap.
 - Assist the lead teacher in developing and implementing age-appropriate lesson/activity plans for the assigned classroom in the areas of art/creative expression, sensory, music, language/reading, math, science, gross motor, and social-emotional health.
 - Complete all tasks delegated to you by the lead teacher. This includes, but is not limited to cleaning and sanitizing toys, shelves, tables, dishes, sinks, and toilet area, sweeping and moping the classroom floors, taking out garbage/recyclables, helping children wash their hands, serving meals/snacks, changing diapers/assisting children with toileting, updating MyKidzDay app profiles, etc.
 - Maintain open communication and cultivate positive relationships with all parents, caregivers and staff at Eco Baby.
 - Acquire First Aid & CPR certification and complete 30 training hours every two years, as required by New York State Regulations.
 - Adhere to all OCFS regulations, Eco Baby policies, and Eco Baby procedures at all times.

Part-Time Assistant/Floater/Substitute:

- Summary: The Assistant/Floater/Substitute is responsible for assisting the lead and/or assistant teachers with implementing activities and completing daily tasks in the assigned classroom. This is a part-time position and the Assistant/Floater/Substitute is expected to work as needed.
- Responsibilities:
 - Adhere to the classroom's daily schedule with included times for: structured activities, free/imaginative play, group time (circle, morning meeting, etc.), meal time, diapering/potty, outdoor/physical activities and nap.
 - Assist the lead/assistant teacher in implementing age-appropriate lesson/activity plans for the assigned classroom in the areas of

art/creative expression, sensory, music, language/reading, math, science, gross motor, and social-emotional health.

- Complete all tasks delegated to you by the lead teacher. This includes, but is not limited to cleaning and sanitizing toys, shelves, tables, dishes, sinks, and toilet area, sweeping and moping the classroom floors, taking out garbage/recyclables, helping children wash their hands, serving meals/snacks, changing diapers/assisting children with toileting, updating MyKidzDay app profiles, etc.
- Cover bathroom/meal breaks for core classroom staff, as needed.
- Maintain open communication and cultivate positive relationships with all parents, caregivers and staff at Eco Baby.
- Acquire First Aid & CPR certification and complete 30 training hours every two years, as required by New York State Regulations.
- Adhere to all OCFS regulations, Eco Baby policies, and Eco Baby procedures at all times.

Schedule: We aim for consistency in our schedule and try our best to have our employees work the same shift each week. However, sometimes it may change. The weekly work schedule will be posted in advance in the staff room. It is your responsibility to personally check the schedule each week or call the center to check when you are scheduled to work.

SALARY GUIDELINES/PERFORMANCE REVIEWS/BENEFITS:

Salary Guidelines:

Wages are on a sliding scale. All employees will be given a copy of the sliding scales at the beginning of their employment and can have access to these documents at any time during employment. Wages are based on education, training, and/or experience. Raises in wages will occur annually following the Annual Performance Evaluation. These are based on job performance, attendance, trainings, etc. and are subject to the discretion of the Eco Baby Children's Center, LLC Director. The standard raise after one year of service is \$.25 per hour. After two years of service, and annually following that, we calculate raises based on the cost of living increase for that year and our budget. Eco Baby Children's Center, LLC reserves the right to keep wages the same at any annual evaluation time.

Performance Reviews:

All employees will receive an evaluation following a 2 Week Probationary Period.

Initial Performance Review 3 months following initial employment. This will be completed by the center director. This will consist of a scheduled observation, evaluation sheet, and meeting with the director. There is also a self-evaluation and peer-evaluation That will be part of the review.

All employees will receive an Annual Performance Review one year after initial employment, and each year thereafter. This will be completed by the center director. This will consist of a scheduled observation, evaluation sheet, self-evaluation, peer-evaluation, and meeting with the director.

Benefits: Unfortunately, we are not able to offer benefit packages.

PLANNING TIME:

Lead Teachers will receive paid planning time in which to collaboratively work together on lesson planning. Coverage will be provided for each lead teacher at a minimum of one hour per week for planning time.

Lead Teachers will have computer/internet access during classroom time and planning time.

BREAKS:

Lunch: Employees will receive 30 minutes of an unpaid lunch break if they work more than 6 hours. We do our best to offer our full time staff lunch breaks at the same time each day. You may take your lunch break on or off premises. If you leave for lunch, we expect you to arrive back on time. This is crucial to our scheduling and making sure that all children are properly supervised.

Short Breaks: For every 4 hours worked, you may take a 15-minute break. This can be on or off premises, but again we expect you to arrive back promptly after 15 minutes. If you are driving, you may use this break to move your car to avoid downtown Troy parking fines.

SICK PAY/VACATION PAY/HOLIDAY PAY:

Vacation Pay/Sick Pay: After 12 months of full time employment (30 or more hours per week), you will receive 5 days paid time off. Vacation/sick pay does not roll over from year to year. If your employment is terminated or you resign and have unused vacation/sick pay, you lose those days and will not be compensated. You will be paid the hours you would usually work that day and this will not exceed 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week. We realize that sometimes things come up suddenly, but we always appreciate knowing in advance if someone will be out so that we can schedule staff to cover your shift.

Holiday Pay: We compensate all of our full-time employees (30 or more hours worked per week) for all days that we are closed due to an observance of a holiday. If you are a full-time employee, you will be paid your established pay rate for the hours you would have worked on that given day, not to exceed 8 hours per day. If a holiday falls on your day off, you will not be paid.

Inclement Weather Closures: If the center is closed due to inclement weather, all full time employees (30 or more hours worked per week) will be compensated. If you are a full-time employee, you will be paid your established pay rate for the hours you would have worked on that given day, not to exceed 8 hours in a given day.

***All of the above compensations only apply to full-time employees. Whether you are hired as a full time or part time employee will clearly be stated at the time of hire on your Wage Notice. If at any time the status on this form changes from part time to full time, these benefits will then be awarded to you following 12 months after you begin your work as a full time employee. The center Director reserves the right to offer these benefits sooner under certain circumstances (e.g. an employee becomes full time after 3 years of part time service, etc.)

We apologize that we cannot easily award these benefits to everyone. Our budget does not allow for it, so we reserve those benefits for employees who have dedicated at least one year (12 months) of full time employment.

ATTENDANCE/ASKING FOR TIME OFF/CALLING IN SICK:

When you are scheduled to work, we expect you to be here. We expect you to be on time and ready to work at the beginning of your scheduled shift. Attendance is crucial to the success of the center. The children you are teaching are counting on you!!!

If you are running late for rare circumstances out of your control, you must inform us of your anticipated time of arrival.

Asking for Time Off: If you need to take a day(s) off, you must inform your director in writing at least 2 weeks prior to the day(s) you need off. Time off is unpaid. This is subject to approval from the center director.

Calling in Sick: We realize that there will be those rare days when you or a close family member may be under the weather. If you need to call in sick, please inform us as soon as you realize that you will not be coming in for your scheduled shift. It is okay to call the evening before or during the night and leave a message on our answering machine. You may also text message Andrea at 518.321.9744. We will need to make arrangements for coverage for you so that your children are properly supervised.

Covering Teacher Absences: When absences are planned, the director will find another staff member to fill the employee's shift. Eco Baby has one extra staff member on the schedule each day in the event that a staff member is absent without notice. In the event that additional coverage is needed to cover absences, the director will attempt to call our substitutes/staff who are off that day to see if they can come in. If coverage still cannot be found, the director will cover the shift as needed.

DRESS CODE/PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:

We expect that you will dress neatly in comfortable pants/jeans that are easy to move in. All employees are required to wear one of our Eco Baby shirts. You may either:

Please anticipate that your clothes may get dirty while working in the daycare environment. You may want to store an extra change of clothes in your bag.

We are a shoe-free facility. Staff, in addition to children and parents, will be required to remove their shoes upon entering the facility. You may store a pair of indoor slippers shoes if you wish.

Outdoor Play: Please have comfortable, appropriate shoes for outdoor play. During the colder months, you will also want to have clothing appropriate for outdoor play.

Jewelry: Please keep your jewelry simple for your own safety, as well as the safety of the children.

Perfumes/Colognes: We respectfully ask that employees refrain from wearing heavy perfumes, colognes, body sprays, and perfumed lotions made with artificial ingredients due to sensitivities to allergies and keeping a natural environment. Essential oils and natural products are acceptable alternatives.

Eco Baby Shirts: All staff in the 3 and 4-year-old classrooms are required to wear an Eco Baby T-shirt on every field trip. Each staff member will receive one red shirt, and there are several blue/green/yellow shirts in the staff room.

HANDWASHING:

All employees must wash their hands with soap and warm water:

1. Upon beginning their scheduled work shift
2. After returning from any break in the work day
3. After each diaper change and/or toileting experience
4. Before preparing for any meal or snack (this includes setting the table)
5. Before preparing/pouring beverages
6. Before preparing/serving foods
7. Before and after attending to any injury that requires first aid (also wear gloves)
8. After any bodily substances come in contact with your hands, including saliva, nasal secretions, etc.

CELL PHONE/PHONE USE:

NYS Regulations state that employees may not use cell phones during your working hours. We ask that you keep your phone turned off/on vibrate while you are on the clock. You will have time on your break to use your cell phone. We do realize that sometimes things come up and you may need to make a phone call during work hours. Our land line is always available in the event that you need to make an important phone call. You may also receive phone calls on our land line in important or emergency situations. If you are going to make or take a phone call, please let a free care-giver or your director know that your children are properly supervised.

SMOKING:

There is no smoking anywhere on our premises. This includes the courtyards outside our main doors.

Also, please be aware of some the new research coming out about 3rd hand smoke. Remnants of cigarette smoke can stick to your hair and clothes. Since you have such close contact with children, we ask that you use appropriate measures to eliminate 3rd hand smoke (ex: changing shirt, washing hands, etc.).

PERSONAL BELONGINGS:

Eco Baby Children’s Center, LLC is not responsible for employees’ personal belongings. We provide space for you to store your coat, etc. in the office or classroom. You may want to refrain from bringing in any valuable items or keep them or keep them locked in your vehicle.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY:

We maintain privacy and confidentiality of all employee records. Employee records containing confidential information are kept locked in the center’s office. Employee records are kept on file for 3 years following the termination of employment, at which point they will be shredded and recycled.

Children’s files are accessible to the staff, only if the staff member directly works with the child. The director holds all children’s files and all children’s files remain locked in the office. Once a child ages out or is no longer in the program, the files remain locked securely in the office.

It is our policy that all employees maintain confidentiality of all information regarding staff, families, and children.

TERMINATION:

We hope to build a lasting employment relationship with you. However, if you decide to terminate your at-will employment with Eco Baby Children’s Center, LLC, we ask that you provide the courtesy of a two week, written notice. If you decide to end your employment, please think of the children first. It will take Eco Baby Children’s Center, LLC about two weeks to find an employee to replace you and in the meantime, the children you were caring for need to be properly supervised.

There may also be instances when we need to terminate your at-will employment. These instances include, but are not limited to:

- Excessive absences
- Excessive tardiness
- Job Performance
- Non-compliance with Center Rules/Regulations
- Failing to Complete Required Training
- Failure to Provide State Required Paperwork
- Inappropriate Conduct with Children, Families, or Staff

***New York State is an “At-Will” State, meaning that an employer has the right to discharge an employee at any time for any reason or no reason.

III. PHILOSOPHIES**FAMILY INVOLVEMENT:**

We pride ourselves on open communication with families. You will be expected to have professional, verbal, as well as written communication with parent(s)/guardian(s) on a daily basis.

Daily reports will be given to parents either in hard copy form on our Daily Sheets or via the MyKidzDay App.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:

Please be aware of our social responsibility: We take pride in owning a small business in Troy, NY. We believe that small businesses have a social responsibility to give back to the community which supports them. We strive to purchase foods and supplies from local farms, businesses, stores, and vendors. Supporting local farms and vendors will help our community as a whole thrive. We also participate with local CSA Farm Shares. If you have any further suggestions on how we could give back to the community, please let us know!

PHILOSOPHY OF EARLY EDUCATION:

Children will develop and learn more in these early stages than in any other point in his/her life and our goal is to make the most of this crucial time. We have a deep respect and appreciation for all early learners. We believe children thrive best in a peaceful, holistic, supportive, and nurturing environment where they are encouraged to embrace opportunities for self-discovery. We believe that when allowed to unfold in their own way and own time, children discover and inspire the best in themselves and others.

During the early years, what children need most is to feel safe, secure and loved. Therefore, building quality, personal relationships with caregivers is at the core of our program. We believe this allows each child to feel secure, confident, and able to rapidly learn through new explorative experiences within their environment. We have structured our rooms and programs through the eyes of early learners with plenty of opportunities for self-discovery.

Our toddler classroom is child-centered and provides daily educational experiences through free and guided play. The children will have the opportunity to participate in role play, art, music, reading, gardening, puppet shows, physical activity, dance, family-style meals, etc. At Eco Baby Children's Center, we believe the path to early language literacy begins with basic conversations between caregivers and young children. Each child's caregivers will promote early language development by using simple words the children understand and by interacting with each child daily through the use of books, songs, puppet plays, etc.

In our 3 and 4-year-old classrooms, the children begin getting accustomed to more structured environments. While they will still be allowed plenty of time for free exploration, they will start participating in daily academic centers as well as a structured and educational "morning meeting". At this stage, children will focus on letter/name/number recognition and writing, counting, shape sorting, early science exploration based on STEM research, and fine motor skills (cutting, tracing, etc.). By the time children reach our 4-year-old classroom, the children begin focusing on Kindergarten readiness by aligning lessons to the Core Body of Knowledge and the Early Learning Guidelines. While there is an emphasis on academics at this age, our programs

continue to focus on building social/emotional skills through play-based activities, physical development through movement and exercise, and creativity by incorporating the arts and music on a daily basis.

SIGN LANGUAGE:

We often use basic signs along with words when communicating with young children because we believe there are many benefits to using sign language. Signing allows early learners to clearly communicate while building verbal language skills, it reduces stress and frustration, reinforces verbal language by adding visual kinesthetic emphasis to auditory input, and builds on a child's natural tendency to use gestures. Sign language won't delay verbal language development, but may instead, accelerate it. .

DAILY SCHEDULE:

Each classroom must post a Daily Schedule, which outlines the overall structure of the day. It must be broken down into times and include free play, morning group time, learning activities/centers, physical activity, rest period, meals, handwashing, and bathroom/diapers, in addition to anything else you would like to add.

III. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES:

SHOE FREE POLICY:

We have implemented a strict shoe free policy. Staff must remove their shoes upon entering our daycare facility and keep them off while inside the daycare facility.

MEALS AND SNACKS:

We understand the importance of quality nutrition. We vow to serve only natural foods, and vow to provide local and organic foods as available. Our foods will never contain any artificial preservatives or high-fructose corn syrup. Our milk, eggs, and the majority of our meats are supplied from local farms. Fruits and vegetables are from local farms as available. We seasonally participate in a local CSA farm share. All of our meals/snacks are prepared on-premises.

Food must always be prepared using cold water from the faucet that has run for minutes to reduce any contaminants.

Water must be available to all children of an appropriate developmental age when they are thirsty.

We currently provide breakfast, lunch, and snack, but this is subject to change. We participate with CACFP (Food Program), so please be sure to make sure serving sizes follow regulations for each age group. Meals provided by us must be documented on the Record of Meal Production (Food Log).

When serving/preparing meals, please make sure you have a food glove on your hand if touching food. Dishes must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized appropriately.

MICROWAVE:

Microwaves are for staff use ONLY. We never use the microwave for any food/drink preparation for the children.

BREASTFEEDING:

We support mothers who wish to visit their child and breastfeed them at our facility. The mother can choose to breastfeed in a comfortable chair in a private area or in the room in which the child is being cared for. We support a mother's right to breastfeed where she feels most comfortable and feel that it is healthy for other children to witness breastfeeding in a supportive environment. Employees will be responsible for supporting breastfeeding mothers.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE/OUTDOOR PLAY:

We believe that daily, physical movement is an integral part of early child development. When weather appropriate, each child will be provided with the opportunity for both structured and unstructured outdoor play each day. In the colder months, children may have the opportunity to play outside if the appropriate clothing has been provided (coat, snow pants, hat, boots, gloves, etc.). On days when the weather is uncooperative, we will provide some form of structured and unstructured indoor movement for children. Our structured gross motor activities could include, but are not limited to, dancing, stretching, yoga, organized games, walking, etc.

The children will have the opportunity to play outside in two different courtyards on the premises. The children will also go on short walks to various locations in downtown Troy, primarily to Barker Park. We have been approved through the Office of Child and Family Services to walk the children to Barker Park to play on their age-appropriate equipment.

During the warmer months, the preschool-aged classrooms will participate in local field trips. Examples of typical trips include, but are not limited to: attending the Kid's Music Series at Barker Park in July and August, visiting the local firehouse and post office, going bowling at Uncle Sam Bowling, visiting the Troy Music Academy and spending some time visiting and learning about other local businesses in downtown Troy. At Eco Baby, we believe that having the children participate in local walking trips not only teaches them the valuable skills needed to walk on downtown sidewalks but enhances their learning experience by exposing them to environments and situations they wouldn't normally see here at the center.

TOILET LEARNING

We do not believe in toilet training, but toilet learning. We believe that toilet learning is an evolving process that is learned over time. Employees will not force children to use the toilet, but will assist them when they display cues of interest and encourage appropriately. Employees must never discipline a child for having a toilet related

accident. We do not require children to be using the toilet when entering our 3-year-old program.

DIAPERING

We are supportive of cloth diapering families and are able to accommodate all types of cloth diapers. However, we support the family's choice to send in the type of diaper that they choose.

Diaper Creams/Powders: We do not supply diaper creams. Parents must supply it and fill out a form for topical treatment. For the respiratory health and safety of all children, we do not allow powders at our facility.

TEETH BRUSHING:

While brushing your teeth is an important skill that children love to learn, we are not able to accommodate teeth brushing at our facility at this time.

SELF-SOOTHING:

Many children develop self-soothing habits early in their life while in the care of their parents/guardians. Some suck thumbs or fingers, while some are given pacifiers. We believe in allowing the child to have access to their previously established self-soothing mechanisms as necessary. Caregivers will follow the child's lead in providing opportunities for self-soothing.

Please note: We do not support the abrupt removal of self-soothing items (pacifiers) from a child's world. We believe this causes unnecessary stress.

TEETHING:

Each child will most likely deal with teething symptoms while in our care. We understand that this can be a quite uncomfortable time for babies. We hope to work with families to develop appropriate holistic ways to soothe your baby's sore gums. We will not apply topical numbing gels/solutions to the gums because we feel that numbing areas in the mouth could pose a choking hazard.

DISCIPLINE POLICY:

Employees of Eco Baby Children's Center, LLC must abide by the following Discipline Policy:

At Eco Baby Children's Center, age-appropriate rules are established for each room to ensure the safety and happiness of all children. Our goal is to help children develop self-control and take responsibility for his/her actions. We are clear and consistent with our rules. We explain rules to children in developmentally appropriate ways (simple verbal language & sign language). When a rule is broken, the care-giver will provide discipline without prolonged delay in the following 3 steps:

1. Explanation: The caregiver will explain to the child on his/her eye level how his/her behavior breaks a rule and why this rule is necessary. This gives the child a chance to self-correct his/her behavior.
2. Redirection: The caregiver will gently redirect the child to a new situation.
3. Discipline: If and only if, multiple attempts at explanation and redirection have been used and/or the child's behavior has the potential to harm themselves, other children, or staff, the child will be separated briefly from group activities. At this point the caregiver will gently explain how the behavior breaks a rule and why the rule is necessary. We do not use the phrase "time out," but instead suggest to the child that they have some "calm time" to themselves. The child will be given space to calm down and reflect on the situation. They will remain in close proximity to the caregiver and the caregiver will interact with the child before they return to group activities. Again, our goal is for children to develop ways for building self-control and taking responsibility for their actions.

Aggressive Behavior: If a child continues to show repetitive acts of aggression, we will develop strategies to reduce acts of aggression. Aggressive acts will be documented in writing and reported to the family. If aggressive behavior comes to a point that it jeopardizes the safety of other students or staff, the child's enrollment may be terminated at our discretion (see termination policy).

BITING:

Biting is a normal behavior in the development of many infants/toddlers. However, when it happens, we understand that it is scary and frustrating for all people involved. It is our job to provide a safe setting for all children. We take the following proactive measures when biting occurs:

1. Let the biting child know in words and sign language that biting is unacceptable.
2. Avoid immediate responses that reinforce biting (ex: negative attention). Instead, we focus on caring for the child who has been bitten. The biter is talked to in a level that they can understand.
3. We will examine the context of the biting for any habitual patterns.
4. We will not attribute willfulness or maliciousness to the child.

If biting changes from a relatively infrequent occurrence to an expected outcome, we will do the following:

1. The caregiver will document each biting occurrence, including attempted bites.
2. The caregiver will anticipate biting occurrences and implement preventative measures. They will teach non-biting responses to situations and reinforce appropriate behavior in biting situations.
3. The caregiver may make changes to the room environment to reduce any triggers to potential biting situations (competition for toys or materials, congestion, etc.)

MEDICAL RECORDS AND CONFIDENTIALITY:

We require current medical information on each child prior to enrollment and this must be updated annually.

We maintain strict confidentiality of all medical records and will keep each child's records on file for a minimum of 3 years after the child leaves our care.

Employees of Eco Baby Children's Center, LLC must maintain confidentiality of all information contained in each child's medical records.

ADMINISTERING MEDICATIONS:

Employees will be expected to administer over-the-counter topical medications, sunscreen, and bug repellent at the parent's/guardian's request, but the parent/guardian must complete the consent form. We will not administer a product if it comes in an aerosol can. Application of topical medications must be documented in the Daily Health Checks (see below):

DAILY HEALTH CHECKS:

Each classroom must keep a Daily Health Checks notebook for each child. The daily health check should be done as soon as the child arrives to care as possible. During the health check, you should check the child for any scratches, bruises, injuries that the child might have come in with. If you see something, write it down.

It should also be noted in the Daily Health Check if the child was ill while in care (runny nose, cough, rash, etc.) or was sent home sick.

IMMUNIZATIONS:

We require that current immunizations records from the child's pediatrician be kept on file and be updated annually. Parents/guardians are responsible to providing this information from the child's pediatrician.

PROCEDURES FOR ILLNESS:

Unfortunately, illness is inevitable from time to time in the daycare environment. We will do our best to minimize viruses and infections from spreading through the following measures:

If a child becomes ill while in our care, we will remove that child from the main rooms and have them rest in the office (quiet area) as long as we have the necessary staffing. Otherwise, they will be moved to a quiet area within the main room, away from the other children. Employees will take the child's temperature only through the temporal scanning method, for sanitary reasons. Employees will notify the parent/guardian that his/her child is not feeling well. Parents/guardians are asked to pick the child up within 2 hours after being called to do so.

If a child arrives at Eco Baby Children's Center and is displaying signs of illness, employees will assess the situation and determine if it is safe for your child to stay based on the following guidelines that we provide to families:

Vomiting: If a child is vomiting, they cannot attend daycare at Eco Baby Children's Center. If a child vomits while in our care, he/she will need to be picked up. Children

sent home for vomiting must remain out of care for the next full day and/or 24 hours after the last incident of vomiting.

Diarrhea: A child who has watery stools more than once a day will be sent home. Children may return to daycare once the diarrhea is under control. If your child has an allergy, condition or takes medication that causes diarrhea, please inform me and obtain a note from his/her pediatrician stating the cause of the diarrhea.

Fever: A fever is one of the body's natural defense mechanisms. If your child seems warm while in our care, we will take their temperature using the underarm method. We do not take temperatures orally or rectally. If the child has a low grade fever and no other symptoms, we will notify you, but they may remain in our care. However, if the child has a fever of 100.5 or higher, you will be required to pick up your child. The child must be out of care until they have been fever free/medicine free for 24 hours. We do not support parents/guardians administering fever reducing medications prior to drop-off to bring down a fever.

Common Cold Virus: The common cold virus in daycare is inevitable. Your child will need to stay home or will be sent home if he/she has an uncontrollable and consistent cough, a consistent thick, green discharge from the nose, or are too uncomfortable to participate in all the daily activities.

Conjunctivitis: This is a contagious infection of the eye. It can be characterized by a yellow discharge and tearing. The eyes may be crusty in the morning. With conjunctivitis, the child will need to stay home and may return to daycare after 24 hours of use of medication, when conjunctivitis is cleared, or with written permission from his/her pediatrician.

Strep Throat: Strep throat is a contagious infection. Often children will display a fever combined with a sore throat, although this is not always the case. If your child is diagnosed with strep throat, they will need to stay home. The child may return to daycare with written permission from his/her pediatrician or after being on medication for 24 hours.

Ear Infection: Ear infections are not contagious, but can be very uncomfortable for children and often require the attention of your health-care provider. If an ear infection is suspected, please contact your child's health-care provider.

Coxsackie Virus (Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease): This virus can be characterized by small blisters or red spots on the palms and soles, and/or small painful ulcers in the mouth. Symptoms may include fever, sore throat, stomach pain, and diarrhea. If your child displays these symptoms or is diagnosed with Coxsackie Virus, they will need to stay home until they are fever-free and any open sores have healed.

Chicken Pox: If a child develops chicken pox, he/she may not attend daycare until after the sores are scabbed over and are dry. Please notify us as soon as possible if you feel that your child may have been exposed to chicken pox. We will notify all parents if a child in our care develops chicken pox.

Head Lice: If a case of head lice is suspected, the child's family will be notified immediately. The child will need to be picked up. The child must be free of any lice

eggs before they can return to daycare. This is more of a nuisance than a health hazard, but it is the only way the infection can be stopped. If there is a reported case, all children will be checked for any signs of head lice.

Herpes Simplex Viral Infections (Cold Sores): Children with open sores near or around the mouth that cannot be covered may not attend daycare. This virus is highly contagious. Children can return to daycare when the blisters are crusted over or with a note from the pediatrician stating that they child may return to daycare.

Yeast Infection/Diaper Rash: This can be common in babies and young children in diapers. Some children are susceptible than others. If your child develops red, raised, round spots in the diaper area, please work with your child's health-care provider to discuss ways to control this uncomfortable issue. There are many holistic treatments, as well as prescription antibiotics and creams.

***Employees will be provided with a copy of Eco Baby Children Center's Health Care Plan.

ALLERGIES:

Parents/guardians must inform our staff in writing of any allergies.

***Please note: We do not offer peanut butter at our facility or provide any foods that contain nuts. Soy nut butter, which is not related to the nut family, is offered instead. Thank you for your understanding in this delicate matter.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN:

During any evacuation, Eco Baby Children Center, LLC's primary focus will be on the immediate evacuation and safety of children. Our facility is hard-wired to the Troy Fire Department and we also have a full sprinkler system. Our emergency evacuation plans are posted conspicuously in all rooms of our center. Visual diagrams of evacuation routes are posted as part of our evacuation plan.

Fire Drills/Emergency Evacuation Drills: We will conduct at least monthly, pre-arranged evacuation drills at least monthly to be in compliance with NYS regulations. During a drill, emergency personnel will be notified and our alarm will be sounded. The director or his /her designee will confirm that all children have left the premises and that everyone is accounted for. At that point, children and staff will re-enter the building.

Please note: In order to decrease confusion, if a parent/guardian is present during a fire drill, we ask that you participate in the fire drill and stay with your child until the drill has ended.

In any evacuation, the following policies apply:

- An alarm will sound signaling that all children and adults should immediately evacuate the building.
- One staff member from each room will be required to take our prepared "emergency bags" (containing phone numbers, first aid kit, etc.)

- All children will exit the building following the primary or secondary routes.
- Attendance: Attendance for each room will be taken promptly upon exit from the building. The director, or his/her designee, will make sure that everyone has left the building and that everyone is accounted for.
- Relocation Sites: If we are unable to return to the daycare center, we have designated relocation sites where we will take the children until a parent/guardian can pick their child up.

In the event of an emergency evacuation, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified via phone. Up to date phone lists are in our emergency bags that staff will bring with them. An e-mail will also be sent if possible.

SHELTER IN PLACE:

In some situations, it may be necessary to remain on site while taking special precautions to ensure the safety of the children and staff. This may include keeping children in care beyond normal business hours or the short term restriction of movement in or out of the program. If this happens, we will notify parent(s)/guardian(s) by phone and email. During Shelter in Place, we will continue to do our best to meet all of the children's needs.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/MALTREATMENT:

All staff members of Eco Baby Children's Center, LLC are mandated reporters according to the policies set forth by New York State and the New York Child Protective System. Mandated reporters are required to report instances of suspected child abuse or maltreatment to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment. We are not required to notify the parents of other persons legally responsible either before or after the report. For more information about child abuse and maltreatment, please refer to NYS OCFS regulation 418-1.10 or call the Child Abuse Public Hotline at 1-800-342-3720.

PETS/ANIMALS:

We do have pet bunnies at Eco Baby and love the experience the children get from caring for and loving a class pet.

IV. ADDITIONAL POLICIES/PROCEDURES

FISCAL POLICIES:

Tuition: Eco Baby is a privately owned and operated OCFS licensed daycare center. That means that our budget relies on tuition paid by our families and/or subsidy payments. Our center has a locked tuition box in which families are to submit payments. If a family attempts to hand you a check or cash, please direct them to the tuition box. The director will place receipts in student mailboxes.

If a family chooses to pay by credit or debit card, please have them meet with the director to process that payment or arrange and auto-debit.

Budget/Funds: The tuition that comes in to the center directly pays our staff, our rent, our utilities (phone, internet, etc.), food/milk, insurance (liability, workers' comp, & disability), classroom supplies, cleaning supplies, professional development, etc.

Payroll: Your hours worked will be documented using our time clock. If you forget to clock in or out, please see the director to document your hours. GTM Services, based in Clifton Park, handles all of our payroll needs. Hours worked are reported to our payroll representative by the owner or director. As an employee, you are then paid bi-weekly and have the option of choosing to receive a live check or direct deposit. Live checks are mailed to the center and direct deposit disperses the funds directly to your bank account. GTM Services also handles all of our payroll taxes and tax filings.

ACCOUNTING POLICY:

Eco Baby manages their own basic accounting using Quick Books. Eco Baby generates quarterly reports in Quick Books and all information that is put into Quick Books is then passed along to our accountant at Scott, Stackrow & Co., a local company based in Troy, NY. Our accountant reviews all data and files to the IRS on our behalf.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE:

Eco Baby Children's Center is open promptly each day at 7:00 am. Children must be picked up before closing at 5:30 pm. Children will be signed in and signed out upon arrival and departure using our Attendance Sheets. No child will be able to leave with a person other than a parent/guardian unless their name is on the release form. Parents must also give oral/written permission prior to pick-up.

MARKETING:

Eco Baby heavily relies on word-of-mouth for marketing. Most families are enrolled through word of mouth. It is the responsibility of all staff to work together to provide the highest quality programs that the families who are enrolled can share their positive experiences with friends/family/community members.

We do also use Facebook as a marketing tool. If you are taking pictures in your classroom of an event or activity that you think would make a good Facebook post, please send those pictures to the director. You may only photograph those children whose parents have signed the consent form upon enrollment.

From time to time, if we are holding a special event, we will have flyers available. Please feel free to take some and disburse them to anyone who might be interested.

STAFF RECRUITMENT:

Job postings will be listed internally on the staff bulletin board and listed on sites such as Craigslist.com, Indeed.com, etc. We also inform programs such as the Early Childhood Program at Hudson Valley Community College, when we have job openings.

Eco Baby takes pride in recruiting individuals with experience and knowledge of Early Childhood Development, but we are also willing to provide necessary training to those with less experience. We believe in providing necessary professional development so that all staff members can increase their knowledge of early childhood best practices.

Eco Baby is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against candidates based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc. We believe in creating a diverse staff that is truly reflective of the community in which we serve.

NAPS:

We believe that rest and naps are very important to child development. We strive to provide a calm, soothing environment that encourages children to rest when they are tired. We have set aside time from 1 pm to 3 pm for nap/quiet time. If a child chooses not to nap, they may play/read quietly. We will never force a child to take a nap.

Toddlers (18 months to 36 months) will nap on cots with blankets provided from home. We also have two cribs for our younger toddlers if needed. To prevent the spread of germs and illness, sleep items should be sent home and washed weekly.

Children in our three-year-old classroom will nap on cots with blankets provided from home. To prevent the spread of germs and illness, sleep items should be sent home and washed weekly.

Our four-year-old children rest on mats with blankets provided from home.

TOYS FROM HOME:

We ask that parents/guardians do not bring toys, book, etc. from home. It is very easy for them to get mixed up with our toys or for other children to want to play with them. If a child has a special sleep toy or blanket used for naps, they may bring it with them, but it must be labeled clearly with the child's first and last name. Due to our policy on napping.

FOOD FROM HOME:

We respect the family's right to supply their own food for their own child. If families desire to send in specific food items for their child's meals/snacks, they may do so. Families should inform the care-giver upon drop-off of any foods that will need to be refrigerated/heated.

However, due to our beliefs on the importance of local/natural/organic foods, we will not allow families to bring in foods from home to share with the group or any other children.

INCLEMENT WEATHER/CLOSING:

Eco Baby Children's Center will close for inclement weather when the Troy City School District is closed. If the Troy City School District has a two-hour delay, we will open on a two-hour delay. Please stay tuned to the local school closings for this information.

CELEBRATORY EVENTS:

Out of respect for religious diversity, we do not celebrate specific religious holidays. But out of the love for celebration, we will have organized celebrations around Halloween, Thanksgiving, seasonally themed celebrations, Earth Day, the 4th of July, and individual birthdays. Families must be notified of these celebrations at least a week in advance.

DIVERSITY:

We embrace diversity in our daycare culture and do not discriminate against families based on race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, etc. We are an equal opportunity employer and do not discriminate against employees based on race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, etc.

TERMINATION PROCESS:

Eco Baby Children's Center reserves the right to terminate any child's enrollment in our program at any time.

HANDBOOK AGREEMENT:

All employees must sign and return the last page of this handbook, stating that they have received and read the current Employee Handbook in its entirety, understand it, and agree to comply with its contents.



Employee Handbook Agreement

I _____ am employed by Eco Baby Children's Center.

I _____ have been provided with a copy of the current Employee Handbook, have read it in its entirety, understand all of its contents, and agree to comply with its contents. I understand this is not a contract of employment, rather I am an "at-will" employee who can be fired for any or no reason.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Eco Baby Children's Center, LLC Director Signature: _____

Date: _____ Print Name: _____

Title: _____