



# *First Step*



# *Daycare Handbook*



**5343 Jefferson Street**

**Moss Point, MS**

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## **Table of Contents**

<i>Welcome .....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Purpose and Goals .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Child Care Regulations and Summary .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>General Information For Parents.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Payment Policy.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Parental Involvement.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Educational Curriculum .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Discipline Policy.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Volunteer Guidelines.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Medications/Injury .....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>After School Program.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Receipt of Handbook &amp; Payment Form .....</i>	<i>15</i>

**Welcome  
To  
First Step Daycare**

*Dear Parents:*

*We are happy to have your child enrolled in our preschool program. We know that the time spent with us will be beneficial to both you and your child.*

*It is the aim and purpose of First Step to provide experiences that will contribute to your child's physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development. We recognize that each child is a unique individual and that each child has its own developmental characteristics. It is our goal that each child becomes independent and develops as an individual.*

*A child's first experience in a preschool program will have a great deal to do with shaping of his/her educational and social growth. Your attitude will greatly influence your child. Be enthusiastic about things s/he does and show that you are truly interested. This is one of the best ways to get your child started on a happy and successful learning journey.*

*Since we are here to serve both you and your child, we are always happy to have input from our parents. Feel free at any time to make an appointment with your child's teacher or with me to discuss your ideas and concerns. We ask that you read our handbook carefully to become familiar with all policies and retain it for future use.*

*We are looking forward with excitement to working with you and your child to make FIRST STEP PRESCHOOL the day care facility in the state.*

*Sincerely,*

*Barbara Walker,  
Daycare Director*

*Teria Siggall,  
Asst. Center Specialist*

## *Purpose and Goals*

- To provide high quality childcare to every child;
- To provide the opportunity of growth and learning in a healthful wholesome environment;
- To spark in each child the desire to learn and instill self esteem;
- To work with parents on parenting skills;
- To partner with parents informing them of community services available to them and their family;
- To insure that each child knows that she/he is a vital part of society by accentuating the positive;



## ***Child Care Regulations and Summary***

The Regulations Governing Licensure of Child Care Facilities requires that Child care providers supply you with a summary of the Child Care Regulations that govern the licensure of child care facilities. You will find that information below.

The Child Care Regulations are the rules and regulations that each child care facility in Mississippi must follow in order to maintain their Child care License. You, as a parent, are entitled access to these regulations. Among the subjects covered in the Child Care regulations are:

Licensing Requirement	Health, Hygiene and Safety	School Age Care
Right of Entry and Violations	Nutrition and Meals	Summer Day Camp
Facility Policies and Procedures	Discipline and Guidance	School Age Program
Personnel Requirements	Transportation	Hourly Child Care
Records	Diapering and Toileting	Hearing, Emergency
Reports	Rest Periods	Suspension, Legal Actions & Penalties
Staff Requirements	Feeding of Infants & Toddlers	Release of Information
Program of Activities	Swimming & Water	
Equipment, Toys & Materials		
Building and Grounds		

### APPENDIXES

**Appendix A-** Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting  
**Appendix B-** Reportable Diseases  
**Appendix C-** Nutritional Standards  
**Appendix D-** Playground Safety  
**Appendix E-** Dishwashing Procedures

**Appendix F-** Hand washing Procedures  
**Appendix G-** Diaper Changing Procedures  
**Appendix H-** Cleaning & Disinfection Procedure  
**Appendix I-** Communicable Disease/Conditions &  
Return to Child Care Guidelines

*A full copy of the Child Care Regulations should be located in the Director's Office of your child care facility. It should be available for your examination upon request. You may also access the regulations at [www.MSDH.STATE.MS.US](http://www.MSDH.STATE.MS.US) (from the left menu, select Licensing, then, Child Care. You may direct your questions to the local licensing official Karen House, Gulfport, MS at 228-867-6236 or you may contact the Child Care Licensure office in Jackson at (601) 576-7613.*

*Should you have a complaint concerning a child care facility, contact the licensing official listed above or call the Child Care Licensure office, toll free, at 1-866-489-8734.*

## *General Information for Parents*

Hours: 6:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Daycare  
2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. After school program

Holidays: Mardi Gras, Good Friday, Memorial Day, the 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (Thursday & Friday) (2) weeks at Christmas.

### Requirements for Entrance:

- A. An application form must be completed and returned to the Director at the time of registration.
- B. Birth Certificate/ Social Security Card
- C. Registration fees and one week in advanced paid
  - 1. Registration Fee: \$20.00
  - 2. Full Time Fee: \$75.00
  - 3. After School Fee: \$40.00
- D. Handbook form signed
- E. Agreement of payment form signed
- F. Certificate of Compliance Form 121 submitted

Parents must register at our facility located at 5343 Jefferson Street, Moss Point (769-3292, ext 149 or 769-3319). Registration fee and one week's day care fee must be paid in advance before the child begins.

## ***Payment Policy***

- A. The registration fee and one week in advance are due on the first day of enrollment. Registration fees are non-refundable and non- transferrable.
- B. Fees are due to fiscal by THURSDAY afternoon before the week that your child will attend (pay this THURSDAY for next week). All co payment must be paid by the 1st THURSDAY of every month. Grace period until FRIDAY afternoon.
1. If payment in full is not received by the due date, there will be a \$5.00 late fee.
  2. No child will be accepted on TUESDAY if fees are due.
  3. A late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged when you pick up your child after 5:30 p.m.
- C. Please make your checks payable to Jackson County Civic Action Committee (JCCAC).
- D. NSF (non-sufficient funds) checks will in the following
1. A \$20.00 NSF fee will be assessed
  2. Suspension of participation in the program if payment or arrangement is not made within 24 hours of parents being notified of NSF check.
  3. NSF checks could result in all future payments being paid by cash or money order.
- E. If your child is registered as a full-time student, you must pay the entire full time fee, regardless of whether your child attends or not. This includes summer months. There will be no credit for absences which are for less than one week (one week applies to Monday-Friday only). If your child attends any portion of the week, program fees are due in full. A two (2) week advance notice must be given before withdrawing your child (ren). This gives us time to fill this slot before your child leaves.
- G. The exception to these policies will be in cases of lengthy illness. If your child is ill and out of the center for one week, you MAY BE charged half of the usual fee. However, in order to receive the reduction, you will be required to present a doctor's excuse upon payment of weekly fees. If your child attends only one day, the entire weekly fee MUST be paid.

**ALL FEES MUST BE PAID DURING ALL SCHEDULED HOLIDAY, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE TWO-WEEK CHRISTMAS BREAK.**

## *Parental Involvement*

Parents can work together to decide what type of learning experience they want their children to have in First Step. That is what this Handbook is all about. Parents should be involved in First Step because it is their children who are being affected by the program. The reasons for parent involvement are that simple. The task of operating the best program for the child is not at all simple.

Making a good Day Care program calls for many people to work together, sharing their talents, knowledge and energy so that the children can receive the greatest benefits. The more knowledge and energy parents and staff can invest in the program, the better the program will be.

There are three (3) areas of special knowledge parents have that make the program a better one:

1. The parents are experts on their child;
2. The parents have an idea of what they want their child to learn;
3. Parents know the community in which they live.

Because the parents know their child, they can provide the expertise to assist staff in planning a program that best fits the needs of the children to function in the community.

We ask parents to:

1. Encourage and help your child to give proper attention to health, personal cleanliness, and neatness of dress.
2. Insist that your child bring home any communications from school. READ ALL NOTICES that your child bring home.
3. Speak well of teachers, center specialist, and the education they are trying to provide.
4. If you don't like what's going on, tell the teacher and/or Center specialist.
5. Take an active part in parent-teacher activities.
6. Encourage your child to follow the rules of the center and obey the teaching staff. Teach them the importance of safety in school.

### *Absences:*

First Step Daycare office (769-3319) must be notified by telephone prior to 10:00 a.m. each day if your child is absent in order to ensure accountability of all children safety.

### *Drop- In Students*

Drop in students must meet the same entrance requirement as full time students. The maximum number of days per week for a drop in student is 2. Fees must be paid daily. Students that attend more than 2 days must pay full daycare fees.

### *Field Trips*

Periodically we take field trips away from the center. We must have a signed, returned permission slip before any child is allowed to go. We must have adequate adult/child ratios for all field trips. So please volunteer for fields trips if possible.

### *Rest*

All children are expected to rest from 1 to 1 ½ hours each day. Except in emergency cases, please DO NOT pick up your child during naptime. Naptime is scheduled from noon to 1:30 p.m.

### *Clothing*

We suggest comfortable, washable clothes for school and play. Please label all removable clothing with the child's name. Every child should have an extra set of (labeled) clothes to be left in his/her cubby at all times. All children must be dressed in their clothes upon arrival at the Center (pajamas and/or gowns are not acceptable). Please do not allow your child to bring or wear anything of great value to school (this includes jewelry). Children must wear shoes while at the Center. No flip flops are allowed.

### *Outdoor play*

We will spend some time outdoors each day when the weather permits. If there is any reason your child may not be outdoors, please send a doctor note that day stating that the child is to be kept inside.

### *Meals*

Daily meals include breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Meals will be posted on the Bulletin Board for each month. A licensed dietician will approve these menus. If a child has any food or other allergies, please note these with the Center Specialist at registration time. Please include EVERYTHING your child is allergic to and any medication he may be taking.

### *Dismissal*

Your child WILL NOT BE ALLOWED to leave the Center at anytime with ANYONE other than the persons designated on the applications. If someone other than the designee on the application, the parent must send a signed note. All persons picking up children who are not known to staff will be required to show identification. This is for your child's safety. A sign- out sheet must also be signed by the person picking up your child (ren).

Please do not send your child into the center by himself or send a child under 13 years of age to pick up your child. No one under 13 years of age will be allowed to sign your child in to the center or out of the center.

You will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 for every minute you are late picking up your child; LATE fees begin at 5:31. At that time you will be required to sign an infraction notice for late pickup. After the third infraction, your child may be dropped from the program.

## ***Educational Curriculum***

The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos will be used to provide developmentally appropriate practice for learning opportunity at First Step Daycare.

### ***The Creative Curriculum***

- Create an environment in which children are safe, feel emotionally secure and have a sense of belonging.
- Provide responsive care giving to meet the individual needs of children
- Provide safe, developmentally appropriate learning experience
- Individualize schedules, routines, and experiences to meet each child's needs.
- Set limits and guide learning in ways that reflect realistic expectations for children's behavior.

## ***Discipline Policy***

At Jackson County Civic Action Committee- First Step, we believe that each child has a right to play and learn in a protective and safe environment. It is our responsibility to strengthen, mold and teach each child in such a way that they learn to be self-disciplined. Discipline is guidance. Please read this with your child/children and explain if necessary.

### ***Procedure:***

Each classroom will have a set of rules and consequences which the teacher will instruct the children on daily. For children who do not follow the classroom rules, consequences will be applied. Some options available to the teacher are:

### ***Classroom Rules:***

- A. Keep hands and feet to yourself
- B. Respect others
- C. No running in the classroom or the hallway
- D. Take turn sharing
- E. No biting

## **Consequences:**

1. *The child may go to "My Special Place"*
2. *Assigned seating – sitting besides the teacher for the day.*

All children will be rewarded for appropriate behavior. Rewards could include, but not limited to praises, stickers, hugs and special time with the teacher.

If you have questions or concerns regarding our disciplinary policy, it is your responsibility to discuss it with the director during registration or within the first week of your child's enrollment. Otherwise, this method will be used.

Some of the rules, when broken, that result in disciplinary action:

Fighting

Uncontrollable behavior such as: spitting, throwing objects, screaming etc.

Stating unacceptable words

Any child whose behavior cannot be controlled will be suspended for three (3) days. You must still pay a full week's fee while your child is on suspension. If the behavior continues your child will be dropped from our program.

## **Special Activities**

Indoor/Outdoor Games

Field trips

Arts and Crafts

## **Bringing Items From Home**

JCCAC or FIRST STEP is NOT responsible for items brought in to the center that has been lost, stolen or damaged. NO CANDY, GUM OR COINS should be brought to the center!!

## **Volunteer Guidelines**

We welcome you to the Center. We appreciate you giving your time for the benefit of all of us here at First Step. We hope you enjoy your experience with us and hope to see you again soon. When you come again, bring a friend or a relative. They will enjoy it also.

1. Contact Center Specialist to schedule volunteer time.
2. As soon as you enter the Center, contact the Center Specialist or Teacher to determine the area of need, your interest, or your desire to just observe.

## ***Medications/Injury***

A child may not receive medication of any type from First Step Program unless such medication is absolutely necessary and required by a doctor on a scheduled basis. If this is the case, we ask parents to follow the procedures:

1. Fill out medication form, advising the Director of type of medicine, amount and frequency of dosage.
2. The medication must be in the original container with the pharmacist's label marked with the prescription number, date, child's name and physician's name.
3. At the end of the medication period, parents should take home unused medication or give First Step permission to dispose of it.
4. Do not put any medications in your child's cubby, PLEASE give it to the teacher. No medications should be sent in put sack or bag. Please bring plastic containers whenever possible.

### ***Injury***

Jackson County Civic Action Committee, Inc. carries general liability insurance and health care coverage for children in the event of an accident requiring emergency medical attention. If your child is covered by private health care insurance, our carrier will pay the cost of any uncovered medical expenses.

If your child is injured, our staff will follow our Medical Emergency Procedures. These steps are not limited to the following:

- A. Call 911 for medical emergency. Attempts to contact a parent or guardian.
- B. Attempts to contact a parent or guardian through any of the persons listed on the emergency information form.

If we cannot contact a parent/guardian, we will do any of the following:

- A. Have the child taken to an emergency hospital in the company of a staff member.
- B. Complete an incident report, forward to the finance officer and placed a copy in child's file.
- C. Give parent agency insurance form to complete.

### *Illness:*

We can accept only healthy children at our Center. You are urged to keep your child at home if there are visible signs of illness. In the event that your child becomes ill at the Center, parents will be notified. It will be the Director's decision to determine whether a child is well enough to return. A doctor's statement may be required by the Director before a child may return.

The following are considered basic reasons for sending a child home due to illness:

- A. Temperature
- B. Vomiting
- C. Diarrhea
- D. Croup (bad cough)
- E. Acute Congestion
- F. Suspicion of the following: Chicken pox, measles, mumps, strep throat, impetigo, pink-eye (conjunctivitis) thrush, ringworm, meningitis, and lice.

## ***After School Program***

The bus will pick up your child from school in the afternoons from schools in the Pascagoula and Moss Point areas. On days when the school system is closed, you will have to bring your child to the Center. Please inform the teachers of all non-school days as soon as possible. Your child will receive a snack when they come into the center and have time for recreational activities and homework. In case of unacceptable behavior or language, we will have a conference with you. If the behavior or language continues, it may become necessary to dismiss your child from the roll. Every effort will be made before this drastic action is taken. You will also be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute beginning 5:31p.m.

### ***Rest***

Nap time is scheduled from noon to 1:30 p.m. This will only apply to Head Start half days.

### ***Dismissal:***

Dismissal for after school is the same as the dismissal procedure listed on page 9 of this handbook.

Payment Policy for after school is the same as payment procedure listed on page 6 of this handbook.

**Receipt of Handbook & Payment Form**

This acknowledges that I, \_\_\_\_\_ have received my copy of Jackson County Civic Action Committee, Inc. First Step Daycare and Afterschool Handbook and that in part it has been discussed with me, but I also realize that it is my responsibility to read it completely and, if I have any questions, I may consult with the director.

I have read the payment policy and understand that nonpayment will result in termination of childcare services.

This handbook is a guide and a resource booklet and is subject to change without prior notification.

With this understanding, I accept this handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Parent's Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Child's Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Staff's Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*