Welcome to the Playmates Family!

Thank you for entrusting Playmates Preschools & Child Development Centers, Inc. (Playmates) with the educational journey of your child. We are honored to welcome your family to one of the highest quality early educational programs in the Tri-State Area. As an accredited institution by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and designated WV Tier III Center, we stand proudly among the top 10% of centers nationwide. This accreditation underscores our commitment to excellence in early childhood education and places us in a distinguished league.

At Playmates, we consider it a privilege to be selected as your family's care and education provider. Our unwavering dedication is to enrich the lives of children, enabling them to realize their true potential in a fun, healthy, and nurturing educational environment.

In addition to our NAEYC accreditation, we maintain state licensure and employ multiple assessments within our programs to guarantee that every child in our care receives an unparalleled educational experience. Our handbook encapsulates these guiding principles, serving as a comprehensive resource. We encourage you to take the time to peruse its contents for future reference.

We look forward to fostering a meaningful educational partnership with your family and are committed to ensuring your child's growth, development, and happiness during their time at Playmates Preschools & Child Development Centers, Inc.

Once again, thank you for choosing Playmates for your child's educational journey. Since 1983, we have remained dedicated to providing a foundation for lifelong learning, growth, and success. If you have any questions or require further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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PLAYMATES PROFILE

Playmates, as an esteemed equal-opportunity child development center, proudly serves the community on a non-discriminatory basis. Our commitment extends to providing a nurturing environment that caters to children at varying stages of their early education journey, whether they are new to childcare or preschool or seasoned veterans. Playmates offers meticulously designed programs that are both age and developmentally appropriate, addressing key aspects such as transitions, growth, school readiness, and continuous learning.

Operating as a non-profit, state-licensed child development entity, Playmates prioritizes the safety and well-being of all stakeholders. Our centers are covered by comprehensive liability insurance, offering peace of mind to the families we serve. With a rich legacy spanning over 40 years, Playmates has been a dedicated pillar of the community, contributing to the educational development of countless children.

At Playmates, we uphold an "open-door policy," actively encouraging parental visits, conferences, and observations. Ensuring the safety and security of our staff, children, and families is paramount. As such, access to all Playmates buildings requires an active personal identification code or accompaniment by a staff member, emphasizing our unwavering commitment to a secure environment.

In strict adherence to regulatory standards, Playmates follows all rules and regulations set forth by the West Virginia Department of Human Services, the Office of the West Virginia Fire Marshall, and the West Virginia Department of Education. This commitment ensures that every child at Playmates receives care in accordance with the highest industry standards.

MISSION STATEMENT

Playmates Preschools and Child Development Centers, Inc. will be the leading provider of high-quality care and education services for all children and their families.

Playmates Preschools and Child Development Centers, Inc. will show they CARE enough to make a difference by demonstrating the following VALUES in all we do:

Customer Service
All-Inclusive
Respect
Education
Safe and Secure

We care enough to make a difference!

Playmates Preschools &
Child Development Centers

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The philosophy of Playmates Preschools and Child Development Centers, Inc. (Playmates) is to develop and deliver a curriculum that promotes the physical and emotional well-being of children from cradle to college. We are committed to providing services to families that enhance children's abilities to reach their true potential and to offer a healthy and nurturing educational environments for all children. In such an environment, children are accepted for what they are, not for what they are able to do. Those with special needs develop and excel along with their peers.

Our teams provide guidance and support to our children and families through service, consultation, meetings, and workshops. These efforts increase community awareness and commitment to addressing the educational, social, and emotional needs of all children in our early education programs. This same philosophy will be utilized at any center established and operated by Playmates.

OUR TEACHERS

Every educator at our institution undergoes a meticulous hiring process, underscoring our commitment to ensuring their unwavering dedication, passion, and ability to address the developmental and emotional needs of your child. To maintain the highest standards, we thoroughly verify professional references and conduct comprehensive state and federal criminal background screenings.

Our team members not only meet but often surpass the qualification requirements mandated by state law. Furthermore, each staff member completes an extensive orientation and participates in a comprehensive training program. This rigorous preparation is integral to guaranteeing that our educators are well-equipped to provide the highest quality early childhood education.

At our institution, we take pride in offering a level of customer service,

experience, and commitment that is unparalleled in the field of early childhood education. We are confident that the exceptional qualities of our staff contribute to a learning environment that sets us apart from other providers.

ADHERENCE TO THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Our policy aligns with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its regulations, as well as other pertinent local, state, and federal laws related to providing services for individuals with disabilities. We conduct a thorough case-by-case assessment of each child's needs and are committed to implementing reasonable accommodations to facilitate the safe participation of every child in our group care environment. Our goal is to create an inclusive and supportive atmosphere, ensuring that each child has the opportunity to thrive. If you have specific concerns or requirements, we encourage you to discuss them with our team, and we will collaborate with you to address and meet your child's unique needs.

Special needs assistance is available either on site or through referral agencies.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF PLAYMATES

We believe that an early childhood program, at its best, is one which:

- promotes and supports social/emotional development; and
- promotes and encourages a child to become a creative problem solver.

We hope that all the children will develop the skills to become self-confident, self-motivated, and self-disciplined. We support our children to have the opportunity to grow at their own pace and develop a respect for others in a non-sexist environment. Since learning comes

through activities that children enjoy, a positive attitude toward school will be established as a basis for on-going long-term education.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Playmates shall afford all clients a program to promote the individual child's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual growth and well-being by providing the following:

QUALITY AND CURRICULUM

Playmates utilizes Creative Curriculum as the framework for each classroom's learning environment. The philosophy behind our curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. Learning requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work and learn firsthand about the world we live in.

Daily communication between teachers and families to keep you well-informed about your child's day.

Early intervention testing and on-going support are provided by trained early intervention staff.
Playmates uses assessments to support children's learning, using a variety of methods such as:

- observations
- family input
- checklists
- rating scales
- individually administered tests.

All personnel undergo comprehensive training to enhance their understanding of assessment, encompassing its purpose, utilization, and inherent value. They demonstrate proficiency in articulating these principles through detailed lesson planning and effective oral communication with both families and community stakeholders.

Furthermore, each site adheres to established timelines and dates for conducting developmental screenings and environmental assessments. This structured approach ensures a systematic and proficient evaluation of each child's developmental progress and guarantees the maintenance of a conducive learning environment.

Program and environment assessment will be done through self-assessment and outside evaluators using different tools such as:

- Environmental Rating Scale Quality Assessments
- DoS – Dimensions of Science Assessment
- Creative Curriculum Fidelity Assessments
- NAEYC Observations & Assessments
- Social/Emotional Assessments
- Health & Safety Assessments
- Program Leadership & Administration Assessments
- CLASS Assessments

Educators are scheduled for collaborative planning time weekly, during which they do not supervise awake children and use child assessment outcomes to design activities or lesson plans that meet the needs and interests of the children.

Playmates provides written transition plans including activities to support family transitions, transitions from class or age group within the program, transitions to kindergarten, and transitions between other programs (early childhood and Head Start programs.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Our hours of operation are from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The Kenova Center has extended hours until 8:30 PM Monday through Friday.

Parents wishing to leave their child any time after 6:00 p.m. must notify the center before 3:00 p.m. on the day the services are needed depending on availability.

Pre-K programs offered in public school programs will be 7:45 a.m. - 2:15p.m.

Playmates will be closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Eve at 6:00 p.m.
- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- the day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve at 12 noon
- Christmas Day

Pre-K programs follow county school schedule.

DAILY SNAPSHOT

Children are respected as individuals and can choose activities of interest daily. A reasonable routine for meals, snacks, sleep, and indoor/outdoor play is provided daily including:

- A balance of quiet and active play as well as group and individual activities are available daily.
- Indoor and outdoor activities are provided daily to allow for large and small muscle development.
- Experience and equipment appropriate to the age and stage of development of the individual child are available daily.
- Opportunities provided to educate families and children on eco-healthy practices.
- Children have opportunities for self-expression in conversation, imaginative play, and creativity.
- A variety of social activities are provided considering the child's level of maturity for grouping of children.
- Children have opportunities available for mixed-age experiences as well as for interactions with the child's own age group.

ROUTINE SCHEDULE

Daily Routine

- Arrival, Center Play
- Breakfast
- Morning Meeting
- Gross Motor -Indoors/Outdoors
- Learning Centers – Children's Choice
- Story time
- Lunch
- Quiet time/Nap
- Snack time
- Gross Motor -Indoors/Outdoors
- Learning Centers – Children's Choice
- Story time
- Learning Centers – Children's Choice / Departing

Daily schedules are posted in each classroom and will vary based on age of the children and scheduled gross motor activities which is scheduled for each classroom.

Morning Meeting includes activities to develop cognitive, language and fine motor skills, Pledge of Allegiance, songs, alphabet recognition, calendar, counting and finger plays.

Learning Center/Choice Time includes children's choice activities: art, music, science, math, library, sand/water play, dramatic play, blocks, fine motor and manipulatives.

Evening Routine

- Dinner
- Indoor/outdoor play
- Learning Center – Children's Choice Time
- Snack
- Rest time

Children are in multi-age groups during evening care hours.
As a service to our clients, Playmates offers evening hours at the Kenova Center for children enrolled in our program.

Lavalette, Westmoreland, Buffalo, and Ceredo Centers offer *limited* transportation to Kenova Center for evening care.

You may use the evening service at any time as your regularly scheduled service or as an extra service for special occasions, parents' evenings out, school classes, or for the social development of your child or children.

Please contact the Kenova Center at the beginning of each week to inform us of your childcare needs. In the case of unscheduled plans, you must inform the appropriate center before 3:00 p.m. of the day the service is required. **Evening services MUST be scheduled in advance.**

HEALTHY MEALS AND NUTRITION

(See Appendix 1 and 2)

Nutrient-rich meals and snacks are thoughtfully provided in recognition of the positive impact of good nutrition on both physical and mental performance. Our childcare facility actively participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a federal initiative dedicated to delivering wholesome meals and snacks to children under our care. Adhering to the stringent meal requirements established by the USDA ensures that our offerings meet the highest nutritional standards.

To maintain a consistently balanced and nutritious meal plan, we encourage children to partake in the meals provided by the center, discouraging the bringing of outside food. Meals are served family-style in each classroom, and our commitment to health, nutrition, and safety policies is unwavering. The culinary team diligently monitors the temperatures of all food and liquids introduced into the classroom, ensuring that nothing exceeding 110 degrees is within the children's reach. For infants and toddlers, food preparation is tailored to their chewing and swallowing capacities.

Should a child bring food from home, our staff collaborates with families to guarantee compliance with USDA food guidelines. All foods and beverages must be labeled with the child's name and the date. Shared items from home must either be whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers.

All staff are instructed to thoroughly wash all fruits and vegetables prior to eating and to discard any foods with expired dates.

For infants and children with special feeding needs, our dedicated staff meticulously documents the type and quantity of food consumed, providing this vital information to the child's family daily. It is important to note that we refrain from feeding cow's milk to infants under 12 months of age, in accordance with established guidelines.

Our commitment to nutrition excellence reflects our dedication to the well-being and optimal development of each child in our care.

BREASTFEEDING

We acknowledge that your choices regarding food and feeding practices for your child are deeply personal. Throughout the breastfeeding phase, our aim is to cultivate a comfortable and nurturing environment that accommodates your preferences. We fully support and respect your decision to continue breastfeeding your child beyond infancy, and it's important to emphasize that we do not mandate weaning as a prerequisite for transitioning to the next classroom or age level.

Our facilities are well-equipped to handle your expressed breast milk, and we kindly request that the milk comes to the center in ready to feed sanitary containers labeled with the infant's full name, the date and the time the milk was expressed to ensure that staff and providers are able to offer the oldest milk first. Teachers will discard any unfinished and unrefrigerated formula or breast milk after two hours. To ensure we provide the appropriate environment and support for both you and your child, we encourage you to engage in a discussion with your Center Director about your decision to breastfeed. Your comfort and your child's well-being are paramount to us, and we are dedicated to collaborating with you to address your unique needs.

GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHY CELEBRATIONS

Please help us encourage lifelong healthy habits among our children. We encourage parents to join us for their child's birthday or other special occasion and bring food to help celebrate. Please select or prepare healthier food options that your child enjoys. Suggestions include:

- favorite fruits

- lower fat baked food (example: mini muffins with icing) favorite dishes that aren't necessarily desserts.
- foods with special family or cultural significance
- healthy foods in fun shapes

Also, consider celebrating with favorite stories, music, games or activities. Often the most important thing to your child is that you take the time to help them plan something special. Please remember to talk to your child's teacher about any food allergies or restrictions in the classroom.

INFANTS (BIRTH – 2 YRS)

See also Safe Sleep Policy Appendix 3

Creating a safe and secure environment for infants is paramount to fostering a conducive environment for learning, play, and growth. At Playmates, we have meticulously designed a nurturing and creative world tailored for infants aged six weeks and older, aiming to promote both their mental and physical development.

Our dedicated Center Directors and teachers collaborate closely with you to ensure a seamless transition from your home to our center, leaving smiles not only on your child's face but on your own as well. We are deeply committed to establishing a strong bond with your child, setting the foundation for their optimal start in life.
Emphasizing positive and supportive interactions between teachers and children, our program involves singing, reading, and engaging in conversation to support this crucial developmental stage.

Our classrooms and equipment are thoughtfully sized to be developmentally appropriate, allowing infants to move, explore, and play with confidence. We take pride in individually planning age-appropriate activities that foster your child's cognitive and social development within a warm and nurturing environment.
Playmates encourage keeping infants and toddlers/two's together with their teaching staff for nine months or longer.

TODDLERS (TWO YEAR OLD PRESCHOOL)

Every day in a toddler program is unique, and so is the role you play in their lives. At Playmates, we nurture everyday moments for these young learners. We build on daily routines and create meaningful learning experiences with a comprehensive, research-based infant and toddler curriculum that nurtures the unique strengths, interests, and needs of infants, toddlers, and twos.

PRE-K 3 (THREE YEAR OLD PRE-K)

Our Preschool 3 class empowers children to be confident, creative, and caring learners through play-based, hands-on investigations—a research-based approach that incorporates language, literacy, and mathematics throughout the day.

PRE-K 4 (FOUR YEAR OLD PRE-K)

As formal schooling approaches, the prekindergarten stage emerges as a pivotal period in a child's development. Our Prekindergarten program is designed to foster independence and equip your child for the impending adventure of kindergarten. We facilitate a seamless transition by acquainting children with a more structured learning environment.

Our dedicated teachers are driven by passion and view it as a privilege to collaborate with you during this significant phase in your child's life. We prioritize the cultivation and enhancement of your child's communication, relationship-building, and higher-level thinking skills. Additionally, we focus on refining motor skills and encouraging the vocal expression of creative ideas.
Thorough preparation for kindergarten and future success in school.
Emphasis on vocabulary development through letter-sound and sight word introduction and acquisition.
Hands-on experiences to promote independent and creative learning.

Public Pre-k is provided in partnership with Wayne and Cabell County Boards of Education at no charge. Children must have turned 4 years old before July 1st of the school year.

SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN (KDG – 12 YRS)

Discovering a secure and enriching out of school time program becomes effortless with Playmates Before/After school care and summer camp programs. Our STEAM curriculum provides an engaging environment tailored for school-age children, aged 5 through 12, providing a space where they can spend quality time with friends, even on out-of-school days.

We focus on fostering the development of school-agers, helping them form a strong sense of identity and capabilities. Emphasizing collaboration and positive group interaction, we empower children by offering choices in daily planning while encouraging independent learning. Our program boasts exciting activities, hands-on exploration, literacy and homework help in a quiet and comfortable space for completing assignments.

For your convenience, many of our centers in collaboration with the Department of Education offer transportation to and from neighborhood schools. We align our programs with your school calendar, ensuring a continuum of engaging activities during holidays and out-of-school days.

Key Features:

- STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Arts Math) Curriculum
- Full dinner served afterschool
- Daily D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything And Read)
- Homework help
- Daily fitness activities to promote an active and healthy lifestyle.

- A strong social/emotional program offered in comfortable environments designed to help your child build confidence, self-esteem, character, and essential social skills.

We are proud to be chosen as 21st Century Community Learning Centers (for school age students during out of school times) is coordinated in partnership with Wayne County Board of Education.

SCHOOL BREAK SOLUTIONS

When public schools are on break, families often seek temporary, high-quality care and engaging activities for their school-age children. We offer high quality fun and educational full day care when your child's school is out. Playmates school break care is designed to provide a delightful way for children to spend their breaks and holidays. Beyond the enjoyment, these camps offer parents the peace of mind that their child will be immersed in motivating and stimulating learning activities within a secure environment.

Our summer day camp is crafted to ensure that children have a fun and fulfilling experience during school breaks. Our summer campers enjoy many community field trips including swimming, museums, athletics, culinary, and parks while maintaining a focus on educational enrichment. For additional information about the specific programs we offer during these breaks, please consult with your Center Director. They will be delighted to provide you with comprehensive details and address any questions or concerns you may have about our camp offerings when public schools are not in session.

FAMILY POLICIES

REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT

Enrolling your child necessitates meticulous completion of the registration packet, including all requisite forms, which must be filled out, signed, and promptly returned to your Center Director. Before leaving your child on the premises, we also require the submission of their up-to-date vaccination record and the most recent well visit documentation, signed by your child's healthcare provider.

To ease any first-day jitters, we will schedule an orientation for both the child and their parent or guardian to take a tour of the center, meet our teachers and allow the child to play in their future classroom. This structured approach ensures a smooth transition to the center for your family, fostering a positive and comfortable start to your child's journey with us.

Additionally, it offers parents the opportunity to observe the center firsthand. On the first day of attendance, we recommend that parents spend a few minutes with their children, discussing when they will return for them. Subsequently, we advise parents to depart without prolonging farewells, as lingering goodbyes are not conducive to creating a happy and supportive environment.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR YOUR AWARENESS

In the event a parent must remove their child from childcare, the parent is required to give a two (2) week notice of withdrawal.

Notify staff of any changes of address, phone numbers, employment, or any changes to alternate emergency list.

All children are required to have an updated medical form every year until immunizations are completed and every two years thereafter.

All tuition payments must be rendered on a weekly basis. A form of automatic payment must be kept on file at the center at all times.

Two weeks past due will result in termination of services until the balance is paid.

A non-refundable registration fee is due at time of enrollment. This is a one-time fee charged per family.

A non-refundable supply fee will be charged annually for each child.

Any additional cost of routine care will be the responsibility of parents: diapers, wipes, special supplies or equipment needed. (Please check your child's cubbies daily to assure that we have an adequate supply of these products for the next day).

Parents/Guardians are required to bring their child into the center or class and sign them IN and OUT. Release of children to someone other than a parent or guardian requires photo identification from that individual and it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the center ahead of time of any departure changes for their child.

No chewing gum is allowed.

To protect against cold, heat, sun injury, and insect-borne disease, the program requires families to provide children with clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather and cool in the hot weather as well as sunscreen that is non-aerosol or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of **SPF 15 or higher** that is applied to exposed skin (only with written parental permission to do so).

If the use of an insect repellant is recommended by public health authorities, only those products containing DEET are used and applied no more than once per day (only with written parental permission to do so). No repellant will be applied to children under 2 months of age.

Staff will ensure children are protected from inclement weather including sun, rain, and heat. Children will have the opportunity to play in a covered and/or shaded area.

Handwashing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.
Note: The use of alcohol-based hand rubs in lieu of hand washing is not recommended for early education and childcare settings. If these products are used as a temporary measure, enough must be used to keep the hands wet for 15 seconds. Since the alcohol-based hand rubs are toxic and flammable, they must be stored and used according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Parents are responsible for providing health insurance for their child or children to cover any accident your child may incur.

Program staff protects children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock, burns or scalding, slipping, tripping, or falling. Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from tripping or slipping. Our program excludes infant walkers. Each site has an emergency response plan with procedures to reduce staff and child exposure to environmental hazards.

Playmates parking areas are idle-free zones for all vehicles, including families' automobiles and Playmates busses, except if vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures.

Playmates selects and uses fragrance-free and non toxic cleaning products for use in all our facilities. Whenever possible we use cleaning products that are biodegradable and environmentally friendly. This does not apply to sanitizing and disinfecting products.

Support staff and volunteers do not work alone with children. They must be with, and supervised by, regularly scheduled educators at all times

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF SUPERVISION AND SAFETY MEASURES

Infants and Toddlers:

1. Teaching staff ensures continuous supervision of infants and toddlers through direct visual and auditory monitoring.
2. Monitors are not to be used as a substitute for direct supervision.

Preschool Children:

- Teaching staff primarily supervises preschool children through visual observation.
- Short intervals of sound supervision are acceptable during specific activities (e.g., independent toilet use, library time, or nap periods), with frequent checks on children out of direct sight.

Kindergarten/School Age Children:

- Children involved in safe tasks may briefly be out of direct sight and sound supervision (e.g., taking notes to the office).
- A communication plan with the office, utilizing intercom, walkie/talkie, or video, must be established to confirm the child's safe arrival.

First-Aid and CPR Certification:

- A minimum of one staff member with a valid pediatric first-aid and CPR certification is consistently present with each class.

Staff-to-Child Ratios and Class Sizes:

- Playmates maintains developmentally appropriate staff-to-child ratios and class sizes at all times, both indoors and outdoors.
- Strict adherence to WV DHHR licensing guidelines and NAEYC standards is a top priority.

Supervised Rest and Nap Periods:

- Daily supervised rest and/or nap periods are provided, ensuring a supportive and secure environment for children.

These outlined measures underscore our unwavering commitment to fostering a secure and developmentally appropriate environment for every child under our care.

ITEMS TO BRING TO THE CENTER

Each child should bring to the center the following items:

- A lightweight blanket, crib sheet, and a small pillow for rest times. (Please take-home weekly for cleaning).
- A special stuffed animal, if needed, to sleep with. (However, no other toys should be brought to the center, due to possession problems).
- An extra set of weather appropriate clothing, including underpants and socks. (These items should have the child's name on them and should be left at the center).
- Toothbrush and toothpaste. (Infants gums/teeth are wiped with a disposable tissue).
- Sunscreen, SPF 15 or higher.
- Gloves and headwear during cold weather.
- ***All items should have the child's name on them***.

We ask that children do not bring toys to the center except for show and tell day. This will help avoid any conflicts that may occur. (A small stuffed animal for rest time is ok.)

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to become as involved in the center's operation as their schedule will permit. Suggestions for involvement are:

- Reading your child's daily activity sheet and taking time to discuss your child's day with their teacher.
- Showing interest in your child's activities and continuing related activities/conversations at home.
- Attending special family functions provided by the center (parties, picnics, conferences, etc.).
- Helping with fund raisers.
- Sharing family cultural resources and interests.
- Assisting your child with bringing items/pictures from home that relate to the weekly topic and are meaningful to your child.
- Participate with staff in community cultural events, concerts, storytelling activities, or other events and performances designed for children and their families.
- Participating on parent planning committees; 1) Quality Improvement Committee, 2) Pre-K Committee, 3) Collaborative Committee or 4) the Board of Directors.

Program staff ask adults to translate or interpret communications as needed. If you are interested in sharing your talents, culture, or knowledge let the staff know. Playmates maintains an open-door policy for parents. You are welcome to visit and share time and talents at any time.

FAMILY INPUT AND HOME OBSERVATIONS IN CHILD ASSESSMENT

At Playmates, we recognize that families are experts on their children, and we value your input in understanding and supporting each child's development.

As part of our enrollment process, families complete a developmental history form that asks about your child's health, routines, and milestones. This helps us begin building an individualized approach for your child right from the start.

Throughout the year, families are invited to share observations and updates about their child's growth at home. This can happen informally at drop-off or pick-up, through email or communication apps, or by scheduling a time to talk with your child's teacher.

Additionally, at least twice a year, we schedule meaningful conferences with you to review developmental assessments, celebrate progress, and plan next steps. We encourage you to bring any insights, questions, or updates you'd like to share at that time.

Your voice is essential in painting a complete picture of your child's growth, and we deeply value your contributions to our assessment process.

FAMILY-TEACHER CONFERENCES

At least twice a year, we schedule meaningful conversations with you to delve into your child's achievements and milestones within the classroom setting. These sessions are pivotal moments for us to collaborate effectively with you as partners in your child's educational journey. In order to make these discussions as enriching as possible, we kindly request your active participation. Please bring your observations regarding your child's development at home, along with any questions or pertinent information you wish to share.

During these meetings, we will specifically reference your child's most recent developmental assessment. This dedicated time allows us to explore and discuss what your child has learned, as well as anticipate the exciting prospects that lie ahead at the center. Your input is

invaluable, and together, we can ensure your child's continued growth and success in their educational journey.

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Parent Advisory Council is a group of volunteer parents and community members who promote the goals of Playmates Preschools & Child Development Centers, Inc. The Council acts as the voice for parents and serves as a conduit for all parent involvement and support activities and advises Playmates Leadership on a variety of issues affecting parents of young children, including:

- Policies
- fees
- family events
- finances
- programming

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips with Playmates provide your preschool and school aged child with hands-on, real-world learning experiences, often involving visits to nearby parks, museums, and other local educational sites. To ensure both the meaning and safety of these trips, please consider the following:

Notification: Families are informed at least one week in advance of each field trip. Notifications include details such as the time, schedule, location, and any associated extra costs. This allows parents to adequately prepare for their child's participation.

Permission Slips: Permission slips are a mandatory requirement for all field trips. Each trip necessitates a separate form describing the specific details of the event. Written permission from parents is essential to authorize their child's participation.

Family Volunteers: We welcome family volunteers on field trips; however, it's important to note that personal vehicle transportation is required for volunteers.
Your Center Director is available to address any additional queries you may have and provide further guidance on field trip policies and procedures.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

PLAYMATES EXPECTATIONS

Be Safe **Be Respectful** **Be Responsible**

In their early years, children are actively learning how to navigate social interactions and understand appropriate behaviors in various situations. Discipline at our center aims to maintain a safe and fair environment, fostering the growth and development of a child's self-esteem. We prioritize a proactive and preventive approach to guidance, emphasizing the reinforcement of positive behaviors rather than solely focusing on challenging ones. Our teachers undergo training in diverse techniques. This includes positive guidance, redirection, modeling constructive handling of feelings, resolution of interpersonal conflict, setting clear-cut limits, and the use of logical non-punitive consequences, significantly minimizing instances of challenging behaviors. Challenging behavior is defined as any behavior that (1) interferes with children's learning, development and success at play, (2) is harmful to the child, other children, or adults, [or] (3) puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure.

While most situations are effectively managed within this positive framework, in extreme cases and as a last resort, a child may be gently guided to an alternate activity away from the group. It's important to note that this strategy is not intended as a punishment but rather as a means to redirect the child. The child is encouraged to rejoin group activities when they feel ready to do so. This particular strategy is not applied to infants or toddlers.

Our commitment to providing a nurturing environment extends to strictly adhering to corporate policy and state child care licensing regulations, Playmates strictly prohibits corporal punishment on the premises, including by parents or guardians. Staff must never use physical punishment or engage in psychological abuse. Each staff and child at Playmates is treated with respect, and any behavior intended to harm someone physically or emotionally is not tolerated. ensuring that our staff never employs corporal punishment.

We view families as essential partners in teaching children about socially appropriate behaviors. On occasion, we may seek your collaboration to address and extinguish a challenging behavior, recognizing that parenting styles vary among our families. We appreciate the sensitivity of these matters and respect the diversity of approaches.

Discipline may involve non-punitive restraint to ensure safety and prevent property damage, brief supervised separation from the group, and withdrawal of special privileges.

For children with persistent behavior problems, individual behavior plans are developed. The plan assesses the function of the behavior and includes strategies to address it. The support team, consisting of parents/guardians, classroom teacher, center director, and positive behavior support coordinator, works collaboratively to implement and monitor the plan, ensuring a supportive and inclusive environment for every child.

There is no circumstance when it is permissible for staff to use any form of physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

(1) Playmates Preschools and Child Development expulsion policy is

to prohibit or severely limit the use of suspension due to a child's behavior. Such suspensions may only be temporary in nature.
(2) A temporary suspension must be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.
(3) Before determination if a temporary suspension is necessary, our staff will engage with positive behavior support personnel, collaborate with the parents, and utilize appropriate community resources – such as behavior coaches, psychologists, other appropriate specialists, or other resources – as needed, to determine no other reasonable option is appropriate.
(4) If a temporary suspension is deemed necessary, a program must help the child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible while ensuring child safety by:

a. Continuing to engage with the parents and a mental health consultant and continuing to utilize appropriate community resources.
b. Developing a written plan to document the action and supports needed; and,
c. Determining whether a referral to a local agency responsible for implementing IDEA is appropriate.
d. If, after a program has explored all possible steps and documented all steps taken, a program, in consultation with the parents, the child's teacher, the agency responsible for implementing IDEA (if applicable), and the mental health consultant, determines that the child's continued enrollment presents a continued serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children and determines the program is not the most appropriate placement for the child, the program must work with such entities to directly facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.

Playmates complies with all federal and state civil rights laws.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

SICK POLICY

For comfort and protection of your child/children, no child is admitted to class if he/she shows definite signs of illness. Symptoms may include, but are not limited to fever, rash, headache, sore throat, chronic croup cough, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, eye or ear infection, and communicable diseases.

Communicable diseases such as chicken pox, head lice, measles, etc. will require a doctor's note stating that the child has been examined and is free of symptoms, is no longer contagious, and may return to school.

If your child exhibits any of the above symptoms, please be responsible and find alternate care. Children cannot be left with a temperature above 100.4 and may not return to the facility for 24 hours after fever breaks.

If your child becomes ill at school, you will be contacted and expected to plan to have your child moved to a suitable environment for his/her care and comfort.

Playmates provide space, supervision, and comfort while waiting for pick up because of illness.

MEDICATION POLICY

If the child is currently on medication, the parent must sign a form requesting that this medicine be given and stating the times it should be administered each day. Center personnel will not be allowed to administer medication without this written permission. In addition to this requirement, the medication must also be for that child, or it cannot be administered by center personnel. If possible, the parents should administer medication at home. If scheduling dictates giving

the medicine during center hours, the number of times should be minimized and can only be given with a written order from a physician.

Medication is only administered when:

1. The prescriptive medicine bottle or package has the original pharmacy label showing the prescription number, name of the medication, date the prescription was filled, the physician's name, the child's first and last names, specific, legible directions for administration and storage, and the expiration date.
2. The original non-prescriptive medicine bottle or package also has a label with the child's first and last names, specific, legible directions for administration and storage.
3. All medications are always to be stored in a locked cabinet.
4. Staff are trained in Medication Administration. See Policy PPG-2 Dispensing Medication.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Playmates Preschools & Child Development Centers are committed to maintaining a positive and collaborative relationship with all families. We understand that concerns or disagreements may arise, and we are dedicated to resolving them in a respectful and constructive manner. Our conflict resolution process is designed to ensure that every family feels heard and valued. Here is what you can expect if you have an issue:

1. **Raising a Concern:** If you have a concern or issue, please bring it to the attention of a staff member or the director as soon as possible. You can do this in person, by phone, or via email.
2. **Acknowledgment:** We will acknowledge your concern promptly, typically within 24 hours, and will arrange a time to discuss the issue in more detail.
3. **Meeting Arrangement:** A private meeting will be scheduled to

allow a focused and confidential discussion. Meetings can be held in person, over the phone, or via video call, depending on what is most convenient for you.

4. **Listening and Understanding:** During the meeting, we will listen carefully to your concerns, ask questions to clarify details, and ensure we fully understand the situation from your perspective.
5. **Exploring Solutions:** We will work together to explore possible solutions, keeping in mind the best interests of your child and the broader childcare environment. Our goal is to find a mutually acceptable resolution that addresses your concerns.
6. **Agreement and Action Plan:** Once a solution is agreed upon, we will outline the specific actions that will be taken, along with a timeline for implementation. Both parties will agree on the plan before it is put into action.
7. **Follow-Up:** We will follow up with you to review the progress of the agreed-upon actions. This follow-up helps ensure that the solution is working effectively and that you are satisfied with the outcome.
8. **Ongoing Communication:** We encourage ongoing communication and are always available to discuss any further concerns or feedback. Our aim is to foster a positive and supportive environment for all families.
9. **Further Steps:** If the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, we are open to exploring additional steps, such as involving a neutral third party to assist in the resolution process.

Playmates values open communication and partnership with our families. We are committed to working together to resolve any issues that arise, ensuring a positive experience for everyone involved.

RESOLVING CONCERNS AND GRIEVANCES: STEPS TO HELP FAMILIES BE HEARD

At Playmates, we want families to feel comfortable sharing any concern or problems that may arise. We know that good communication helps keep your child's experience positive. If you

ever feel that something isn't going right, we encourage you to speak up. Teachers and Directors can be reached in person, by phone, by email, or through a scheduled meeting request – whichever method works best for you. Below are three steps to help you share your concerns in ways that increase in formality if needed.
Neither Playmates leadership nor staff will discriminate or retaliate against customers who file a grievance.

Step 1 – Talk It Through (Informal Resolution): Start by having a conversation with your child's teacher or the Center Director. Most concerns can be quickly resolved this way.

Step 2 – Put It In Writing (Formal Resolution): If talking it through doesn't help, write down your concern and give it to the Center Director and Executive Director within five days. They'll respond in writing within five working days of receipt.

Step 3 – Ask the Board to Review (Final Resolution): If you're still not satisfied, you can send your written concern and the earlier responses to our Board of Directors. They will review everything said and send you a final written decision within fifteen working days.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Our "Crisis/Disaster Response Handbook" is in the Parent Resource Area. Rest assured we will do everything we can to protect your child in the event of a crisis or disaster.

This childcare center has taken these steps to prepare the children, staff, and parents for emergency situations, to reduce exposure to environmental hazards and to reduce injuries:

- The childcare center conducts fire drills at least two (2) times a month and records the dates as required by licensing.
- The fire alarm is loud and may be scary to children. It will be helpful to talk with your child to help prepare them.

- The childcare center checks its emergency kits and emergency medication expiration dates on a regular basis.
- We have at least one land phone to use if there is no electricity and we have access to numerous cell phones.
- With any disaster or crisis, your cooperation is necessary for the following: Encourage and explain to your child why the best place for them is at the childcare center.
- Explain that if you are unable to pick them up quickly, we will care for them until you or your emergency contact comes to get them.
- Listen to your local radio/TV stations for updates.

We will care for your child until you or your designee is able to reach them. Be sure to keep your child's emergency release card updated. Children will only be released to those specified by you on their card. We will also utilize the phone numbers on the emergency release card should we need to relocate to our alternate site.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

All details within your child's records, including your personal information, are treated with utmost confidentiality. Access to these records will only be given to administrators and educators who have consent from a parent or legal guardian to access the records, the child's parents or legal guardians, and regulatory authorities. Unauthorized access to the records is prohibited without your explicit written authorization or a court order. We prioritize safeguarding your privacy and ensuring that sensitive information is disclosed only under lawful and authorized circumstances.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Playmates Preschools & Child Development Centers prioritize the safety of children during transportation, offering a fleet of licensed and insured student transportation vehicles for school commutes and center-sponsored field trips. We adhere to all state licensing

requirements and other regulatory agency requirements. Our drivers undergo specialized defensive driver training initially and engage in annual refresher courses. As part of our stringent driver qualification process, driving records are reviewed annually. Moreover, student transportation drivers are subject to initial and random testing for substance/alcohol use.
Transportation services are available for children who can be safely transported on a center vehicle, following both individual state childcare licensing regulations and specific regional guidelines.

To ensure the safety and well-being of the children, parents must notify the center in advance if their child will not be utilizing transportation on a specific day.

MANDATED REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

THIS CENTER REPORTS SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT TO CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES AS REQUIRED BY WEST VIRGINIA LAW.

Our mission is to ensure the safety and well-being of all children in our centers, not only during their time at our facility but at all times. It is a legal obligation for anyone working directly with children to promptly report any suspicions or evidence of child neglect or abuse to the appropriate state childcare licensing agencies or law enforcement.

Non-compliance with reporting obligations, as outlined in individual state childcare licensing regulations, can result in legal accountability. Furthermore, the law explicitly prohibits interference with an individual's attempt to report child abuse or neglect.

For detailed information on the mandatory reporting requirements specific to your state, please call:

Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-352-6513

WEAPONS AND VIOLENCE

The safety of our learning environment is of utmost importance to us. Therefore, we strictly prohibit family members, children, and guests from possessing firearms or other weapons on our property and during events sponsored by us. The only exception to this policy may be granted to sworn law enforcement officers if required by law. In the event that a child is found in possession of a weapon, center management will promptly confiscate the item and notify the appropriate authorities.

Additionally, in situations where a child or parent's behavior poses a threat to the safety of others, or if a child or parent engages in abusive behavior towards other children, parents, or staff within the center, we reserve the right to immediately disenroll the child from our program. This policy is in place to ensure the well-being and security of all individuals within our learning community. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in maintaining a safe and respectful environment for everyone involved.

DRUG FREE ENVIRONMENT

Our commitment to fostering a healthy and safe environment is paramount. Therefore, we have a strict policy in place to ensure that staff, family members, and guests refrain from smoking in the center and its surrounding grounds. Additionally, we emphasize that at no time is anyone permitted to use, consume, sell, manufacture, or be under the influence of any alcohol or illegal drugs on center property. These policies are in place to safeguard the well-being and safety of everyone within our community. We appreciate your cooperation in maintaining a secure and supportive environment for all.

COMMITMENT TO THE NAEYC CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

At Playmates Preschools & Child Development Centers, our policies are grounded in the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. This Code guides early childhood professionals in making responsible decisions

and promotes respect, trust, and integrity in all our relationships. Below are examples of how our program policies align with and support these ethical responsibilities:

1. **Confidentiality Policy:** *Connected Ethical Principle: "We shall respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, and colleague)."*
   We maintain strict confidentiality of children's records and family information. Personal data is shared only with authorized individuals and only when necessary to support the child's development or ensure safety. This protects the family's right to privacy and dignity, as outlined in Section I-1.3 of the Code.
2. **Family Engagement and Communication Policy:** *Connected Ethical Principle: "We shall develop relationships of mutual trust with families."*
   We actively seek family input through conferences, open communication, newsletters, and surveys. Our team respects each family's background, values, and contributions, working in partnership to support children. This reflects Section II-1.1 and II-2.2 of the Code, which emphasize collaboration and family rights.
3. **Discipline and Guidance Policy**: *Connected Ethical Principle: "We shall not participate in practices that are emotionally damaging, physically harmful, disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, or intimidating to children."*
   Our approach to guidance focuses on positive behavior support and developmentally appropriate strategies. We never use punitive or harmful discipline. This policy supports the Code's Principle I-1.5, affirming our responsibility to protect children's well-being and support their positive development.
4. **Staff Conduct and Professionalism Policy**: *Connected Ethical Principle: "We shall demonstrate in our behavior and language respect and appreciation for the unique value and human potential of each child." (Section I-1.10); "We shall model and promote ethical conduct to students, interns, and new professionals in the field of early childhood education."*

(Section IV-2.2)

We expect all staff members to uphold high standards of professional behavior in their interactions with children, families, and coworkers. Staff receive regular training on ethical practices, confidentiality, and respectful communication. This policy reflects our responsibility to model ethical conduct and support a culture of professionalism and integrity.

5. **Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Policy**: *Connected Ethical Principle: "We shall recognize and respect the unique qualities, abilities, and potential of each child." (Section I-1.1); "We shall acknowledge families' childrearing values and their right to make decisions for their children." (Section II-1.2).* Playmates welcomes all children and families regardless of race, religion, ability, or background. We actively promote inclusive practices in curriculum, staffing, and environment. This policy aligns with the Code's commitments to diversity, equity, and respect for family cultures and values.
6. **Health and Safety Policy**: *Connected Ethical Principle: "We shall be familiar with and implement laws and regulations that protect the children in our programs." (Section I-1.8); "We shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are emotionally damaging, physically harmful... or intimidating to children." (Section I-1.5)* Children's safety and well-being are our top priorities. Our program follows strict health and safety procedures, including daily health checks, emergency drills, sanitation practices, and ongoing staff training in first aid and CPR. This policy directly supports our ethical responsibility to protect and advocate for children's welfare.

INFANT MILK STORAGE APPENDIX 1

Infant Milk Storage			
	Storage Location and Temperature		
Breast Milk	**Countertop** 77 degrees F or colder (room temperature)	**Refrigerator** 40 degrees F	**Freezer** 0 degrees F or colder

Freshly Expressed or Pumped Breast Milk	Up to 4 hours	Up to 4 days	Within 6 months is best, up to 12 months in deep freezer
Thawed, Previously Frozen Breast Milk	1-2 Hours	Up to 1 day (24 hours)	Never refreeze human milk after it has been thawed
Leftover from feeding (baby did not finish the bottle of breast milk)	Use within 2 Hours after the baby is finished feeding		
Formula Milk	2 Hours at Room Temperature/One Hour after baby drinks from bottle	24 Hours in Refrigerator	

FOOD PROGRAM APPENDIX 2

Building for the Future

This day care facility participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a federal program that provides healthy meals and snacks to children receiving day care.

Each day more than 2.6 million children participate in CACFP at day care homes and centers across the country. Providers are reimbursed for serving nutritious meals which meet USDA requirements. The program plays a vital role in improving the quality of day care and making it more affordable for low-income families.

Meals CACFP homes and centers follow meal requirements established by USDA.

Breakfast	Lunch or Supper	Snacks (Two of the four groups:)
Milk Fruit or Vegetable Grains or Bread	Milk Meat or meat alternate Grains or bread Two different servings of fruits or vegetables	Milk Meat or meat alternate Grains or bread Fruit or vegetable

Participating Facilities Many different homes and centers operate CACFP and share

the common goal of bringing nutritious meals and snacks to participants. Participating facilities include:

- Childcare Centers: Licensed or approved public or private nonprofit childcare centers, Head Start programs, and some for-profit centers.
- Family Day Care Homes: Licensed or approved private homes.
- After-school Care Programs: Centers in low-income areas provide free snacks to school-age children and youth.
- Homeless Shelters: Emergency shelters provide food services to homeless children.

Eligibility State agencies reimburse facilities that offer non-residential day care to the following children:

- Children aged 12 and under,
- Migrant children aged 15 and younger, and
- Youths through age 18 in after-school care programs in needy areas.

Contact Information: Questions about CACFP? Please contact one of the following:

Sponsoring Organization/Center	**State Agency**
Playmates Childcare Jeanette Perdue-Barker 725 Chestnut Street Kenova, WV 25530 304-453-4858 Wayne	West Virginia State Director Office of Child Nutrition Department of Education 1900 Kanawha Boulevard Building 6, Room 248 East Charleston, WV 25305-0330 Phone: 304-558-2708

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

SAFE SLEEP POLICY APPENDIX 3

All staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and others who care for infants in the childcare setting should follow these required safe sleep practices as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

a. Infants up to twelve months of age should be placed for sleep in a supine position (wholly on their back) for every nap or sleep time unless the infant's primary care provider has completed a signed waiver indicating that the child requires an alternate sleep position.
b. Infants should be placed for sleep in safe sleep environments; which includes: a firm crib mattress covered by a tight-fitting sheet in a safety-approved crib (the crib should meet the standards and guidelines reviewed/approved by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission [CPSC] and ASTM International [ASTM]), no monitors or positioning devices should be used unless required by the child's primary care provider, and no other items should be in a crib occupied by an infant except for a pacifier;
c. Infants should not nap or sleep in a car safety seat, bean bag chair, bouncy seat, infant seat, swing, jumping chair, play pen or play yard, highchair, chair, futon, or

any other type of furniture/equipment that is not a safety-approved crib (that follows the CPSC and ASTM safety standards) (4);

d. If an infant arrives at the facility asleep in a car safety seat, the parent/guardian or caregiver/teacher should immediately remove the sleeping infant from this seat and place them in the supine position in a safe sleep environment (i.e., the infant's assigned crib).
e. If an infant falls asleep in any place that is not a safe sleep environment, staff should immediately move the infant and place them in the supine position in their crib.
f. Only one infant should be placed in each crib (stackable cribs are not recommended).
g. Soft or loose bedding should be kept away from sleeping infants and out of safe sleep environments. These include, but are not limited to bumper pads, pillows, quilts, comforters, sleep positioning devices, sheepskins, blankets, flat sheets, cloth diapers, bibs, etc. Also, blankets/items should not be hung on the sides of cribs. Swaddling infants when they are in a crib is not necessary or recommended, but rather one-piece sleepers should be used (see Standard 3.1.4.2 for more detail information on swaddling).
h. Toys, including mobiles and other types of play equipment that are designed to be attached to any part of the crib should be kept away from sleeping infants and out of safe sleep environments.
i. When caregivers/teachers place infants in their crib for sleep, they should check to ensure that the temperature in the room is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult, check the infants to ensure that they are comfortably clothed (not overheated or sweaty), and that bibs, necklaces, and garments with ties or hoods are removed (clothing sacks or other clothing designed for sleep can be used in lieu of blankets);
j. Infants should always be directly observed by sight and sound, including when they are going to sleep, are sleeping, or are in the process of waking up.
k. Bedding should be changed between children, and if mats are used, they should be cleaned between uses.

The lighting in the room must allow the caregiver/teacher to see each infant's face, to view the color of the infant's skin, and to check on the infant's breathing and placement of the pacifier (if used).

A caregiver/teacher trained in safe sleep practices and approved to care for infants should always be present in each room where there is an infant. This caregiver/teacher should remain alert and should actively supervise sleeping infants in an ongoing manner. Also, the caregiver/teacher should check to ensure that the infant's head remains uncovered and re-adjust clothing as needed.

Infant sleeping areas included within the regular classroom area of each age group.

SPACE FOR NOTES AND COMMENTS