
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



189 West Creek Road
Saint Marys, Pennsylvania 15857
814-781-7101 ext. 1623

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SECTION 1: GENERAL

Welcome

We are pleased to have you on staff with **A Step Ahead Child Center**, and wish you every success in your new position. We pride ourselves on hiring and retaining individuals who have a strong ethic of service and contribute to the growth and success of our organization. We hope that you will take pride in being a member of our team.

This handbook is designed to familiarize you with **A Step Ahead Child Center**, providing you with information about working conditions, employee expectations, and some of the policies affecting your employment. If you have questions or concerns about any of the material within this handbook, we urge you to discuss them with your immediate supervisor.

After reviewing this handbook, please sign the Acknowledgment form included at the back, confirming that you have received and understand the contents.

No handbook can anticipate every situation or question about all of our policies and terms of employment. **A Step Ahead Child Center** reserves the right to add new policies and to change or cancel existing policies at any time. We will endeavor to notify you of any changes to this handbook as they occur.

This handbook supersedes all previous handbooks and management memos that may have been issued on the subjects covered.

Welcome to **A Step Ahead Child Center**. We hope that your experience here will be challenging, enjoyable, and fulfilling.

SECTION 2: EMPLOYMENT

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

A Step Ahead Child Center is an equal opportunity employer and it is our policy that employees and applicants will not be subjected to unlawful discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, veteran's status, marital status, physical or mental disability, or any other basis prohibited by applicable state, federal or local laws.

Accordingly, **A Step Ahead Child Center** will hire, train, and promote individuals in accordance with this Equal Employment Opportunity Policy; make decisions according to the principle of equal opportunity by imposing only bona fide occupational qualification requirements for employment opportunities; and administer all personnel practices and programs (including, but not limited to, compensation, benefits, transfers and training) in accordance with this Equal Employment Opportunity Policy.

Americans with Disabilities Act

A Step Ahead Child Center is committed to complying with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and offers equal employment opportunities for qualified individuals who may have a physical or mental disability, but can still perform the essential functions of the job.

Consistent with this policy of nondiscrimination, **A Step Ahead Child Center** will provide reasonable accommodations to a qualified individual with a disability, as defined by the ADA, who has made **A Step Ahead Child Center** aware of his or her disability, provided that such accommodation does not constitute an undue hardship on **A Step Ahead Child Center**.

Any employee, who believes they have been discriminated against due to characteristics listed in the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, may file a complaint of discrimination with any of the following.

A Step Ahead Child Center
189 West Creek Road
St. Marys, PA 15857

Department of Public Welfare
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Room 223, Health & Welfare Building
PO Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office for Civil Rights
Suite 372, Public Ledger Bldg.
150 South Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106

PA Human Relations Commission
301 Fifth Avenue
Suite 390, Piatt Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Department of Public Welfare
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Western Regional Office
301 Fifth Avenue
Suite 410, Piatt Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Anti-Harassment and Non-Discrimination

A Step Ahead Child Center wants to provide all employees a work environment that is free from harassment and discrimination. Therefore, it shall be **A Step Ahead Child Center's** policy to prohibit discrimination or harassment of employees based on race, religion, color, gender, age, national origin, citizenship, disability, citizenship, marital status, sexual orientation, pregnancy or any other basis protected by state, federal or local laws.

A Step Ahead Child Center expects that all relationships among persons in the workplace will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice and harassment. Sexual harassment typically is **serious offensive conduct** directed towards an individual because of his/her gender and is **unwelcome** by the individual. Sexual harassment does not refer to casual conversation or compliments of a socially acceptable nature.

Federal Law defines sexual harassment as unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- (1) submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of employment; or
- (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as basis for employment decisions; or
- (3) such conduct interferes with an individual's work performance; or
- (4) conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

The following list provides some examples of conduct that **could be viewed as** sexual harassment. This list does not cover every type of behavior that could constitute sexual harassment. It is meant to provide employees with some idea of the type of conduct that is prohibited under this policy.

- Sex oriented verbal "kidding," "teasing," or jokes
- Foul or obscene language or gestures
- Physical contact such as patting, pinching, or brushing against another's body
- Pressuring someone to go on a date
- Comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, body gestures, suggestive or insulting comments
- Inquiries into one's sexual experience and discussion of one's sexual activities.

Communication of any harassing material by e-mail, voice mail, organization bulletin boards or otherwise is a violation of **A Step Ahead Child Center's** policy against harassment.

Reporting Harassment

A Step Ahead Child Center encourages employees to report any problems they experience or observe concerning harassment, including sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation. Employees should report harassment **before** it becomes severe or pervasive.

- Any employee who believes that he or she has been subjected to objectionable conduct prohibited by this policy is encouraged (but not required) to let the offending person know immediately and firmly that the behavior is offensive.

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- Any employee who believes that he or she has been subjected to objectionable conduct prohibited by this policy must report it to their immediate supervisor or a member of management if the supervisor is the offending individual.
 - Every reported incident of unlawful harassment or discrimination will be investigated.
 - Individuals reporting complaints or providing information in good faith in connection with an investigation will not be retaliated against for their participation in this procedure.

Investigation

A Step Ahead Child Center will promptly undertake an investigation of all complaints of harassment, discrimination or retaliation. The investigation will include a private interview with the person filing the complaint, and with witnesses if applicable. The person alleged to have engaged in harassment will also be interviewed.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent consistent with an adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

Responsive Action

Employees found to have engaged in conduct in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

No employee will be disciplined or otherwise retaliated against for filing a complaint or participating in the investigation of a bona fide complaint. However an individual who brings a false or frivolous complaint is subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Grievance Procedure

Employees should share their concerns, provide input, seek information, and resolve work-related issues by professionally discussing them with their supervisors. The simplest, quickest and most satisfactory solution is often reached at this level.

If discussion with the employee's supervisor is not able to resolve the matter, a formal grievance may be filed.

The following grievance procedure is for complaints other than those you feel are of a Civil Right nature. If you believe that your civil rights have been violated, please follow the procedure described in the Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Employer section of the handbook.

Step 1

Staff member will notify and discuss the complaint with the Director. The Director will investigate the matter and give the employee a determination within (1) business day.

Step 2

If a resolution is not satisfactory, the employee may appeal the decision. The Director will arrange a conference to be held with the Operations Director within (2) business days. Following

the meeting, the Operations Director will make a determination within (3) business days. The employee is responsible for developing a written statement of the complaint for the Operations Director's review prior to the meeting.

Step 3

If a resolution is not satisfactory, the employee may appeal the decision. The Operations Director will arrange a conference to be held with the Executive Director within (5) business days. The employee is responsible for developing a written statement of the complaint for the Executive Director's review prior to the conference. Following the meeting, the Executive Director will make a determination within (3) business days.

Step 4

If a resolution is not satisfactory, the employee may appeal the decision. The employee and the Executive Director are responsible for developing a written statement of the complaint for the review of the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee will investigate the complaint and determine whether a conference is necessary. A determination of conference scheduling will be conducted within (3) business days. The decision of the Personnel Committee will be final.

Ethics Policy

Ethics are integral to the successful achievement of our mission at **A Step Ahead Child Center**. Employees are expected to comply with this policy and to hold to the highest ethical standards. By understanding this policy, employees will recognize the situations and activities that must be strictly avoided and those that require disclosure or prior approval. Employees must treat all co-workers, clients, and external parties with honesty, integrity, and fairness in all regards.

Confidential Information

Due to the sensitive nature of information that you will know as a teacher of young children, it is imperative that you keep sensitive information confidential. Any information about children or their families must be shared on a "**Need to Know**" basis only. Thus, be very sensitive about discussing children's developmental needs and family information in public places such as lounge or hallway. This does not exclude off premise discussions and/or conversations. Follow the Code of Ethical Conduct and questions of major concerns should be forwarded to the Director. Protection of the interests of each child and family is vital in maintaining a standard of professionalism and privacy.

As per state regulations, a facility employee may not disclose information concerning a child or family, except in the course of inspections and investigations by agents of the Department of Public Welfare or programs which A Step Ahead Child Center has partnered with including Keystone STARS. A parent may request access to or transference of their child's file contents. This request must be made in writing and submitted to the Director. Sharing confidential information with individuals who are not designated to receive such information will result in disciplinary action and possible termination.

Also strive to be supportive of center efforts by avoiding negative or malicious discussions about center issues. Together we can achieve great child care and education for our parents and children. Stay positive and focus on the needs of the children in your care.

At-Will Employment

Employment with **A Step Ahead Child Center** is at-will, meaning that either you or **A Step Ahead Child Center** may terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without a reason or notice.

Statements or promises, information in this Employee Handbook or in any other publications cannot modify this at-will employment relationship. Only a written and signed contract by the Executive Director or the Board can change an individual's at-will employment status.

Prior to First Day of Employment

The following must be completed prior to your first day of work:

- Initial health appraisal with TB test (Must be dated within the last 12 months)
*A Step Ahead Child Center will pay for initial health appraisal and TB test
- Two written non-family references
- Application for PA Child Abuse Clearance
- Application for PA Criminal History Clearance
- Proof of application for PA-PATCH (FBI Clearance) and submission of fingerprints
- Verification of experience (diploma, transcripts and employment verification form)

Introductory Period

The first 90 days are considered the Introductory Period. Days of absence do not count toward your 90 days. Either the employee or the employer may end the employment relationship at will at any time during or after this period, with or without cause or advance notice. The introductory period may be extended at the discretion of the Director.

The Introductory Period is intended to give new employees the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a level of performance acceptable to **A Step Ahead Child Center** and to determine whether the new position meets their expectations. Similarly, **A Step Ahead Child Center** uses this period to evaluate the employee's capabilities, work habits, and overall suitability for the job. Upon completion of the introductory period, staff will be reimbursed for their clearances.

New staff will complete fire safety training and emergency operations training on their first day of employment.

Newly hired staff are required to complete a 15 hour orientation training as well as a mandated reporter training within their first 90 days of employment. Official clearances must also be received within the first 90 days of employment. Staff are considered "Provisional" until clearances are received and may not be left unsupervised with the children at any time.

The Director will meet with new staff within the first 30 days of employment to discuss their performance to date as well as any concerns or needs that the staff may have.

Upon completion of the introductory period, full-time staff will be eligible to receive health insurance coverage.

Ongoing Training

New staff will be required to complete a Professional Development Plan through the PA Keys. This plan will assess each employee's areas of strength and weakness regarding child care training topics and will be revised annually.

Staff are required to participate in annual training hours to meet the requirements of the Department of Public Welfare, The Children and Adult Care Food Program, and Keystone STARS. Staff will be provided with multiple opportunities throughout the year to meet these requirements as well as the training needs identified in their professional development plans. Staff must complete a minimum of 2 hours of training related to child health and nutrition annually.

Staff are encouraged to further participate in higher education programs and will be notified of educational opportunities in the area. Financial aid is available for many educational programs through the Keystone STARS program. If you are interested in furthering your education, please meet with the Director to discuss opportunities.

Personal Data Changes

To help keep record and benefits program information accurate, please notify **A Step Ahead Child Center** of any changes to your personal information, such as: mailing address, marital status, dependents', emergency contacts, and other possible relevant information.

Performance Evaluation

Supervisors and employees are encouraged to discuss job performance and goals informally, as needed. A formal written performance evaluation will be conducted at the end of an employee's first 30 days and annually thereafter.

These evaluations provide both supervisors and employees the opportunity to review job tasks, recognize strengths, identify and correct weaknesses, and discuss positive approaches to achieving goals.

Staff meetings will be held monthly to discuss current team and facility needs as well as upcoming activities.

The Director will also conduct a minimum of 2 classroom observations of each room per year. These observations are done without staff knowledge and results will be shared with the staff members. The Director will make note of staffs strengths and also where staff can improve.

Resignation

Resignation is a voluntary act initiated by the employee to terminate employment. While the law does not require advance notice, **A Step Ahead Child Center** requests at least two weeks' written resignation notice from all employees.

SECTION 3: Schedules, Compensation & Absences

Work Schedules

Weekly schedules are posted on the staff bulletin board adjacent to the time clock. Hours of work are subject to change by Director to meet the needs of our families and Center. Any requests for days off must be given one week in advance for approval. Any requests for special days for consideration at the last minute will be honored whenever possible and when coverage is available.

Recordkeeping

All hourly employees are responsible for accurately recording the hours they work. You must accurately record the time you begin and end work. All over-time hours must be preapproved by a supervisor. No employee is permitted to leave the building without permission and must always clock out when leaving the premises except in those cases where leaving the building is part of his/her job responsibilities.

Altering, falsifying or tampering with pay records is strictly prohibited and shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Breaks/Lunch for Staff

A Step Ahead Child Center does not have a defined break policy in which operations stop for a specified period of time. It is recognized, however, that occasional breaks are necessary. Therefore, it is suggested that the time and occasion of such breaks be at the discretion of the supervisor and do not interfere with the supervision or care provided to the children.

Staff are expected to utilize the children's naptime to take a break, eat lunch and prepare lesson plan materials. Each staff member is also given a 30 minute break away from the children in which ratio remains maintained where they may work quietly to plan lessons, crafts, etc. Staff are not permitted to use their cell phones during this time.

Please refer to the Smoking Policy in Section 5 for information regarding smoke breaks.

Workweek & Payroll

A Step Ahead Child Center's normal business hours are Monday-Friday, 6:30 AM – 5:30 PM. The payroll period is Sunday through Saturday. Payday is every other Thursday. In the event a regularly scheduled payday falls on a holiday, employees will receive pay on the business day prior.

The following taxes are subtracted from pay:

- Social Security
- Local tax

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- State income tax
 - Federal Withholding tax
 - Any legislated unemployment tax
 - Local Service Tax

Overtime

Due to training requirements, staff may be periodically scheduled to work during non-operating hours. These hours must be verified by the Director and documented on the timecard.

Licensing requirements dictate that certain staff-child ratios are maintained. If you believe that your classroom will be out of ratio at the end of your scheduled shift, please notify your supervisor immediately. Overtime will always be approved to maintain ratio.

Expense Reimbursement

Employees must maintain accurate documentation of any business-related expenses incurred on behalf of **A Step Ahead Child Center** that need to be reimbursed. Receipts and detailed explanations of expenses must accompany all reimbursement requests.

Errors in Pay

If you become aware of an error in your pay or deductions, bring it to the attention of your supervisor so that it can be corrected as soon as possible.

Absences

The center cannot operate effectively or efficiently unless its employees can be depended upon to show up for work on a timely and consistent basis. A Step Ahead Child Center depends upon each employee, and when one person is absent, a replacement must cover for the day. Thus, absenteeism has a particularly disruptive effect on both the Center and the children. Employees who take excessive time off, or abuse the benefits of sick, personal, and vacation provided are subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

You should report any anticipated absence to your supervisor ahead of time. In an emergency, call the center and let your supervisor know as soon as possible the reason for your absence and when you expect to return. If this occurs outside of business hours, you must call the Director, Erica Solorio at (814)594-4530 at least 1 hour before the start of your shift.

Staff are not permitted to call off more than (3) times in a 90 day period. If a staff calls off (3) times within a 90 day period, documentation from a medical provider will need to be provided. Calling off more than (3) times within 90 days or failing to provide a medical excuse will result in a written warning.

Failure to report for a scheduled shift, without notifying a supervisor, will be documented as an unexcused absence. Unexcused absences are subject to immediate discipline up to and including

termination. If you are absent from work for three consecutive days **without** advising your supervisor, you will be terminated.

Full-time staff are not permitted to miss more than 24 hours of work in a 30 day period. Part-time staff are not permitted to miss more than 12 hours of work in a 30 day period. Excessive absence will result in a written warning. New hires are not permitted to miss more than 16 hours of work during their 90 day trial period. Excessive absence during the trial period may result in termination or extension of the trial period. Missed hours of work consist of any time that staff would normally be scheduled for and does not attend for any reason including illness, appointments, and personal reasons. If you are able to switch shifts with a coworker to avoid missed hours, it will not be held against you however if we are unable to accommodate your schedule request, the hours will count toward your missed hours.

In order to maintain the health and safety of the children we care for, we ask that you not report to work if you have a communicable disease. Illness resulting in consecutive days of absence will be charged as a single absence with documentation from the staff's medical provider.

Please Note: All absences will be monitored. Excessive absences, or pattern of absences that begin to occur, will be addressed by the Director and could possibly be grounds for termination. It is important to understand that when we are short of staff, it is not only stressful on the other staff members, but affects the children as well.

Emergency Conditions

Emergency conditions, such as severe weather, power outages, or fire can disrupt operations and interfere with work schedules, as well as endanger employees. These extreme circumstances may require the closing of the work facility. In the event of an emergency or severe weather your supervisor will notify you of any schedule changes or closures.

Car trouble is not considered an emergency. Please arrange for a ride from a friend or family member if the problem arises. Employees are required to call the Director, Erica Solorio at (814)594-4530. If the Director is not available, the designated Assistant Director, Tammy Kriegel, must be contacted at (814)594-5159. Please try both numbers until the phone is answered.

Employees who come in late, leave early, or are absent because of an emergency or severe weather situation must notify their supervisor immediately. Failure to notify your supervisor may result in you being marked unexcused.

SECTION 4: BENEFITS

Social Security

The Social Security Program (FICA) provides disability and survivors insurance protection throughout your working years as well as monthly income that you can depend on when you retire. In addition to the amount taken from your paycheck to be contributed to the Social Security Program, Elcam pays a matching amount. For additional information about the amount of monies taken from your paycheck toward FICA, please consult the Executive Director.

Workers' Compensation Insurance

A Step Ahead Child Center provides a comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program to our employees. The workers' compensation program covers injuries or illnesses sustained in the course of employment that require medical, surgical, or hospital treatment.

If you are injured or think you have been injured while working, no matter how slightly, you must report the injury immediately to your supervisor to protect your eligibility for compensation and alert **A Step Ahead Child Center** to any potential workplace hazards. If medical treatment is necessary, a medical evaluation/treatment form must be completed by an attending physician. An employee will not be permitted to return to work until the employee presents an authorized medical release from the attending physician.

Workers' compensation is intended to cover only work-related injuries and illnesses. Because of this, neither **A Step Ahead Child Center** nor the insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of workers' compensation benefits for injuries that might occur during employees' voluntary participation in off-duty recreational, social, athletic or community-based activities sponsored by **A Step Ahead Child Center**.

Unemployment Compensation

The Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation System was created to provide assistance to workers who are temporarily out-of-work through no fault of their own. The assistance to workers consists of benefits that are established through state law or mandated by the federal government. The assistance to workers is intended to provide maintenance income for the worker until the worker returns to work or finds a new job. A claimant must be employed in covered employment for at least 18 different weeks, for which the claimant was paid a minimum of \$50 for each week of employment, in order to qualify for benefits.

Employment Classification

Employees who are regularly scheduled to work more than 29 hours per week are considered full-time employees. Full-time employees will be entitled to the following benefits:

Holidays

A Step Ahead Child Center will be closed for the following holidays. Full-time employees will receive regular wages for these days upon completion of one year of continuous employment.

Paid holidays are as follows:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- 2 free days (used on days of your choice with supervisor approval)

To be eligible for holiday pay you must have worked your scheduled hours the days before and after the holiday. If a recognized holiday falls during an eligible employee's paid absence (e.g. vacation, sick leave), holiday pay will be provided instead of the paid time off benefit that would otherwise have applied. If a recognized holiday falls during an eligible employees unpaid absence (e.g. unpaid leave of absence), no holiday pay will be provided. Use of free days must be approved by the Director at least one week before the days being requested off. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, we will have Friday off. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, we will have Monday off.

Vacation

All employees who have completed 12 months of continuous full-time employment will be eligible for 6 days of paid vacation effective July 1. For employees who complete their first 12 months of continuous full-time employment, the following schedules will be utilized until the following July:

July 1-September 30	5 days
October 1-December 31	4 days
January 1-March 31	3 days
April 1-June 30	2 days

Vacation time must be used by June 30th. Unused time will expire on July 1st each year. Vacation time must be taken in full days (8 hours) or ½ days (4 hours). Vacation time must be scheduled in advance and approved by the Director. Vacation approval will be on a first come, first serve basis.

Leave of Absence

A. Leave of Absence Without Pay

A leave of absence is granted for special circumstances and must be approved by the Director and Executive Director. A leave of absence may be granted for a 30 calendar day period or less and may be renewed by a written request for up to a maximum of 6 months. Failure to report to work upon termination of this leave will result in termination and loss of benefits. A leave of absence is unpaid.

B. Family Medical Leave

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 grants an eligible employee up to a total of 12 weeks of leave during a 12 month period for one or more of the following reasons:

1. The birth of a child of the employee
2. Placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care
3. To care for an immediate family member (spouse, parent, or dependent) with a serious health condition
4. When the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition

All employees who will miss more than 3 days of work for one of the above reasons, with the exception of individuals who are off work for a work-related injury, will be required to request time off under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. A WH-381 form must be completed by management and reviewed with the employee to begin FMLA.

Vacation and free days must be used prior to the issuance of FMLA time.

Bereavement Leave

Employees will be compensated for 3 regularly scheduled calendar days following the death of an immediate family member. Immediate family includes mother, father, sister, brother, spouse, and children. Employees will be compensated for 1 day following the death of a mother-in-law or father-in-law.

Additional time off without pay may be granted at the discretion of your supervisor to attend the funeral of other relatives or friends. You also have the option of using any available vacation days in these instances.

Burial Detail

A Step Ahead Child Center will allow 2 hours of paid time off per month to participate in a military burial detail. Please inform your supervisor and provide documentation of attendance.

Jury Selection/Jury Duty

An employee who is absent during his/her regularly scheduled work hours to fulfill an obligation of jury selection will be paid full wages. The court will pay \$9.00 per day and Elcam will pay the difference of his/her hourly pay rate.

An employee who is absent during his/her regularly scheduled work hours to fulfill an obligation of jury duty will be paid full wages. The court will pay \$25.00 per day and Elcam will pay the difference of his/her hourly pay rate not to exceed 40 hours in one calendar week or 80 hours in one calendar year.

Evidence of jury selection/jury duty must be provided in advance and approved by the Executive Director to receive paid time.

Military Leave

A Step Ahead Child Center will grant military leave of absence in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) of 1994.

Voting

A Step Ahead Child Center encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by participating in elections. Generally, employees are able to find time to vote either before or after their regular work schedule. Flexibility in the work hours will be allowed to accommodate your right to vote. Notify your supervisor prior to Election Day, if you require any such accommodation.

Insurance

Regular full-time employees are eligible for health insurance benefits after 3 months of continuous full-time employment.

A Step Ahead Child Center offers the following health and life insurance options to employees:

1. Enrollment in Highmark Community Blue health plan at a rate of \$40 per pay period which will be deducted directly from the employee's paycheck. A full description of the health insurance program is contained in the Highmark Community Blue handbook which is available upon request.

Coverage is effective on the first day of the month that falls within 90 days of continuous full time employment. For example, if you were hired as a full-time employee on July 9th, your coverage begins on October 1st. For coverage to be effective, you must complete an enrollment application which will be given to you prior to your eligibility.

2. Enrollment in the incentive plan. Employees who do not choose to enroll in the health plan may choose the incentive plan. Employees enrolled in the incentive plan will receive \$85 monthly.

Termination of Benefits will occur due to the following conditions:

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1. See Highmark Book description
 2. Death
 3. Permanent termination of employment-coverage ends the last day of the month in which you last worked
 4. Disability- (FMLA) coverage may be extended for a maximum period of 3 months
 5. Leave of Absence- coverage may be extended for a maximum of 6 months
 6. Lay-off coverage extended to the end of the following month from date of lay-off

Retirement Plans

A Step Ahead Child Center employees can contribute to a retirement plan of their choice. A Step Ahead Child Center does not provide a match to the retirement plan. The employee designates how much money s/he would like deducted from his/her paycheck. For the convenience of the employee, an IRA plan is set up with Legg Mason and a 403-b plan is set up with Fidelity. An employee may choose a plan either of these plans or their own.

SECTION 5: EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

Computer Use

All employees have the responsibility to use A Step Ahead Child Center computers and telecommunication resources in an efficient, effective, ethical, and lawful manner.

The following are unacceptable uses of company technology:

- Installing software onto computers or the network without management authorization to do so
- Duplication of copyrighted software, except for backup and archival purposes
- Use of resources for any purpose which violates federal or state law
- Connecting personal devices such as USB storage devices, phones, etc beside those provided by A Step Ahead Child Center
- Misrepresenting your identity in the use of information technology resources including using someone else's username and password without their knowledge
- Attempting to evade, disable or hack security provisions
- Sending or storing for retrieval material likely to be offensive to the recipient
- Use of resources to introduce or propagate viruses, worms, malware or for any other destructive intentions
- Use of resources for the purpose of music or movie sharing
- Use of resources to intentionally access obscene or pornographic material
- Use of resources for your own commercial purposes
- Use of resources to disrupt the work of others

A Step Ahead Child Center may delete unlicensed and personal software without notice.

Outside Employment

A Step Ahead Child Center expects that all of its employees will be professionally committed to their position and responsibilities. **A Step Ahead Child Center** also supports employees who wish to engage in outside employment or community related activities, as long as such efforts do not create a conflict of interest or interfere with the regular and punctual fulfillment of your work with **A Step Ahead Child Center**.

Employees who have questions regarding possible conflicts of interest should seek advice from their supervisor.

Personal Appearance

Employees have a direct impact on the image of **A Step Ahead Child Center** and should appear neat, clean, and dressed appropriately for the work being performed. It is important to dress in a manner that will allow you to interact with the children on their level and actively engage in their activities which include art, water play and physical activity. Teachers are required to participate in children's active games at times when they can do so safely and should not be sitting during active playtime. Clothing that is exposing or has inappropriate slogans is not acceptable. It is also

highly recommended that you keep a change of clothes in your work locker in the event that your clothes become soiled during activities.

Personal Belongings

Each staff is designated an employee locker upon start of employment at A Step Ahead Child Center. Personal belongings should be kept in your assigned locker. You are not required to lock your locker unless it contains items that could be potentially harmful to the children. You may request a lock from the Director at any time.

Phone Usage

Personal calls should be kept to a minimum and should not interfere with the employee's work. Cell phone use is absolutely NOT permitted when staff are to be supervising the children. Cell phones may be used during naptime/break time so long as they do not interfere with caring for the children. If a situation arises where you must use a personal phone during work hours, please notify your supervisor. Excessive phone use during work time will result in disciplinary action.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the facility at any time. Employees may smoke in designated smoking areas or in their vehicles during breaks. Cigarette butts must be disposed of in provided containers.

Substance-Free Workplace

The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 requires **A Step Ahead Child Center**, as a federal contractor and grant recipient, to certify that it will provide a drug-free workplace. As a result the following is prohibited:

- Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or substances, including the illegal use of prescription drugs;
- The illegal use, sale, manufacture, distribution or possession of drugs while on organization business or premises and while operating vehicles on organization business;
- The use, sale, possession, transfer or purchase of alcoholic beverages on organization premises or while performing organization business, except in connection with organization-authorized events; and
- Working under the influence of prescription or nonprescription drugs that could impair judgment or motor functions and potentially place persons or property in jeopardy.

A Step Ahead Child Center will not condone criminal activity on its property, or on property under its direct control, and will take appropriate action up to and including terminating an employee.

As a condition of employment, employees must abide by the terms of this policy and must notify **A Step Ahead Child Center** of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace not later than five days after such conviction.

A Step Ahead Child Center has the right to conduct a search of all organizational owned property (desks, cabinets, etc) and employee property on the facilities, such as handbags and briefcases, if there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a violation of the substance abuse control policy has occurred. **A Step Ahead Child Center** may, but is not required, to obtain the employee's consent when property belonging to or used by an employee is to be searched.

Gross Misconduct

Some offenses are so serious that they can result in termination without previous warnings. The following examples are listed for the guidance of all. This list is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all prohibited activity. The following actions may result in immediate termination:

- Inappropriate behavior toward parents. (All staff is expected to be professional and courteous at all times. If a parent is rude to you, please allow your Director to handle the situation.
- Neglect or physical abuse of a child.
- Withholding of food, nap or other comfort from a child.
- Failure to report to work three consecutive workdays without proper notification.
- Falsification of center records (i.e. employment application, time clock, and your records)
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Smoking in prohibited Areas.
- Conviction of a felony for any offense committed while employed by the center.
- Fighting, threatening violence or boisterous or disruptive activity in the work place.
- Leaving a child unattended (inside or outside)
- Allowing a child to leave the center with an unauthorized person.
- Sleeping while supervising children.
- Habitual absenteeism or tardiness without notice or unauthorized absences from workstation during the workday.
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment.
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of employer-owned or customer-owned property.
- Insubordination that show gross disrespect such as threatening, profanity, or yelling at the Directors.
- Unauthorized use of telephones, mail system, or other employer-owned equipment (No cell phones allowed in the center during work hours!)
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the work place, while on duty, or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment.
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct.
- Sharing confidential information about the center or any of its employees.
- Promoting and sharing rumors or negative information about A Step Ahead Child Center.

Disciplinary Action

There will be repercussions to any violation of the above rules. Depending on the severity of the offense and the Director's discretion, violations may be followed by a warning, a two day suspension, and/or termination of employment.

Employees may be issued a written warning for violation of A Step Ahead Child Center policies. An employee may receive a maximum of three warning notices. The 3rd written warning will result in an unpaid suspension of employment. Further infractions after the 3rd written warning and suspension will result in termination of the employee.

Serious misconduct will result in termination of the employee with or without prior warning notices. These infractions include violence, substance abuse, mistreatment of children, theft, and criminal activity both in and outside the work place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RELEASE FORM

I understand that I am an at-will employee, and I therefore understand that my employment may be terminated at any time, with or without prior notice, and with or without cause or reason by **A Step Ahead Child Center**. Likewise, I understand that I am free to resign at any time, for any reason. No employee, agent, or representative of **A Step Ahead Child Center** other than its executive officers has authority to enter into any agreement guaranteeing employment for any specified period of time, or to make any representations, promises or agreements contrary to the foregoing. I further understand that any such agreement authorized by executive officers shall not be enforceable unless it is in writing and signed by both an executive officer and myself.

No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about policies. As **A Step Ahead Child Center** changes, the need may arise to change policies described in this handbook. **A Step Ahead Child Center** reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policies or portions of the handbook from time to time as it deems appropriate in its sole and absolute discretion. As soon as practical, **A Step Ahead Child Center** will notify all team members of such changes. This Handbook supersedes any previous Employee Handbook.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood this statement and have received a copy of the Employee Handbook. Your signature further acknowledges and agrees that you will read and familiarize yourself with its contents and follow the policies and rules indicated.

Please date, print and sign your name and forward this form to your supervisor.

Employee Printed Name

Employee Signature

Date