



## Parent Manual

Thank you for choosing The Owl's Nest Daycare & Preschool! We are so excited to be involved in the care of your child. This manual is intended to introduce you to some very important policies and procedures we follow within our center.

Please be sure to read this manual carefully and don't hesitate to contact the center Director if you have any unanswered questions. We require that our parents have read and acknowledge receipt of this manual upon enrollment in our center.

We look forward to working with you!

Owl's Nest Team

**"Owl's Nest" is also known as "Owl's Nest" or "center" in this document.**

## Mission Statement

Owl's Nest strives to provide a high-quality educational environment for the children in the communities we serve, thereby laying a well-rounded educational foundation and passion for learning.

## Enrollment

Prior to enrollment, you will be provided with a series of documents that are required to be completed before your child(ren) begin attending our center. These forms collect important information and are expected to be completed in their entirety. The state of Idaho also requires that we keep up-to-date immunization records on file for all children within our care.

At Owl's Nest, we welcome children of differing abilities who can be effectively supported in our care environment. We will work with parents to provide a safe, nurturing and learning environment for their child. We will also work together to support any services needed to enrich your child's development.

Confidentiality is required in childcare programs to protect the rights of children and families. Staff are expected to not talk about or share written information, pictures, or any other identifying information about a child or family without the written permission of the family. When information is shared it is based on a need-to-know and is done with the written permission of the family to support decision-making and planning.

## Immunization Policy

Under Idaho Code 39-1118 and IDAPA 16.02.111 all licensed childcare providers are required to keep immunization records on file for each child. Keeping the records on file and up-to-date on every child is part of the health and safety inspection process by the health district staff. Therefore, this file must be received on or before the child's first day at the center. Each time the child receives new immunizations, it is the parent's responsibility to provide the center with an updated immunization record. Failure to comply may result in immediate termination from the center.

It is the policy of our center to follow the Idaho Code and IDAPA immunization requirements except in the following scenarios:

- Written medical proof of the child's immunity to any of the nine (9) diseases covered by the immunization schedule or a physician's statement that the child previously had been diagnosed and treated for Measles, Mumps, or Rubella.
- Written statement from a licensed physician that the child's life or health would be at risk if any or all of the required immunizations were given. This includes the decision of a licensed physician to delay administration of one or more immunizations due to health reasons.

In addition to requiring a written statement from the child's licensed physician for the above two scenarios, a copy of the Idaho Childcare Immunization Requirements Exemption form is required to be completed and kept on file at our center.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Our center does not accept exemptions for religious or philosophical reasons. If you disagree with this policy, you are free to seek childcare services elsewhere.



## Illness Policy

Parents agree to keep their child/children at home or seek alternate care arrangements for the following conditions:

- Pain - any complaints of unexplained or undiagnosed pain
- Fever (100°F/38.3°C or higher)
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Headache or stiff neck
- Unexplained diarrhea or loose stool combined with nausea, vomiting or abdominal cramps
- Blood in stools
- Nausea or vomiting
- Severe itching of body and scalp (symptomatic rashes that may be contagious)
- Signs of pink eye
- Significant respiratory symptoms such as wheezing, uncontrolled coughing, productive cough
- Known or suspected communicable diseases

It is required to keep (or take) a child home when the child:

- Is suffering from one or more of the above symptoms
- Is not well enough to take part in the activities at the daycare center

Ultimately the care of the child is the parent/legal guardian's responsibility.

Parents will inform Owl's Nest within 24 hours of a diagnosis of a serious illness or contagious disease of a communicable nature in the family. This is to protect staff and the other families who attend the daycare. Failure to do so is grounds for immediate termination of care.

Parents agree that a child will be symptom free, without the aid of symptom reducing medications such as Tylenol, for a full 24 hours prior to returning to Owl's Nest. We reserve the right to ask for a note from your family doctor, depending on the illness/disease.

If a child is diagnosed with a contagious illness that results in the child being out of the center for a period of time to recover and prevent spread of the illness, tuition will not be waived during that time. The length of time that is recommended for a child to be "quarantined" from childcare may be determined by the treating provider, the Central District Health Department, and/or at the discretion of Owl's Nest.

### Care of a Sick Child and Notification of Parents

When a child becomes ill, we will make the child comfortable in a quiet place where he/she can rest and will be closely supervised until the parent/guardian arrives to take them home.

Parents will be notified immediately and agree to begin making alternate work arrangements or arrangements for alternate childcare until the child is able to return to Owl's Nest. If your child is seriously ill, the parent or designated pick-up person must come for the child IMMEDIATELY. If we cannot reach a parent, we will call an emergency contact listed on the registration form.



## Medications

Prescription medications will only be given to a child in care with the following conditions:

- Parent/guardian gives written permission to Owl's Nest, with full instructions as to dosage, and times to administer medication
- All prescribed medications must have the child's name on the prescription bottle
- Non-prescription medications will be administered as per recommended dosages on medicine bottle

## Lice

Excluding children from childcare is not required by the State of Idaho however, in the event lice is discovered on a child, the parents will be immediately contacted to pick up the child and begin treatment. The child may return the next day while still undergoing active treatments. Parents in the impacted classroom will be notified as a courtesy and provided with the head lice parent information letter. Deep cleaning of the impacted room will be performed per the recommended guidelines.

## Diapers, Wipes, and Potty Training

Please be sure your child always has diapers and wipes. The weekly tuition to Owl's Nest does not include these types of supplies, including diaper cream for the treatment of diaper rash. We will notify you when your child is low on supplies. If we have notified you that your child needs more diapers or wipes, and they have not been supplied, your account will be charged \$1.00 for every diaper, and \$1.00/day for wipes.

## Potty Training

We are happy to work on potty training with your child. However, until your child is able to have no more than two accidents a week, it is strongly advised that he/she should wear disposable training pants (such as Pull Ups) to school for sanitary purposes.

Please provide training pants for your child while at school. We will take your child to the restroom on a regular basis to encourage proper toilet usage. Please keep in mind that the activity level at the daycare center can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at home. Therefore, we will continue to use disposable training pants until your child can and will announce that he/she must use the bathroom (not just at home, but here, as well) and can control his/her bladder and bowels for a few minutes beyond that announcement.

Please also continue to provide disposable training pants for nap time.

## Center Closures

### Holidays

Owl's Nest will be closed on the following days if they happen to fall on a weekday: New Year's Day (January 1<sup>st</sup>), Memorial Day (actual date varies), Independence Day (July 4<sup>th</sup>), Labor Day (actual date varies), Thanksgiving Day (actual date varies), and Christmas Day (December 25<sup>th</sup>).



When we set our rates it is with the understanding that we observe the above holidays. If one of these holidays falls on a weekend, the Friday or Monday before or after the holiday may be closed instead. Credit is not given for scheduled closures to observe holidays.

We recognize that there are certain days surrounding major holidays which will likely be minimally attended by children. Such days include the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and New Year's Eve. The Owl's Nest will survey parents prior to each of these days and ask them to sign up their children if they will need childcare. This will allow us to appropriately staff those low attendance days and give our staff the opportunity for time with their own families.

## Vacation

After three months at Owl's Nest, families receive one week (number of days depends on enrollment schedule) vacation per year. Vacation time must be submitted at least two weeks in advance and the full week must be used at one time. Unused vacation does not roll over from year to year. Vacation weeks may not be used to decrease a family's balance and are not eligible for "pay out" if the family unenrolls. If a family elects to use a week of vacation, the child(ren) may not attend the center during that elected week without the usual weekly schedule and tuition fees being fully reinstated.

## Tuition and Fees

### Tuition Payment

Tuition is due each Monday for the current week's childcare. Payments received after Friday will be assessed a \$10.00 late fee each day up to 10 days after the due date. After 10 days of no payment, children will not be allowed to return to Owl's Nest until tuition has been paid in full. A \$25 fee will be assessed for returned or failed payments (checks, EFT, or credit cards). Tuition is not based on your child's attendance, but rather on the space held for your child. Childcare tuition will not be adjusted for holidays, late arrivals, early pick-ups or missed days. If your child is part-time and attends on a non-scheduled day, they will be charged for that day, regardless of their attendance for the week. Registration with one form of payment is required at the time your child is enrolled. EFT is the preferred method of payment, however if parents choose to pay with a credit/debit card, a 3% transaction fee will be added to the weekly tuition charge.

Owl's Nest operating hours are 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday – Friday. Children picked up after these posted business hours will incur a \$5.00/minute late fee to their account. If the credit/debit card on file or EFT fails, parents will be notified, and extended lateness could result in disenrollment and notification to the credit bureau and/or turned over to a collection agency. **If your account remains unpaid in full beyond 30 days, we reserve the right to turn over the account to a collections company with the appropriate fees applied.**

### Registration and Material Fees

There is a \$75 per child, non-refundable enrollment fee. This is billed and collected during the first week your child(ren) attends Owl's Nest or before the initial start date to secure a spot in our program. A \$75 per child annual materials fee is billed annually thereafter at the beginning of the school year (August). Families who enroll after June 1 are not subject to a second fee that same year.



## Termination

A two-week notice submitted by EMAIL is required to terminate this agreement with Owl's Nest. By signing a childcare contract agreement, you agree to give a two-week notice before terminating care or paying the two-week fee to terminate immediately. The two-week fee is equivalent to two full weeks of tuition for your child(ren).

## Childcare Schedules

If your child is part time (anything less than 5 days per week), they must have a set schedule. If a holiday falls on a scheduled day, there will not be credit given for the holiday. If a child comes on a non-scheduled day, they will be charged for that day (at the drop-in rate). If you would like to change your schedule, you must consult the Director for availability and submit your request in writing for our records (an email is sufficient). If a schedule is changed you will be expected to adhere to the new schedule.

The daily educational activities begin by 9:30AM. Head counts for lunch occur by 10:00AM. We ask that your child arrive each day by 9:30AM to participate in daily activities and be counted for meal preparation.

Mid-day nap and rest times are extremely important for children. Because some children become upset and cry during drop-off, we ask that parents do not drop-off children during the mid-day meal and rest time. This “black out time” is from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM daily (unless otherwise approved by the Director). We appreciate your understanding of this request, especially for our one's, two's, and three's classrooms.

Sleep is an important part of a young child's life and we recognize that sleep needs will vary depending on the age group. Our goal is to provide a supportive environment to meet each child's sleep needs and do so in manner that adheres to local and state safe sleep practices.

Below is a brief summary of the sleep schedules broken down by age group/classroom:

- **Infants (newborn – 12 months):** the sleep needs and patterns of all infants will differ. In the infant classroom, it is important to allow infants to sleep as often as needed. We do not have defined nap or rest times for infants however it is common for older infants to settle into a morning and afternoon nap schedule. It is vital to learn an infant's schedule and communicate trends/changes with parents.
- **Toddler (12 – 24 months):** after the age of 1, toddlers are generally ready to transition to a single afternoon nap each day. On occasion, a toddler may still need an occasional morning nap to help get them through the day. It is important to support the needs to toddlers who are transitioning and allow a tired toddler to rest, even if it is outside of the defined nap time. Most toddlers do very well with a single afternoon nap from about 1:00 – 3:00.
- **Twos – Threes (24 – 48 months):** as children get older, some will still rely heavily on an afternoon nap whereas others may 'give up' their afternoon nap sooner than expected. Even for children in these age groups, it is important to offer a rest time in the afternoon. Most children will still nap but some may just use this time as quiet or rest time. The afternoon nap/rest time is daily from 1:00 – 3:00.



- **Fours/Preschool (48 – 60 months):** nearly all children have outgrown the need for naps by preschool. In our center, we do offer quiet/rest time for preschoolers however most will not fall asleep.

Our center practices safe sleep by:

- Placing infants on their back to sleep
- Placing infants in an approved crib with a firm mattress to sleep alone
- Ensuring cribs are free of toys, bumpers, or extra bedding
- Ensuring rooms are at a comfortable temperature and are not too hot or cold
- Prohibiting smoking in our building and transport vehicles
- Not leaving infants in car seats, swings, or carriers while sleeping
- Giving infants ‘tummy time’ occasionally while awake and playing
- Ensuring constant direct and active supervision of infants, toddlers, and older children while sleeping through sight and sound
- Lighting in the room must allow for caregivers to see the color of each infant’s face; sound in room must be quiet enough so caregivers can hear and observe for any respiratory problems, such as choking
- Infants are dressed during sleep without the possible hazard of head coverings (hats, hoods), strangulation, or entrapment from cords, strings, ribbons on clothing or pacifiers and elsewhere. Detached pacifiers are acceptable during sleep
- Infants are always held for bottle feedings and sippy cups are only used when a child is being held or sitting at a table or highchair; bottles and sippy cups are never used during nap time
- Using mat and cot covers and cleaning them at least weekly (or as needed); bedding is stored so that it does not contact the floor or other bedding
- An individual crib, cot, mat, sleeping bag, bed, mat or pad is provided for each child who spends more than four hours a day in the childcare setting. Children do not simultaneously share sleep equipment or bedding during nap times

### Infant Feeding

We are supporters of breast feeding and mothers are welcome to come breastfeed during infant feeding times. If a mother cannot come breastfeed in person, we encourage parents to bring labeled breast milk so we can feed your baby by bottle when you are not available. This means that infants must be able to feed from a bottle prior to enrollment.

If the parent/guardian wishes to have the infant use formula, this must be provided by the parent. Owl’s Nest will not provide infant formula for your infant. Additionally, the parent must notify Owl’s Nest staff when the infant is ready to transition to solid foods. The parent must instruct the staff on the frequency of eating solid foods and must provide their own baby foods. Once the infant has transitioned off breastmilk/formula and baby food, Owl’s Nest center will provide meals as part of the tuition costs.

### Guidance Policy

Learning proper behavior takes practice. Our teachers work on positive reinforcement, predictable routines, and teaching self-control when managing their classrooms. Most challenging behavior will be managed through redirection. Dangerous behaviors such as hitting and kicking will require the



child to be moved away from the other children until they can calm down. They are also helped to think of other ways they could have handled their frustrations.

For ongoing behaviors, parents may be asked to make a plan for school and home to provide consistency for the child. This may include a daily log to see the progress of their child's behaviors. Physical punishment is never allowed. If a child's behavior is severe enough to cause injury to another person, or a tantrum is not controllable, we will contact you to pick your child up for the day.

### **Biting**

While biting is upsetting, it is a normal part of toddler development. Most children that bite do so for a very short time. Every effort is made to prevent biting. If your child begins to bite, we will take extra care to monitor your child and prevent biting incidences. However, if after shadowing your child, the biting continues or is severe, we will contact you to pick up your child for the day. Severe biting can also be cause for termination of a child.

Having your child bit can also be very upsetting. Please understand that toddlers do not bite to be mean. They are toddlers and need to learn how to handle their emotions. Biting does not mean an automatic dismissal of the offending child. Teachers will first work to prevent biting and teach alternate behaviors. However, in the end, the safety of the children comes first and the determination to terminate a child that bites will be made on an individual basis, and for the safety of all children.

### **Progressive Guidance/Discipline Policy**

Owl's Nest believes that children learn positive behavior through reinforcement and redirection. The most effective way to help a child learn positive behavior is to reward those behaviors so that the child will want to repeat them. We will teach alternative strategies or implement a behavior plan when appropriate behaviors are exhibited. We encourage verbalization of needs and feeling when it is developmentally appropriate.

We encourage the children to develop self-control to solve minor conflicts in a peaceful way. However, at times children behave inappropriately. Some of their behaviors may even be injurious to themselves or others. We feel that in order to preserve the safety of the children these behaviors must be controlled.

We will implement the guidance and direction necessary for healthy growth and development. Parents will be notified if negative behavior becomes a concern. When positive discipline measures do not result in children meeting acceptable standards of behavior, corrective action may be initiated by program staff as a tool to improve behavior. Corrective action is an instrument to change unacceptable behavior and offer direction.

Progressive discipline refers to the concept of increased severity in discipline if a child repeatedly violates rules or fails to meet behavior expectations. In adherence to the principles of progressive discipline, violations of the code of conduct or behavior standards are categorized into three categories and each carries its own series of consequences. The categories of violations are as follows:





Minor Violations:	Major Violations:	Critical Violations:
-Disrespectful towards staff -Disrespectful towards other students -Disruptive behavior -Repeatedly not following directions -Repeatedly not following program/ game rules -Excessive horseplay	-Pushing -Tripping -Hitting -Kicking -Spitting -Threatening comments or gestures -Uncontrollable behavior -Aggressive behavior towards other children or staff -Inappropriate language -Teasing or embarrassing others -Willful destruction of Owl's Nest property	-Fighting -Leaving assigned area without permission -Biting -Aggressive behavior that causes serious harm to another child -Harassment, intimidation, bullying

### Administration of Guidance/Discipline Policy

Progressive discipline for the aforementioned violations will be administered with regard to the following disciplinary track:

	First Occurrence	Second Occurrence	Third Occurrence	Fourth Occurrence	Fifth Occurrence
<b>Minor Violation</b>	Written notice to parent/ guardian describing the behavioral concern	Written notice to parent/ guardian describing the behavioral problem	Written notice to parent and parent conference	1 to 3 day suspension from the daycare center (tuition not prorated)	Expulsion from the daycare center without reimbursement
<b>Major Violation</b>	Written notice to parent/ guardian describing the behavioral concern	Written notice to parent and parent conference	1 to 3 day suspension from the daycare center (tuition not prorated)	Expulsion from the daycare center without reimbursement	
<b>Critical Violation</b>	1 to 3 day suspension from the daycare center (tuition not prorated) OR expulsion from the center	Immediate expulsion from the daycare center without reimbursement			

At every phase the before or after school program staff should follow up with a discussion with the child about the behavior as well as an appropriate in program consequence immediately after the behavior is exhibited.

### Terms of Progressive Guidance/Discipline



All corrective action is documented in writing, including a description of the violation, date, and time, and it is signed by the child's parent/guardian and a staff member. A parent's refusal to sign the documentation will be noted in the report.

### **Terms of Suspension**

When a program participant is placed on suspension, the length of suspension is contingent upon the severity and nature of the violation. Determination of the violation is at the discretion of Owl's Nest management.

## **Injuries**

### **Injury Reports**

Any time your child receives an injury while in the care of Owl's Nest, you will receive an injury report explaining how the injury happened and what treatment was given. For anything requiring more than basic first aid, parents will be contacted immediately.

### **Home Injury Reports**

If your child is injured with a visible injury at home, you may be asked to fill out a home injury report explaining how the child received the injury and if there is any special care needed by our teachers.

## **Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) Development Assessments**

ASQ-3 is a set of questionnaires about children's development. It has been used for more than 20 years to make sure children are developing well. It is called a screener because it looks at how children are doing in important areas, such as speech, physical ability, social skills, and problem-solving skills. ASQ-3 can help identify your child's strengths as well as any areas where your child may need support.

There are 21 ASQ questionnaires that can be administered to children ages 1 month to 5 ½ years. New families enrolling in our center will be asked to complete a questionnaire on their child(ren) within 60 days of enrollment. Families should complete at least two (2) questionnaires per age year. For example, a child enrolled in the two's classroom will have two surveys completed during the child's time in that classroom, which is presumably two completed surveys at various points that the child is two years old.

Participation is not mandatory for families; inclusion of a validated screening tool such as the ASQ-3 is an important part of our Steps to Quality accreditation. Much more information will be provided to families regarding the benefits and process of completing a screening form.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect Policy**

Owl's Nest staff will review the guidelines for recognizing child abuse and neglect annually.

Owl's Nest staff handbook contains a policy on recognition and documentation of suspected child abuse and neglect, including a specific section on recognition of child sexual abuse.



Childcare workers are in a unique position to recognize victimized children. Because of this, we are legally mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. A report of child abuse is not an accusation. It is a request for more information by a reporter who has reasonable suspicion that abuse or neglect may be occurring. A report does not mean that our employees must determine that abuse and/or neglect has occurred. In Idaho, Child Protective Services is responsible for that determination.

Owl's Nest employees must fully understand their legal obligation to report suspicions of child abuse, and review the guidelines upon hire and every year of employment. The training will also cover how to respond if a child discloses. It may seem easier not to get involved and believe that someone else will eventually make the report. This "wait and see" approach can be very dangerous, even deadly, for a child who is being mistreated.

All staff and volunteers are mandated by law to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Abuse may be physical, emotional, or sexual. Neglect is the failure, refusal, or inability, for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, clothing, shelter or medical care. Staff and volunteers who report in good faith are immune from civil or criminal liability. Staff or volunteers who intentionally fail to report suspicion are subject to fines or imprisonment under the law.

If abuse or neglect is suspected, the incident will be documented immediately. The situation will not be discussed with anyone but the Director. If the Director is not available, staff can make the report directly to the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, and notify the Director by phone, text or email.

To prevent child abuse and neglect, this program:

1. Trains staff in the Strengthening Families Protective Factor Framework and Stewards of Children Darkness to Light.
2. \*Trains staff to avoid one-staff- one-child situations if at all possible. If scheduling requires one adult be alone with one child, the parent is always informed at pick-up or drop off.
3. \*Designs our classrooms to avoid hidden and secluded areas.
4. \*Makes sure interactions between children and staff can be observed and interrupted.
5. \*Uses proper names for body parts.
6. \*Never forces children to give affection.
7. \*Tells children that if they have questions about someone's behavior, the best thing they can do is ask about it.
8. \*Explains that secrets can be harmful.
9. Requires a background check for all staff.
10. Develops positive, non-judgmental relationships with parents.
11. Is alert to signs of stress in parents and struggles in the parent-child interaction.
12. Communicates regularly with parents concerning a child's progress.
13. Provides education including offering tips for specific challenges.
14. Provides opportunities for parents to become involved in their child's care.
15. Provides information about community resources.
16. Models developmentally appropriate practices by allowing the parent observational opportunities to see their child interact with childcare staff.
17. Provides an atmosphere for parents to share their experiences and develop support systems.



18. Reaches out to fathers, grandparents and other extended family members that are involved in a child's development.

\* These strategies are part of our sexual abuse prevention plan.

#### Idaho STARS

www.idahostars.org

2-1-1 Idaho Careline

1-800- 926-2588

Fax: 208-345- 6569

### Partnership With Families

We are excited to be involved in the care and development of your child. In order for this partnership to be successful, there are a few things that we expect from our parents:

- **Agreement** to the center policies outlined in this document. We strive for transparency to avoid misunderstandings. If something is unclear, please ask us!
- **Open communication** regarding your child, any issues or concerns, or requests. Although we have many standards we must follow, we want to hear if there are unique things that must be considered with your child. No two children are the same!
- **Honesty and trust** of your child's teachers. We take many measures to ensure a safe and healthy environment for your child. If a problem arises, please show your trust by asking questions and not jumping to conclusions or blaming. Growing up can be hard for children and it is not uncommon for behaviors to arise that you do not see in the home setting!
- Please **respect** our team by recognizing that caring for children is a very demanding job. Encouragement and appreciation of the staff is just as important as it is with children.
- Be **open-minded** that if our team has feedback on your child or is faced with some challenges, that it is well intended so that the child can learn.

Although we hope to never be faced with this situation, we do reserve the right to terminate the childcare contract immediately if a parent is exhibiting extreme behavior. Some examples include but are not limited to: yelling/foul language towards staff, name calling of staff, being demeaning/belittling towards staff, throwing things, slamming doors, and/or causing a scene within our center that is alarming/off-putting/unprofessional.

