



# Ingrid's Early Childcare Family Handbook

## ***Welcome family!***

I am pleased that you have chosen Ingrid's Early Childcare and welcome you to our family! We provide quality childcare in a loving home environment for children ages 6 weeks through 12 years. At Ingrid's Early Childcare, children are allowed to be children, and families are always a priority.

I believe that family engagement is an essential piece of high-quality childcare.

Communication is a key ingredient in creating a successful partnership with our families. The following pages of this handbook detail mutually beneficial requirements that are necessary to ensure there are no misunderstandings. These policies are to protect your child along with all the children and enforced with fairness and respect. Please read this handbook thoroughly and feel free to ask questions about any of the materials that may be unclear to you.

I look forward to a positive working relationship with all my children and their families! If you have any questions, feel free to ask and I will do my best to work with you to help make your child's experience here a happy one.

Thank you!

Kiara J Howard

## **Philosophy**

My goal is to provide your child with a clean, safe, and comfortable, fun, and nurturing learning environment where they learn through play with guidance and loving care while you are at work or attending school. We provide learning activities based on play that meet the needs of each child at their developmental level. The childcare environment and activities are planned for both the group and individual child based on their unique needs, abilities, learning styles, and interests. I plan activities and experiences to foster growth in each domain: physical, health, social/emotional, math, science, social studies, and language/literacy. My goal is for each child to be ready for future learning at school.

## **Non-Discrimination and Inclusion Policy**

We maintain a diverse environment that exhibits mutual respect for all children, families, staff, and community members. We provide an inclusive environment for all children, families, and staff without regard to race, color, gender, sexual orientation, family composition, national origin, ethnicity, economic background, handicap, or ability. We encourage you to share information about your family's language and culture that can be incorporated into our childcare. This could include having books in your home language, cultural food items in the play kitchen, and special activities for holidays.

I follow the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to make all reasonable accommodations to address the needs of individuals both children and adults with disabilities. We will familiarize our program with the child's specific needs, such as the Individualized Family Plan (IFSP), Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and any other medical or therapeutic information provided by the families. Children with special health care needs such as diabetes, food allergies, requiring use of a feeding tube, etc. are welcome in our family day care. We will work as a team communicating, sharing information, and using necessary resources to ensure that any child with special needs and special health care needs is welcome and supported.

**All children are accepted and welcomed into Ingrid's Early Child Care regardless of their health care needs.**

### **Enrollment Policies**

My enrollment process begins and interview where we can meet each other, and you can see my childcare. We also go over policies, emergency contact forms, health forms, immunization requirements, registration forms, picture forms, transportation forms, etc. We will set up a time for your child to come visit to get to know their new childcare environment as well as meet and greet each staff, volunteer and substitute here.

All MSDE and program form MUST be completed and returned before your child is admitted to our care. Failure to return forms or keep information current could result in your child's termination.

### **Business Hours & Attendance & Hours of Operation & Services and Fees**

I provide childcare **Monday through Friday from 7:00 am until 5:00pm**. Daily childcare services are based, determined, contracted, and provided per **individual parent's need, hours, and times**. Arrival and departure time is determined by **the start time of each child's shift**.

**DSS Vouchers are accepted here at Ingrid's Early Childcare. DSS Vouchers will begin on the date that they are given to the provider.** Parents must understand that they will be responsible to pay any monetary co-pay difference between the amount of the DSS Vouchers and the weekly fee amount charged by the childcare provider. DSS Vouchers end on the expiration date. **Ingrid's Early Childcare will provide two weeks' notice before your DSS Vouchers expiration date.**

Please call us at least 1 hour before your child's usual arrival time if they will not attend day care on that day. Children need **to arrive by 8:45am to have breakfast** and allow the childcare provider to focus on the children in her care.

**No one is permitted to enter after 9:00am** unless they have a doctor's or WIC appointment. Be sure to notify the day care if you have an appointment.

Please notify us if you plan to pick up your child earlier or later than your usual time. To ensure the safety of your child, only you or the person listed on your Emergency Information form may pick up your child. Phoning or texting us to inform us that someone other than yourself will be picking up your child is fine provided we know that person, and your child can identify them, or can give me a password previously provided for such occasions. We will release your child only to others who are age 16 years or older.

Be sure to sign the check in and out sheet each day and let any others who will pick up the child know they need to sign your child out. Your child needs your attention at drop-off and pick-up so do not be distracted by using your phone or talking to others.

Part time childcare is defined and provided to be up to 3 days at the rate of \$60 a day.

✓ Infants: \$330.00 a week (6 weeks – 12 months)

- ✓ Toddlers: \$300.00 a week (13 months – 23 months)
- ✓ Pre- School: \$270.00 a week (2 years – 5 years)
- ✓ Before/ After School and School Closure: \$150.00 a week (5 years – 12 years)

Special adjustable weekly rates may be considered for families with two or more full-time children needing care. A 10% discount will be applied for sibling's discount.

### **Communication and Parent Engagement**

We are a small, family-oriented program and try to maintain personal contact by talking with you daily and texting as needed. I provide on-going contact through texting, emailing and phone calls unless you have another preferred communication method. **Please let me know how it is best to reach you while your child is in my care.**

Parent conferences for more extended conversations about your child's progress will be offered twice a year either in-person or by phone, or at other times as needed. Keep us informed and up to date of any household, contact, or medical changes the impact your child.

As a family-oriented program, it's important that you as parents and family members are included in different activities along with your children throughout the year including holiday parties. We go on trips often and encourage you to join us. We also have a grand End-of-Summer picnic here in our backyard for you and your children.

### **Family Conferences**

At Ingrid's Early Childcare I will have 1 formal conference a year, parents will be informed via email, telephone calls/text messages, personal letters. Parents will sign up on parent board when picking up their child or at drop off.

### **Illness**

MSDE requires you to provide documentation of your child's health and up-to-date immunizations, and we do not accept children with incomplete immunizations. We cannot accept sick or contagious children. Please use good judgement when your child is not feeling well and cannot participate as usual in our full day of activities including going outside. Keep them home if they are throwing up, have diarrhea, or have a fever. If your child becomes ill while in childcare, we will contact you IMMEDIATELY for our, the other children's, and your child's health and protection.

We follow all MSDE and our local Health Department guidance for excluding contagious children and possible childcare closures.

Medication including both over the counter and prescribed will ONLY be given with written approval and the completed Medication Permission form.

### **Cleanliness & Hygiene**

We do our best to maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene standards. Children's hands are washed before & after meals, coming in from home & outside, and after toileting. In addition, toys & equipment are sanitized with a bleach solution daily. Please have your child bathed and dressed for play that includes art and outdoor play. Make sure they are dressed for all weather conditions.

### **Child Guidance/Discipline Policy**

While in our care, only positive encouragement is used. We believe the most effective ways of enforcing positive behaviors are **Praise, Respect, Positive Reinforcement, Re-direction, and**

**Reflection.** The first step is to be sure the children know the childcare expectations and rules such as “walk inside, run outside” and “hands are for helping, not hurting.” These rules and expectations are posted on the walls throughout our environment as reminders. Our older and more verbal children help to create the rules. I remind the children about our rules and expectations often during group discussions.

When needed, I talk to the child to ask if they know what they did wrong or what the conflict is to be sure they understand the rules and impact on each other. I provide them time and space to reflect, think, and discuss their behavior and what they can do to resolve it. During the day, children will have many opportunities to make choices, so they feel a sense of self-empowerment and control. At times, I will re-direct them to another area or toy to play with to avoid conflicts. These methods help them regulate their behaviors and play better with their friends. When there are disputes between friends, we will encourage them to speak to each other to work out their problem.

Children will NOT be subjected to spanking, restraint, denial of food, shaming, yelling, or any verbal, emotional, or physical punishment. If a child has continuing behavioral problems, you will be informed so we can work on this together.

### **Meals & Nutrition**

We provide breakfast, lunch, and 2 snacks to all children except those needing formula/breastmilk and prepared baby food as supplied by their parents. We are part of the Child and Adult Care Food Program and follow their policies for nutritious and healthy food. Fresh fruit and/or vegetables are served at least once daily, whole grain bread products are served, 1% milk is served at all meals and most snacks when 100% fruit juice might be served, and water is available throughout the day. Meat and poultry are served but not any pork products. Parents can provide food substitutes when a child has a determined food allergy or sensitivity, or otherwise needs pediatrician approval. Any food or meals provided by the families must meet the Food Program requirements.

Parents may provide special food and treats for birthday and holiday celebrations. All food must be purchased and in its original container so we can identify all ingredients. Please discuss these plans with us.

### **Supplies & Toys**

Parents of infants are responsible for supplying bottles, formula or breastmilk, baby food, diapers, and wipes. All parents are to supply at least 1 full set of extra clothes and a favorite blanket for rest/nap. Make sure your child's name is on ALL supplies you provide.

We have lots of safe and appropriate toys and equipment that all children of all abilities and learning styles can play with. We choose toys that the children are interested in playing with and rotate them with others in storage when the children start to become bored or need more challenges. Since we provide a wide variety of playthings, we ask that no toys from home be brought to childcare.

Anything brought in will be put up safely until the child is picked up. This policy is for the concern of all children in our care because often children have a hard time with sharing toys brought from home.

**There are 2 EXCEPTIONS to this policy:** Your child may bring a stuffed animal or doll to be used only during nap time. It will be put up until then. The other exception is Show & Tell and we will inform you ahead of time when this will be held.

### **Screen-Time Policy**

Babies and toddlers under age 2 years do not watch TV, videos, or use the computer/tablet. Children ages 2-5 years watch TV or online videos for exercising, movement, or educational media of no longer than 30 minutes to support our weekly theme or planned activities. The children ages 2 years and up have the option to use a tablet with educational apps during independent time in the morning and afternoon when I can closely monitor and for no longer than 30 minutes a week. Children are never forced to participate and can choose another option in our room.

When I have school-age children, they can use their tablets provided by the schools for homework and virtual learning as needed. At all times, children using any type of media are directly monitored by me and I provide interaction, support, and assistance.

**Children will NOT be subjected to spanking, restraint, denial of food, shaming, yelling, or any verbal, emotional, or physical punishment. If a child has continuing behavioral problems, you will be informed so we can work on this together.**

### **Inclement Weather & Emergency Closings**

We will be closed in accordance with local, Maryland State, Baltimore City Public Schools or Federal Government offices weather closings which include icy conditions, snow days, flooding, and such. Parents will be texted or please call for childcare hours and closings. If we need to close due to emergency situations only for a week or more, parents MAY NOT be charged their regular fees.

### **Fire and Emergency Evacuations**

I am trained in first aid and pediatric CPR. Every month, we have a fire drill and twice a year, we have an evacuation drill. If we need to evacuate to another location, we will go to Walk by Faith Ministries at 2500 E. Northern Pkwy. There is a copy of our emergency preparedness plan on our Parent News board.

### **Damages**

It is expected that your child will be respectful of all personal and childcare property and furnishings. A certain amount of "wear and tear" is expected but if your child intentionally damages property through destructive behavior or roughness, you may be liable for 100% of the replacement. This reimbursement will be due before the next month of childcare services begins.

### **Rates, Fees, & Payments**

We offer weekly tuition rates and daily rates as they are **due every Friday** in advance of the week of care. Payments can be made by cash, personal check, cashier's check, money order, Apple Pay or Zelle.

Tuition is charged even when your child is NOT here due to illness, family vacation, etc. Tuition is also charged for holidays, emergency closures up to 2 consecutive weeks, 8 days for childcare provider personal/vacation days, and family vacations with 2 weeks' notice and payment before the vacation begins.

Our holiday closing days and professional development closing days are:

New Year's Eve and Day  
Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday  
Presidents' Day  
Good Friday  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after  
Christmas Eve  
Christmas Day  
Juneteenth Day  
Professional Development Day's

Other fees must also be paid on Friday along with the next tuition payment. These fees include:

- **Late payment fee** of \$10 per day each tuition payment is late,
- **Returned check fee** of \$35 for each check (checks will no longer be accepted), and
- **Late pick up fee** of \$2.00 for each 1 minute late from contracted time, without prior approval.

If you are receiving a Childcare Scholarship, you are responsible for keeping their information current. You will be charged full tuition for any period before we receive your completed voucher. You will also be responsible for any balance not covered by your voucher.

### **Child Abuse & Neglect**

It is law and our responsibility as a childcare provider to report all suspected abuse or neglect involving the children or families in our care. We cannot turn our head on a child that might have been abused or neglected. Therefore, we will notify local Child Protective Services and/or Police Department when we suspect that a child in our care is being physically, sexually, or emotionally abused, neglected, or exploited.

### **Termination**

Termination by parent/guardian: We require a 2-week WRITTEN notice prior to removal of

your child from childcare for which tuition payment will be made.

Termination by the program: The child may be removed immediately or given up to a 2-week written notice for the following circumstance, but not solely limited to:

- Failure to comply with the policies set forth in this Policy Handbook.
- Failure to comply with the Enrollment Contract.
- Destructive or hurtful behavior of the child that persists even with parent cooperation in stopping the behavior.
- Child exhibits special needs or needs related to a serious illness that we at Ingrid's Early Childcare cannot meet. We will make every effort to find appropriate resources working together in the child's best interests.
- Non-payment of childcare tuition or other fees.
- Failure for child to attend for 5 consecutive days without communication.
- Abusive behaviors and/or verbal threats by parents or other family members toward childcare staff, other parents or family members, students, or others associated with the childcare.



# Ingrid's Early Childcare



## Family Handbook Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, parent/guardian of  
\_\_\_\_\_ have read and understand the policies of Ingrid's Early  
Child Care, and hereby agree to the terms and conditions contained in this Family  
Handbook. Changes to this handbook must be made in writing with advanced written  
notification. A new handbook or addendum may be signed at that time to reflect the  
changes. A failure by the provider to enforce one or more terms of this handbook does  
not waive the provider's right to enforce the other handbook terms.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Provider Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

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