

We Inspire the Promise of Tomorrow!



Vermont Hills Family Life Center
8835 SW Canyon Ln. #105
Portland, OR 97225

Vermont Hills Family Life Center



Child Development
Center
Parent Handbook

*We Inspire the Promise
of Tomorrow!*

Welcome to Vermont Hills Family Life Center

Dear Parents:

Vermont Hills Family Life Center welcomes you! Thank you for selecting us as your child's preschool care provider. Vermont Hills is proud to service the child care needs of children at several locations throughout the Portland Metropolitan area.

We believe each child is unique, and we strive to meet each child's individual needs. Our program provides opportunities to develop physical, mental and social skills while giving attention and encouragement in a safe and healthy environment.

Our staff is there to help capture your child's zest for learning as well as provide support for your family through a well defined program curriculum and nurturing child care.

This Parent Handbook features the philosophy of our curriculum, staffing standards, and daily structure. In addition, you will find information important to maintaining communication with Vermont Hills Family Life Center about children's needs.

We are here to assist you. Please feel free to call the Vermont Hills Family Life Center with any questions. Thank you.

Vermont Hills Family Life Center
Administrative Staff

Special Needs

Please advise your child's teacher of any allergies, disabilities, fears, strong dislikes or any other conditions which affect your child's health, happiness or ability to function in a group. While every effort is made to serve all children who need care, occasionally a child's special condition may limit VHFLC's ability to care for him/her in a group setting. Each case will be evaluated on its own merits and concerns or restrictions will be addressed with parents on a one-to-one basis. Care of differently abled or exceptional students should be discussed individually with the site staff and Director to determine the ability of VHFLC to meet those needs.

Tuition: VHFLC is a not for profit organization. The fees charged to the parents are set at a point where our income offsets our monthly expenses for space, toys, operating supplies, administrative and staff costs.

The cost of our program does not vary with individual daily absences, illnesses, school closures or vacations, so we do not make daily or hourly adjustments or provide any credits.

There are two payment plans available to clients in good standing to choose from:

Plan A: Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) deducted on the, First OR First and 15th

Plan B: Payment by check on the First OR First and 15th

Any remaining tuition due is then subject to collection. All families must provide the social security or drivers' license number of the parent responsible for payment. The number is only used in the event of collection proceedings. Parents refusing to provide the number may only choose Plan A or care may be refused.

VHFLC schedules tuition rate increases for September but reserves the right to adjust rates at any time. VHFLC also reserves the right to audit any and all attendance records to ensure proper billing has been done. Clients are responsible for payment for any/all services received.

A late fee of \$30.00 per occurrence will be charged Plan B if payment is not received at the site by the 5th/20th of the month. Plan A is charged a NSF fee if VHFLC is notified of insufficient funds. Payment must be brought to the Site Director within 24 hours of notice.

Failure to pay monthly tuition will result in the removal of enrolled children. Any remaining balance owed for tuition will be sent to collections.

Tuition-Registration-Attendance

Parent Involvement

VHFLC works intensively to be a resource for parents as well as a caregiver for their children in the following ways:

- * Daily contact with parents
- * Informal meetings
- * Formal meetings/child conferences
- * Training sessions where requested
- * Parent Advisory Council
- * Newsletters



The key to a positive partnership is **communication**, with parents being responsible for making sure their care provider is aware of the parents' goals, the provider being responsible for learning parents' goals, and ensuring that they fit within the overall philosophy of the care provider.

A **Parent Handbook** is given to all parents and presents information, including the program's philosophy and policies, as well as the services of the program. Hours, fees, parent requirements and responsibilities, as well as those of the program, are also discussed. Information is concise, arranged logically, and clearly written.

Parent Conferences, when necessary, can take several forms, including large group, small group, and individual conferences. Group conferences are utilized to present general information, and gather information from parents. Individual conferences, which may be either informal (e.g., a brief discussion as to whether a teacher is free during pick-up), or formal.

Parents are often busy and rushed when they arrive to pick up their children, but **parent visits** to the site are welcome and encouraged! Parents should always feel welcome and should feel free to participate with the current activity.

Parent volunteers are most welcome. As little as 15 or 20 minutes spent with a small group of children provides those children the opportunity to interact with other adult models, a wonderful learning experience. Larger scale volunteering could include field trips, work parties, etc.

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Tomorrow!*

Program—Activities—Schedule

Vermont Hills Family Life Center (VHFLC) is a not for profit organization which has provided child care in the Portland metropolitan area continuously since 1979 and currently services approximately 200 preschoolers and 200 school age children in over 12 sites.

VHFLC in accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Mission:

Vermont Hills Family Life Center provides families with education, development, and support through child care and other family services.

Philosophy:

Vermont Hills Family Life Center is dedicated to enriching the lives of children. Through a secure and warm environment that promotes self-esteem, our program involves each child in his/her various stages. We support the family as it encourages each child's special worth.

Values:

Vermont Hills family Life Center values and respects each child's individuality as well as the child's opportunity to experience fun, wonder and challenge in a social setting with positive, healthy role models.

Vermont Hills Family Life Center places a high value on open communication while providing a safe emotional and physical environment.

Vermont Hills Family Life Center values and supports families within a diverse arena.

Vermont Hills Family Life Center values, promotes, and provides opportunities for staff growth and development and fosters teamwork and professionalism.

RISK POOL: If payment is 5 days past the due date a late fee will be assessed. If two or more late fees are assessed during the school year you will be put into the Risk Pool and a VHFLC representative will contact you regarding payment options.

REGISTRATION FEE: There is a \$100.00 annual fee for registration. Registration fees are charged annually and are **non-refundable**. This fee covers September through August.

COLLECTIONS: Unpaid balances are subject to collections. Clients who are sent to collections must pay their account in full before being considered for re-admittance to the program. There is a **\$25.00 re-enrollment fee** during the same school year. Clients who are re-admitted must choose from the following payment options: paying tuition by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) or payment by the 25th of the month for care the following month. The first late payment will result in the immediate removal of the child from the VHFLC program.

FINANCE CHARGE: We reserve the right to charge an interest rate of 1.5% per month, annual rate 18%, if deferred amount has gone longer than one month. In the event litigation is initiated to collect the debt, we shall be entitled to reasonable attorney fees plus the actual costs incurred, to be set by the court at the trial or appellate level.

NSF FEES: When a check is returned to us for insufficient funds, a fee of \$20.00 will be charged to your account. After two checks have been returned, the client will be required to make further payments by Electronic Funds Transfer, cash or money order. Further insufficient funds may result in removal from the program.

TAX STATEMENTS/RECEIPTS: Tax statements will be provided for clients for the current year at no charge. Depending on the number of requests, it may take a few days to process your request. Contact the Main Office **after January 15th** for a statement.

The canceled check is your receipt. If a written receipt is needed, please put the request in writing and deliver it to your Director.

WITHDRAWALS: Should you decide to withdraw your child from VHFLC, a two-week written notice is required. You may send or fax your written notice to your child's site. Re-enrollment is dependent on space availability.

Medication

A permission slip needs to be filled out for all medication and given to the teacher, as it is kept in the locked box either inside the refrigerator, or in the cupboard in our room.



Illness Inventory

Children will be sent home from care if he/she shows:

(Unless excused by a physician's note)

- A. Temperature of 100.4 °F or higher (under arm).
- B. Vomiting - nausea
- C. Diarrhea - more than one abnormally loose stool per day that is not contained by the diaper or underwear. We will call on the second
- D. Discharge from the eye or inflammation of the membrane that covers the white part of the eyeball
- E. Severe cough
- F. Skin or eye lesions or rashes that are severe, weeping or pus-filled
- G. Difficult breathing or wheezing
- H. Unarousable (extremely fatigued)
- I. Yellow color to skin or eyes
- J. Stiff neck and headache
- K. Complains of severe pain
- L. If symptoms interfere with ability to participate in the activity of the classroom
- M. Head lice or nits

Children should remain at home for 24 hours after diarrhea or vomiting and until fever is below 100.4°F for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.

Please Read Carefully:



If any individual authorized to pick a child up from the Site, who appears to pose an imminent danger to the health or well-being of child(ren), or staff, Vermont Hills Family Life Center is authorized to contact local law enforcement officers and refuse to release the child(ren) pending investigation, or to follow the instructions of the local law enforcement officers.

If the individual in question is not a parent, we will attempt to contact a parent for further instructions. If the individual is a parent, we will attempt to contact the other parent. If we are unable to make contact or are unable to obtain instructions which appear to correct the imminent danger of harm to your child(ren), or staff, we will contact local law enforcement agents and will refuse to release the child(ren) until we have been authorized by those local law enforcement agents.

Harassment of staff, children or parents is always inappropriate and may be grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. If you have any particular instructions which you would like us to follow in circumstances such as outlined above, please provide them to us on your enrollment form.

Preschool Screen Time Policy

Vermont Hills Family Life Center believes that limiting a child's exposure to television, computers, and other devices is important to healthy development at our center. Excessive screen time may take away from exploring, playing, and interacting with others - all of which are important for a child's development.

We do not offer any screen time to children under 2 years old.

We limit movies to 2 or 3 times per year, and inform parents and families ahead of time, when screen media will be used. Only G rated, non violent, culturally sensitive, movies will be shown. Movies and other screen media will be chosen carefully and will usually correlate with themes that we are focusing on at the time. We typically choose screen media that allows, and encourages active participation. An alternate activity will be provided for children who do not wish to participate. Screen media will not be available during meals or snack times. If computers are in the classroom, children are limited to 15 minutes per day.

Staffing

VHFLC seeks to provide the highest quality child care programs possible. Toward that end efforts are made to recruit and attract the most qualified staff that are then trained extensively.

All staff must meet educational and work experience requirements appropriate to their position and pass a criminal background check, including an FBI check. Every staff member is trained in First Aid, CPR and Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse, as well as holds a current Food Handlers card. Our staff receives yearly training through in-services, workshops and staff meetings. All staff must meet the Child Care Division's requirement of 15 hours per year of training in child development or related fields.

VHFLC values, promotes and provides opportunities for staff growth and development as well as fostering teamwork and professionalism. The majority of our staff are experienced providers with a wide variety of abilities and education. We feel very committed to competitive salaries and benefits. Staff benefits include vacation, paid holidays, discounts and incentives. Staff salaries account for at least 80% of our budget.



Our Program: is developmentally appropriate and provides a variety of activities through which VHFLC seeks to engage each child in enriching explorations. We present activities through a curriculum framework that is designed to enhance the development of each child in the following areas:

Social/Emotional Development: Children’s feelings about themselves, developing responsibilities and their ability to relate to others.

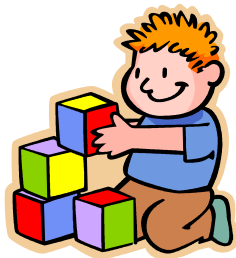
Physical Development: Children’s gross and fine motor skills.

Cognitive Development: Children’s thinking and problem solving skills.

Language Development: Children’s ability to communicate through words, spoken and written.

A variety of hands on experiences and choices are offered on a daily basis:

- Creative art expression
- Drama and imaginative play
- Music and movement
- Literacy and story time
- Manipulatives
- Indoor/outdoor activities and games



Lesson plans are developed by well trained staff with an emphasis on monthly themes. These plans are posted for parents on a weekly basis.

Developmental Screening:

Vermont Hills Family Life Center uses the University of Oregon’s tool called the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, or ASQ that is for parents to complete. This will help us create individualized programs and quality experiences for children. With this confidential information and screening, we hope to provide and serve children in the following ways:

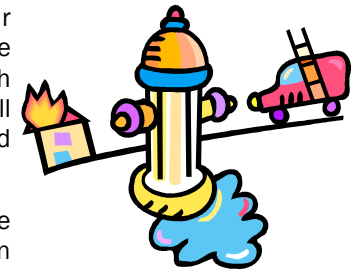
1. Create individualized lessons to help your child in meeting his or her developmental milestones.
2. Monitor your child’s progress towards the milestones.
3. Help with parent conferences.
4. Connect those families that may need outside services.

When an outside referral may be beneficial, we will refer families to the Multnomah County Early Childhood Program for additional assessment.

Health-Safety-Medication

Health and Safety Procedures: VHFLC works to create a high degree of positive health and safety practices.

Emergency Procedures follow mandated guidelines, with monthly fire drill (recorded), staff training on earthquake emergencies, as well as other potential “threat” emergencies. Fire drill procedures are posted, and fire emergency equipment, when required, is available and maintained per schedule. However, should an emergency occur during the operating hours, when we have not yet arrived, which necessitates closing your site; we will not be available to care for your child later that day.



Check In and Out Policy: To ensure the safety and supervision upon arrival in the **morning** program, please walk your child into the designated VHFLC area. Upon checking your child out in the afternoon please indicate that you are leaving to a VHFLC staff member. Your child will only be released to those individuals you have designated on your child’s enrollment form.

Pictures of those designated individuals, including parents, must be on file. In an emergency, please phone us and we will follow an alternate policy.

VHFLC programs close promptly at 6:00 pm and no caregivers are scheduled to care for children after this time. Any time you come later than 6:00 pm you will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute that you are late. You must pay the caregiver who has volunteered to stay with your child(ren). The clock located at the site determines the correct time. Abuse of this policy may result in restriction of care for your child.

Inclement Weather: We hope the following information will assist you in planning ahead for our winter season. Our main objective during bad weather is to ensure staff and children's safety. Thank you in advance for understanding our need for safety. Even the best laid plans may not meet what the weather has in store. Inclement weather is a prime example of when names, photographs, phone numbers of people authorized to pick up your child(ren) are extremely important and crucial.

1. If Portland Public Schools are closed, sites at St. Andrews, University of Portland and VA are closed.
2. If Portland Public Schools open late, sites at St. Andrews, University of Portland and VA will open at 10:00am.
3. If Portland Public Schools close early, we encourage you to pick up your child as soon as possible, as after dark the temperature drops and streets are more treacherous.
4. Should weather conditions get worse, VHFLC may decide to contact parents and request your child be picked up as soon as possible.



During the Holiday breaks, Portland Public Schools are already closed, and if it becomes necessary to close VHFLC, the TV stations will be contacted as well as an announcement on our website: www.vhflc.org

Age-Group Movement

Transitioning children from room/group to room/group is based more on the individual child's **readiness** to move, rather than adhering to any strict time guidelines. When a child nears a transition time, s/he will spend increasing amounts of time in cooperative play situations with children from the "older" group, and will spend increasing amounts of time with the teacher of the group into which s/he will be moving.

Criteria for movement is comprehensive, including physical, social and intellectual development, as well as standard "measurement" items such as degree of toilet training, need for naps, and "sociability".

Additionally, it is important to understand that movement to another group, whether developmentally ready or not, cannot occur if the group being moved into is full. Movement (and non-movement) also affects the dynamics of the child's current group. The key is to continue to gear the environment to the individual child's needs, focusing on what is developmentally appropriate for each child.

Positive Guidance Policy

Discipline is to help the child develop the internal controls to manage better in the future. Therefore, we use the following positive guidance techniques.

1. Modeling an appropriate example by our own behavior.
2. Setting clear and responsible limits that protect the child's safety and welfare, the rights of others, and our environment.
3. Planning a program that meets the needs and interest of the children.
4. Designing the children's environment so that it is comfortable and of interest to the children.
5. Maintaining the environment so it is safe.
6. Providing positive suggestions, choices, and redirection while acknowledging appropriate behavior.
7. Encouraging verbalization and problem solving.
8. Encouraging self-help skills and independence.
9. Inappropriate behavior by the child is dealt with by:

- a. Acknowledging the child's feelings, discussing the rules, and suggesting appropriate alternatives.
- b. Telling the child of the consequences of his/her inappropriate behavior.
- c. Removal of the child from his/her activity.
- d. Waiting for the child to show that he/she is ready to enter the activity.
- e. Helping the child to re-enter successfully.

Attending On Non-Contracted Days

Due to our need to comply with CCD ratios, we do not offer regular drop in care. In the event you need to attend on a non-contracted day, you may make arrangements with the site director. Attendance will be granted upon space availability. There is an extra charge for attending any day not covered in tuition.

There are no substitutions for days missed for absences, illness, vacation, or closure days caused by inclement weather.

Please ask your director about the extra charge fee.

Combined Classes During Breaks

Due to low attendance during Winter, Spring and Summer it may be necessary to combine classes. This allows us to honor staff requests for vacations or time off.

In-House Events

We plan in-house events during the school year at an EXTRA CHARGE to cover guest and activity fees. When an in-house event is planned, parents are notified prior to the date of the event about the specific activity and the time it will be presented. If an event falls on a day your child does not attend you may sign up with the director if you attend with your child.



Toys From Home

There are days your child's class will have sharing days and teachers will notify parents as to what is appropriate (toys or other items) to bring for sharing. We ask that you read the information given to you by your child's teacher at the beginning of the year. VHFLC is not responsible for toys, brought from home to school, that break, are damaged, or are lost. Money, guns, war toys and other toys of destruction are not acceptable at our Center.

What to Wear to School

Think of your child's comfort and provide simple clothing that is free of complicated fasteners. Think of messy art materials and other activities and provide clothing that is washable. Think of our playground and provide clothing that is sturdy. Think of the changeable weather and dress your child accordingly. Also, label all outer garments including hats and boots. VHFLC is not responsible for the loss or damage of personal items brought to school.

Birthday Parties

If you are interested in celebrating your child's birthday with him/her AT school, you may bring refreshments to school for morning or afternoon snack. Please prearrange this with your child's teacher.

We ask that you not bring balloons to school, as they are one of the leading causes of death by choking.

To reduce children's hurt feelings, we ask that birthday party invitations include everyone.



Handwashing

Research has shown that daily hand washing upon arrival and departure in childcare centers significantly reduces the spread of illness. We ask that you assist your child in washing his/her hands upon arrival each day. Children also wash their hands before eating, after toileting, and before any food related project. Additional handwashing happens throughout the day.

Covid

We are following the ODE, ELD, OHA and Multnomah County guidelines regarding masks and Covid exclusion policies. If you have any specific questions please ask!