

PARENT HANDBOOK

Main Center

607-272-7117
506 First St, Ithaca, NY 14850

Monday-Friday 7:30am – 5:30pm

UPK After School Program

607-882-5904
201 E. Tompkins St, Ithaca, NY 14850

Monday-Friday 2:00pm – 5:30pm

SUMMER (July & August)
Monday – Friday 8:00am-5:30pm

Info@dicc.org www.dicc.org

A Partnership For Our Children

Dear Families and Caregivers,

Thank you for your interest in placing your child in our Center. Downtown Ithaca Children's Center (DICC) staff will be working closely with you to provide the best care and education. Please feel free to talk with any of us about your questions and ideas. You are always welcome in your child's room! This is a partnership among your family and the DICC family.

DICC is licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services providing full-day child care and education. NYS OCFS regulations can be found online at http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/daycare_regulations.asp and are posted on our parent bulletin boards. If you would like to contact NYS OCFS, their phone number is 315-423-1202. We are in partnership with the Ithaca City School District (ICSD) for Universal Prekindergarten and the contact number for the Office of the Early Childhood Program is 607-274-2208. Our program provides child and family-centered care and education. This is accomplished through: age-appropriate lesson planning, active parent participation, staff development, culturally responsive teaching and learning, interactive engagement where children grow in all areas of development, and so much more related to curriculum, anti-bias practices and strong beliefs in each child's strengths, assets and challenges.

Staff members are extensively supported and trained to recognize the wide range of developmental milestones throughout the early childhood years. It is so important that staff know and understand who they teach – culturally, socially, racially, economically, intellectually, physically and all ability and capacity for overall wellness. Together, we all learn and grow.

We have many partnerships for programming and funding some including: The Sciencenter, Tompkins County Public Library, Buffalo Street Books, Local Youth Development Programs, Higher Education and School Districts, The Park Foundation, United Way, Human Services Coalition, Community Foundation and more. It is exciting!

It is our mission to provide a creative and culturally diverse environment that fosters the emotional, social, and intellectual development of children. Our successes are achieved through family, staff and community support and collaboration.

We look forward to shared caring, teaching and learning experiences that take place for your child.

Sincerely and Respectfully,
The DICC Staff and Administration

Heather Harbot	Krista Tripp	Kenya Way-Vines
Program Manager	Executive Director	After School Director
Heather@DICC.org	Krista@DICC.org	Kenya@DICC.org

Who We Are

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Downtown Ithaca Children's Center provides a creative and culturally diverse environment that fosters the emotional, social, and intellectual development of children. Our successes are achieved through family, staff, and community support and collaboration.

HISTORY:

The **Downtown Ithaca Children's Center** has decades long connection to the city of Ithaca and surrounding communities. Originally established in the early 1970s as the **Drop-In Children's Center**, the facility initially operated as a parent cooperative, offering childcare services "by the hour." This approach provided a unique and necessary service to members of the community. The Center quickly evolved into a more traditional not-for-profit daycare facility with paid full-time staff. However, the Center maintained its cooperative spirit through the constant presence of parents /guardians who continued to volunteer and served on its Board.

In 1996, the Center became licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services and has subsequently provided full time daycare services for the Ithaca community while continuing to also offer "drop-in" services when needed. In 2005, the Center added a new toddler wing, increasing the center's ability to further provide for the needs of the community.

In recent years, the Center's contribution to the community has shifted more towards an emphasis on full-time care, leading to our reintroduction to the community as the **Downtown Ithaca Children's Center**. It is with this connection to our past and a clear vision towards the future that the Downtown Ithaca Children's Center continues to provide quality, safe, nurturing care for our community's children.

Our Staff

Quality programs mean quality staff. The interconnectedness of this is essential. There are aspects that assure quality including: recruitment, hiring and retention of the best people. The classroom teams play crucial roles in fostering strengths-based growth and development for every child – individually and collectively as part of a community. These areas of human resources have both business and caring/teaching/learning expectations.

Recruitment is ongoing and not just when an opening occurs. We believe that it is important to have a pool of candidates through formal and in-depth searches, experiences with other programs, relationships and work through prior collaborations, people who are known through other positive working situations and more. It is our responsibility to keep active potential candidates as well as new ones. We have a critical commitment to hiring staff from diverse backgrounds. It is important that children see themselves represented in the adults who care for and teach them. The diversity of the children and families must align with the staff and environment.

Hiring is a thorough process that meets the regulations set by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. Action tasks include: establishing an inclusive and well-trained interview team, face to face interviews with equitable and fair questions (virtual situations are considered as needed), work and personal reference checks, classroom visitations prior to hire, criminal background checks at the State level and medical/credential/educational/experiential requirements, and administrative onboarding. Additionally, DICC pursues candidates who demonstrate the following: cultural competencies, flexibility, patience, excellent communication, respectful honesty, love and curiosity for the children and learning, and belief in all children's strengths, capacities, and challenges.

Retention and staff stability is necessary for continuity of care and education. We believe that staff thrive and sustain excellent teaching and learning when they are set up for success and well supported. Our commitment is strong to teacher retention and is demonstrated through our practices some including:

- Provisions that respond to the diversity of the staff
- Monthly team and staff meetings for ongoing development
- Professional development opportunities for individualized and collective interests
- Flexible work scheduling to allow for continuing education
- Access to higher education scholarships and
- Resources – human, material and fiscal – that best support the strengths and needs of all employees
- Ongoing coaching and supervision that is collaborative in beliefs
- Shared leadership and ongoing input to operations and programming
- Benefits: Health/Dental Insurance, Paid Vacation & Sick, 401k (with 5% employer match)
- Vigilance of positive and effective working conditions
- Release time for working with families, each other, community partners and outside agencies

REGISTRATION & PAYMENT

The procedure for registration is as follows:

- Fill out a registration packet.

- Review the Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct, sign the lower portion submit to administration.

- Have a medical provider complete OCFS LDSS-4433 Child in Care Medical Statement or providers equivalent to confirm immunization record and return with registration. The provider may also fax this documentation to us at 607-272-4100.

- IF your child has a medical condition which requires utilization of life saving medication, OCFS LDSS-7002 Medication Consent Form must be completed by both the licensed authorized prescriber and the parent/guardian. In addition, the parent must collaborate with the Administrative Coordinator to establish an Individual Health Care Plan for A Child with Special Health Care Needs (OCFS LDSS-7006).

- IF your child has a known allergy, OCFS-6029 Individual Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan must be completed and signed by both parent and physician/HCP. Many times this will require the completion of OCFS LDSS-7002 Medication Consent Form as well.

- Pay an annual registration fee of $25.

- Review the Parent Handbook, sign the final page confirming understanding of policies/procedures and submit to administration.

- Pay a tuition deposit.
  - Full pay registrants must pay a tuition deposit equal to two weeks' tuition at the rate the child enters enrollment. This is refundable and may be used towards the child's final two weeks at the Center as long as two weeks' notice is provided.

- Registrants receiving childcare subsidy assistance (DSS) from their county of residence:
  - Registrants must pay a $300 deposit for full time and a $100 deposit for after-school. If necessary, these deposits may be paid in $25 per week installments. Upon withdrawal from program DSS client deposits will be refunded once payment for all charges has been received.
  - DSS registrants must sign and return Special Rules and Requirements for Families Receiving Department of Social Services (DSS) Assistance agreement found on page 17 of Parent Handbook.

Payment is expected weekly, billed at the beginning of each week. You are welcome to pay ahead by the month, semester, or year, if that would be more convenient. **Automated Payment Processing** may be authorized. Deductions are NOT made for absences because of illness, holidays, vacations, center closings or "short" months. Missed payments could result in fines or other penalties. If a financial problem arises**,** please see the Executive Director to work out a solution before payments are missed. (Information about emergency childcare scholarships is available upon request.)

HOW WE DO THINGS...

Arrival and Pick-Up

The Center provides care from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM weekdays unless notified of closing (scheduled or emergent).

It is important for children to be picked up on time. It eliminates stress for the child when all others have gone. If you are late without a communicated reason, you sign a late pick-up slip and will be billed for the late fee ($1 for every 1 minute late). Repeated lateness could compromise the placement.

If a child is left for more than 1 hour after closing and none of the child's parents or emergency contacts can be reached, we will have to consider the child abandoned and make a report to the Child Protective Service Department of Social Services. We do everything we can to avoid this type of situation, yet safety and accountability are critical.

Weather Related Closings

We make every effort to remain open on inclement weather days. DICC makes decisions independently and does not follow the local school district closing determinations. Although many times they align pending the severity of the weather. Closings (schedule and weather related) are posted on the DICC webpage (www.dicc.org) as soon as determined. Email, Procare app and text messages are sent to all parents if the center is closed, is experiencing a delay (opening late) or needs to close early as well. **If you do not receive a text message or email from us stating specific changes, then we will be open!**

In Case of Emergency

Emergency procedures are located in each classroom and the main office. The procedures include detailed information for the staff to use in emergency situations, as well as emergency phone numbers. All staff are trained on the procedures and protocols.

Smoke detectors are located throughout the building. The detectors are checked regularly and inspected annually. The detectors and emergency fire alarm pulls are directly wired to a third party, which will then contact the Ithaca Fire Department. When an alarm is set off, the fire department responds immediately.

Fire drills including the utilization of primary and secondary egress points are conducted monthly. Shelter in Place drills are conducted two times per year.

Local and National Emergencies – In the event that children and staff need to evacuate the building due to a national or local emergency, they will proceed to the Sciencenter or to the closest safe building as

directed by the emergency personnel. Should an emergency occur when a classroom is offsite and safety must be obtained closer than the center, the Sciencenter, Hickey's Music Center and Tompkins Community Action Sally Center are available alternate shelters. The DICC will only be evacuated in the event the building is deemed not safe for occupancy by the police/fire department. Additional emergency information will be released via social media, email and texting. **Please ensure that all information, telephone numbers and emergency contacts are updated and checked regularly throughout the year. Each family should have a contingency plan for picking up your child in the case of an emergency.**

Clothing Guidelines

Comfortable and safe clothing is important to the children. They work with materials in the classroom that may result in their clothing becoming soiled or wet (water, paint, etc.), sometimes more than once a day. It helps them to have the option of changing into clean dry clothes. Please provide changes of clothing for both the fun and sometimes messy activities as well as weather-related changes that may arise. The clothes should be labeled and checked regularly for adequate size and be weather appropriate.

Toileting Practices

We work together with families on toileting practices. They are initiated at home, yet some children need support from the classroom team. The teachers will use positive encouragement in order to promote using the toilet. Please dress your child in easy on/easy off clothing until they are able to be completely independent in this area of development.

Articles from Home

Children may bring a cuddly toy or blanket to serve as a comfort object. Other individual toys should be left at home. Some teachers may provide a sharing time or have themes in which children have resources and interests from home materials. That is discussed with you, children, and the staff. Talk with the classroom teachers about any questions or insights you have regarding this topic. Since they are personal items from home, you will be responsible for them. We do our best to assure supervision and guidance for helpful care and use.

Parent and Center Communication

Interactive, responsive, and reciprocal communication between parents and staff is essential. Teachers exchange information at drop-off and pick-up times, yet these are often rushed and busy conversations since they are engaged with the children. There are other ways parents and staff can communicate including:

- Individualized methods for daily communication that meet the strengths and needs of families
- Identification of specific times and ways to connect
- Use of the Procare App (this includes daily communication on diapering/toileting, feeding and resting)
- Telephone and email as mutually agreed upon
- Communication notebooks
- Parent requests for a conference with a teacher/team – virtually and/or in person
- Other ideas are welcomed and appreciated

Video Cameras

Video cameras are located in each classroom, large motor rooms, the front door, the playground, the kitchen, and the front office/resource room. These record at all times for the purpose of programming observation, staff development, children and staff safety and wellness. Videos are always accessible to the administrative staff. Video viewing by others must be approved and supervised by administration.

Program Philosophy, Teaching and Learning Practices

The DICC program is designed to encourage the growth of each child through an interactive child-centered and teacher facilitated approach. Individually and collectively, children both initiate and are guided to build on their intrinsic desire to gain knowledge about their worlds – intellectually, socially, emotionally, culturally, linguistically, physically, educationally and personally. Children are provided with a variety of developmentally appropriate materials and experiences which enable them to learn naturally, through exploration and discovery. They are supported to make choices, expand interests, and feel success, excitement, engagement and stretch and reach their assets, capacities and competencies. Staff have education, experience and ongoing training in early childhood practices, offering support and encouragement for children as they grow in the following areas:

- Positive self concept;
- Respect and curiosity for cultural diversity;
- Social and emotional skills;
- Gross and fine motor skills;
- Logical thinking skills; abilities to reason, question, experiment;
- Language development;
- Creative expression;
- Wellness for health, safety, nutritional and personal practices;
- And all that impacts teaching and learning that reaches wants, needs, goals and affirmations.

We use a combination of child-centered and teacher-facilitated (directed and guided) approaches. We believe that children and adults share specific ways of being that impact confidence, strengths, challenges, belief systems, curiosity, intentionality, problem solving, self-awareness and mindset, relatedness and capacities that support equity and access to all that is available within the children's environments in and outside of the center.

Developmental checklists are used to observe, guide and provide ongoing assessment of each child as well as who they are in their community. This helps in developing individualized goals that are incorporated into the core curriculum. Parent teacher conferences are regularly scheduled once a year, in the spring or summer. A parent and teacher conference can be scheduled at any time throughout the year.

Each room in the Center has a number of interest areas some including:

- Blocks
- Dramatic play
- Books/quiet area
- Table activities (small motor)
- Art/Science/Language development
- Sand/water
- Literacy – reading, writing, listening and speaking
- Representation of culture, family, race, class, abilities, language(s), gender/non-gender, beliefs, strengths and vulnerabilities so that children see themselves and feel understood and honored

Instructional Support Process

Children learn, respond and express themselves in different ways. As each child's health, development and safety are a priority in our classrooms we have processes established to identify and provide support as needed. Behaviors/patterns experienced will be communicated to parents/caregivers; many times, parents will be invited to participate in the observe-identify-support process as we prefer to work together.

When teaching teams notice a behavior or other pattern that impedes learning for a child or the learning/safety of the other children in the class, they identify/discuss as a teaching team with the Program Director, assess the circumstances associated with the behavior/pattern, document occurrences to assist in identifying patterns, as well as request an observation be conducted by the Social Emotional Support or Program Director. Following the observation, the teaching team will meet with the Social Emotional Support and Program Director. The team works together to identify what supports, routines or practices may be attempted or modified for the child/children to experience greater success. Should an Instructional Support Plan or further assessments be identified as beneficial, the Program Director will work with the parent(s)/caregiver to discuss and arrange accordingly; support plans may be implemented before a parent meeting is conducted.

Physical Well-being & Health

For every child enrolled at Downtown Ithaca Children's Center (DICC), each day includes a combination of individual, group and adult initiated activities; opportunities for free play, indoor play and outdoor play; a "quiet time" for rest or nap and relaxed "family style" snacks and meals.

Time outdoors is an important part of a child's day. It provides the fresh air needed to ensure good health and aids in the development of social and gross motor skills. Weather permitting, the children go outside every day for a minimum of one hour for large motor play & development as well as exploration and adventure. DICC benefits from an on-site play yard as well as many local parks and playgrounds within walking distance to bring variety and ensure daily access for all.

When weather is too hot, too cold, or too humid to allow for outdoor activities. Availability to the large motor spaces within our center ensure gross motor development and group play opportunities remain accessible daily. DICC offers a variety of equipment (bikes, scooters, balls, etc.) appropriate to the ages of the children and their developmental levels and interests, including children with developmental delays or disabilities, which promote the children's cognitive, educational, social, cultural, physical, emotional, language and recreational development.

Although children cannot be forced to sleep or forced to stay awake at any time of the day, well-being must allow for periods of rest. To meet the NYS OCFS childcare center regulations, the DICC nap/rest procedures require that children be offered a comfortable place to have everyone lay down quietly for a minimum of 20 minutes. This allows those who were going to sleep to do so without being distracted by non-sleepers; after 20 minutes, non-sleepers are offered a quiet activity.

All children are allowed freedom of movement and are provided with environments to develop such skills as crawling, standing, walking, and running as their age and development permit. DICC programming supports well-being and health of children and families in safe and responsive ways appropriate for the ages of the children in care.

Infants

With infants we talk, sing, interact and connect with them exposing them to language/vocabulary and the world around them. Our teachers respond to infants' sounds and expressions to reinforce safety and security as the children develop confidence and trust. We offer objects with different safe textures, shapes, and sizes to encourage exploration. Young infants are given regular tummy-time while they are awake and supervised indoors and outdoors; as they become developmentally ready, we allow infants to practice rolling, sitting, crawling, pulling up, and cruising at their own pace.

To reduce the harmful effects of screen time on health, learning and sleep of children, screen time is prohibited.

Toddlers

For toddlers we follow their interests and allow children to explore independently while providing encouragement and support. Active play does not need to be complicated or require special equipment—everyday movement, songs, outdoor exploration, and household activities can provide valuable developmental opportunities. We begin to teach healthy habits through routines and encourage helping as well as playing alongside others. We also begin to offer choice and name our feelings as children's language develops.

To reduce the harmful effects of screen time on health, learning and sleep of children, screen time is prohibited for children under 2 years of age; screen time must not exceed 30 minutes per week and must be an educational or movement component of a lesson plan for children 2 years of age with no commercial advertising and is prohibited during naps and meals. Therefore, screen time is strongly discouraged within our toddler program as our classrooms include children 18 months through 2 years of age.

Preschoolers

Our preschool classrooms include frequent opportunities for active play: movement songs, gross-motor play, fine-motor activities during centers, cooperative games in small groups, and a calming movement activity before transitions as well. DICC makes movement fun, developmentally appropriate, varied, and child centered. This allows preschoolers to build physical skills while also developing confidence, self-regulation, communication, and relationships.

To reduce the harmful effects of screen time on health, learning and sleep of children, screen time with no commercial advertising must not exceed 30 minutes per week, must be an educational or movement component of a lesson plan and is prohibited during naps and meals.

Nutrition

DICC serves breakfast, lunch, and a snack family style every day. Our meal program is vegetarian and is based on the use of eggs and cheese, whole grains and beans, local fresh fruit and vegetables, and nutritious snacks. We believe this style of eating provides the children with the highest quality nutrition and a balanced menu. We develop our menu and align our meal program with our participation in NYS Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Each child is offered the correct serving size of each food component in a meal. You can go to the link below for meal components and serving sizes.
https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/docs/cacfp-102.pdf
Eat family style whenever possible. Teachers sit with children and model a social mealtime. Encourage children to try different foods (but do not bully or coerce them).

Children on special diets are communicated and known by the chef and teachers. Some parents provide their own food. We ask that the children bring food that aligns with our menus and beliefs.

Healthy Living Program – For Families & Staff

DICC's commitment to well-being and health is greater than the program we offer within our center for children. Our support for families and staff extends beyond the care and education we provide for children; we also extend opportunities and resources to encourage healthy living for all which include but are not limited to:

- Gross Motor Activities are included in our monthly newsletter offering suggestions of ways we can be more physically active with children at home.
- A healthy seasonal recipe is included in our monthly newsletter.
- Vegetables and herbs grown on campus are accessible and available for all families and staff to harvest for home/personal consumption.
- Local food pantries, SNAP program updates/changes, and WIC schedule/contact are posted on our family communication board in the primary center main vestibule to provide families and staff with information/access to local sources of food and resources.
- During the warm months of the year, DICC board of directors sponsors monthly family meetups at local parks/playgrounds for both community connection as well as opportunity for family outdoor, gross motor play.
- Wellness (Nutrition, physical activity, mindfulness, etc.) is included as a component in our monthly staff meetings and professional development days.
- Annual staff training courses include both CACFP training as well as wellness/obesity prevention training to maintain current with research and resources.
- Resources specific to wellness (mind and body) available from local agencies, NYS OCFS, and early childhood professional organizations are extended to staff as they become available.

OUR FOOD PROGRAM

The DICC serves breakfast, lunch, and a snack every day. Our meal program is vegetarian and is based on the use of eggs and cheese, whole grains and beans, fresh fruit and vegetables, and nutritious snacks. We provide grains and beans and local vegetables and fruits. We believe this style of eating provides the children with the highest quality nutrition and a balanced menu. We develop our menu and align our meal program with our participation in NYS Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

All of our meals meet or exceed the nutrition standards set by the State and Federal Government. We work with local vendors and are committed to supporting our community small businesses along with larger food organizations as needed.

Our meals are designed to maintain positive, enjoyable and helpful eating habits for wellness and healthy development. Some children need time for adjustment. They teach each other about this and it is exciting to see them learn and grow in this area.

Infant formula and baby food can be provided by the Center or by the parent. Children on special diets are communicated and known by the chef and teachers. Some parents provide their own food. We ask that the children bring foods that align with our menus and beliefs. There is always time to discuss the topic of our food program, as it is such an important part of the program and overall wellness for the children.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

DICC Transportation Policy is designed to promote the safety of children and inform families of regulatory requirements. When registering your child, you are required to submit a Transportation Agreement authorizing your child to travel off campus for field trips/events under our supervision. With the exception of daily/local walks, permission slips or notification of field trips will be provided to parents by the classroom teachers.

1. DICC will obtain written consent for any transportation of their child and will keep the transportation policy and the written parental consent on file at the center. Parents can be given a copy.
2. A child will never be left unattended in any motor vehicle or other form of transportation.
3. Every child will board or leave a vehicle from the curb side of the street.
4. Each child will be secured in safety seats or safety belts as required by law. Safety seats will be supplied by the parents/caregiver or the daycare. Notice will be given on who will be supplying the safety seats.
5. Drivers will be 18 years of age or older and hold a current valid license to drive the class of vehicle they are operating. All vehicles used to transport children must have a current registration and inspection sticker.
6. A copy of this plan is provided at enrollment. If the plan changes, the parents/caregiver will be provided a copy of the amended transportation plan prior.
7. The use of cell phones or any other electronic device during transport, including hands-free devices, is prohibited. Necessary calls will be made once the vehicle is parked in a legally permitted position off the road.
8. During the transport of children, the program will adhere to the required child-adult ratios as per state regulations.

Methods of transportation include:

1. Walking
2. Using the city bus.
3. Traveling via paid bus transportation (for example: Ithaca City School buses)

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS FOR CHILDREN AGES 6 WEEKS TO 5 YEARS OF AGE

All classrooms and ages have specific regulations that are available in each classroom and in the front vestibule of the building. This is discussed during your registration and orientation to the center.

Areas of provisions are specific to each age level – infants, toddler, preschool and school age. They include:

- environment
- sleeping/resting
- feeding and mealtimes
- hygiene
- group sizes and ratios
- guiding and supporting children's behaviors
- individualized education plans for children with special needs and accommodations
- individualized and group teaching and learning plans
- and any other areas of programming that are important to families

Health Care Policy

The Health Care Policy is the required plan from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. As a licensed childcare center, we must follow state law regarding vaccinations, exclusion, medication and child abuse reporting.

ABOUT THE DOWNTOWN ITHACA CHILDREN'S CENTER HEALTH POLICY

The Downtown Ithaca Children's Center serves children 6 weeks to 5 years old in a safe, caring and educational environment.

Our health policy is designed to provide a healthy environment for the children in our care as well as for our employees. We also recognize the work responsibilities of parents and the conflicts which arise when an ill child must stay home. Downtown Ithaca Children's Center strives to control the spread of illness to the extent possible by ensuring that neither children nor employees are exposed to serious illnesses. To ensure a healthy group care environment, a partnership between parents and staff is necessary and so important. Staff practices proper hand washing and equipment disinfectant procedures to minimize the spread of illness in the classrooms and are alert to the symptoms of illness. Parents play a key role in minimizing illness and maintaining a healthy environment for all of the children by keeping their child out of the Center when the child's health is questionable or when the teachers believe it is necessary due to health concerns in the room.

WHEN WILL CHILDREN BE SENT HOME?

The decision to send a child home is based on the symptoms a child is showing (see the following) and especially on how the child is acting and feeling. A child who is unable to engage and feel well due to illness should be resting and healing at home. The home and classroom environments are different in terms of simulations and provisions. We observe and determine what is in the best interest of the child and other children and make decisions after that assessment.

Caring for a child who becomes ill in care: When a child displays symptoms of illness while in care, that child is separated from other children and attended to while the family is called to pick them up. An emergency contact card is filled out for each child with back-up telephone numbers. Someone must be available to pick up an ill child at all times.

A child will be sent home if any of the following are present. Please also see the next summary that defines the New York State Illness Exclusion Policy.

- Child has a fever of 100.4
- Child is unable to participate comfortably in group care
- Child requires a greater care need than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children in the classroom
- Child shows signs of possible severe illness:
    - o Lethargy
    - o Irritability
    - o Persistent Crying
    - o Difficulty Breathing

*Beyond the criteria on the following page, DICC staff has the discretion to exclude a child who is too ill to participate comfortably in activities or requires more care than we can provide. We have the right to override a heather care provider's note. Parents/Caregivers will be notified if your child is exposed to a communicable disease. Health alerts will be extended to families of all children enrolled who were exposed.

Illness Exclusion Policy

Exclude If:	Readmit When:
1) Child has a fever of 100.4	1) The child must remain out of group care until the fever has been gone for at least 24 hours (without Tylenol® or other fever-reducing medication).
2) Diarrhea - stools with blood or mucous, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet (two or more loose watery stools per day).	2) Diarrhea free for 24 hours.
3) Vomiting - green or bloody, and/or two or more times during the previous 24 hours.	3) Free of upset stomach and vomiting for 24 hours.
4) Rash - unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.	4) Skin sores are healed or note from clinic or physician stating child is not communicable.
5) Conjunctivitis (pink eye) bacterial and/or viral.	5) All discharge has ceased and note from clinic or physician stating child is not communicable and the child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
6) Impetigo, Skin Lesions, or Scabies	6) Skin sores are healed or note from clinic or physician stating child is not communicable.
7) Strep throat	7) 24 hours after treatment has begun.
8) Chicken pox	8) Until all lesions have dried and crusted (usually six days).
9) Pertussis (whooping cough)	9) Until five days of treatment with appropriate antibiotics.
10) Ringworm	10) After treatment and lesions are covered and a note from clinic or physician stating that a child is not communicable.

For children's comfort children should be picked up within 1.5 hours of notification (subject to fees or penalties after 1.5 hours). Children should remain home for 24 hours without symptoms before returning to the Center. In the case of a (suspected) contagious illness or continuing symptoms, a doctor's note may be required before returning.

Staff Health Policies

Staff members must be free of illness in order to work. Staff members who exhibit any of the symptoms listed above will be sent home from work until symptom-free.

Child Health Policies

All children must be completely immunized to attend childcare.

Proof of the child's physical must be provided by the child's doctor prior to enrollment. Documentation must include immunization information and the results of a well-child visit within 12 months preceding the date of enrollment. Physical and immunization updates are provided a minimum of once per year. Families are informed in writing if their child is not current with vaccinations.

Administering Medication:

The Downtown Ithaca Children's Center does not administer medication.
Children who are prescribed antibiotics must be on the prescribed medication for at least 24 hours before returning to the center.

Injury

Parents will be told of any injuries that take place during their child's stay at the Center. Injuries will be handled as follows:

1. At least one staff member will take charge of injured child, determine extent of injury and take appropriate action. (There is a minimum of one first aid and CPR trained staff member on site at all times.)

2. Other staff will supervise other children and be available to get further assistance, if necessary.

3. All adults present will remain calm and reassure injured child and others present.

4. Parent will be notified of injury once a child is attended to.

5. After the situation is stabilized, injured child will be encouraged to talk about the event, to "tell the story" of what happened (when possible) and will be given further reassurance and support.

If your child is hurt or becomes ill, you will be notified by accident/illness report and phone call. **In case of serious illness or injury requiring immediate medical attention, your child will be taken to Cayuga Medical Center emergency services and you will be notified so you can meet your child and his/her Caregiver there.**

Hand washing

Staff and children wash their hands whenever they are soiled, before eating, cooking, after using the bathrooms, after wiping noses, etc.

Hygiene

Children who are old enough to understand are taught basic procedures to prevent the spread of germs, for example: To cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze, or to blow their runny noses. Teachers model all these procedures.

Universal Blood Precautions

- Disposable gloves will be worn by staff, volunteers and parents whenever there is a possibility of contact with blood or bodily fluids (including during diaper changing, changing soiled pants or assisting with toileting).
- Disposable gloves must be disposed of after each use.
- A bleeding child must never be denied care because gloves are not immediately available.
- If blood is touched accidentally, the exposed skin must be thoroughly cleansed with soap and running water.
- Surfaces that have been in contact with blood or bodily fluids (including diaper changing table, toilet seats and handles) must be wiped with a germicidal solution.
- Clothes stained with blood or other bodily fluids will be removed and washed or placed in plastic bag to be returned to parents.

Downtown Ithaca Children's Center Babysitting Policy

Babysitting by center/school staff for center/school families is strongly discouraged because it may cause a conflict of interest or for staff to be viewed less professionally. If a babysitting arrangement is made, you must immediately report the arrangement and sign a babysitting release form. This release acknowledges that such arrangements may be allowed but are not sanctioned by Downtown Ithaca Children's Center and that neither the center/school, the client sponsor, nor Downtown Ithaca Children's Center is liable in the event of a claim. Babysitting arrangements may not interfere with Downtown Ithaca Children's Center services and may not occur during work hours or on company premises.

Below are the agreements. A copy of the release is available in the office for signature.

("Teacher") acknowledge and agree as follows:

1. Downtown Ithaca Children's Center does not support or sanction the practice of families engaging a Downtown Ithaca Children's Center employee for babysitting. Downtown Ithaca Children's Center shall not be responsible for any such arrangement between Parent and Teacher or for any disputes, damages, losses, claims or injuries of any kind and nature which may arise between you, including injuries to a child or the Teacher or loss of/damage to property.

2. While engaged by the Parent as a babysitter, the Teacher is not an employee of Downtown Ithaca Children's Center. Any activities or events that occur during such babysitting services, including but not limited to any transportation to and from Downtown Ithaca Children's Center, are part of Teacher's responsibilities to Parent and are outside of Teacher's responsibilities and duties as an employee of Downtown Ithaca Children's Center.

3. We, "Parent" and "Teacher" on behalf of ourselves, Parent's family and Parent's minor child(ren) hereby release and agree to defend, hold harmless, and indemnify Downtown Ithaca Children's Center, its subsidiaries, affiliates, and employees, from any and all claims of injury or damage (including personal injury) resulting from any babysitting arrangement between us.

Special Rules and Requirements for Families Receiving Department of Social Services (DSS)

- You are personally responsible to pay a $25 registration fee for each child before we can process your application
- You are personally responsible to pay a $300 deposit for each full time child. If necessary, you may pay the deposit in installments billed at $25 per week/child. Your deposit will be returned to you once we have received full payment for all of your charges.
- Parent Fees will be expected on a weekly basis. Please speak to the Executive Director of Operations right away if there is any problem with payment. Anyone who is more than 2 weeks behind will risk losing their child's space in the program.
- I understand that if my subsidy approval may require, I must submit proof of work (paystubs) to DSS **every month**. If I fail to do so, I will be personally responsible for the full amount of the charges for my child's daycare.
- I understand that **I must be working every day that I bring my child to daycare.** DSS will not pay for my child if I miss work because I'm sick, on vacation, laid off, take a personal day, quit my job, or miss work for any other reason without prior authorization. If I bring my child to daycare on a day that I am not working, I will be personally responsible to pay the **full charges** for that day.
- I must notify the DICC immediately if I lose my job for any reason. I will be personally responsible for the full amount of charges for daycare outside of my DSS approval.
- I must periodically recertify with DSS as required by their rules and regulations. If I fail to do so in a timely manner, I will be personally responsible for the full charges of every day until I recertify.
- I will abide by the Health Care Plan for the Downtown Ithaca Children's Center.
- I will pick up my child before the Center closes at 5:30 pm. There is a **$1.00 per minute fee** if I pick my child up after 5:30 pm.
- I agree to provide all requested paperwork required by Office of Children and Family Services regulations and/or The Downtown Ithaca Children's Center within 2 weeks of the original request.

All of the above requirements will be STRICTLY ENFORCED

Name (Please Print)	Child's name (Please Print)
Signature	Date

Please Sign & Return This Page

I have read and understand the information in the
Downtown Ithaca Children's Center Parent Handbook.

Name (Please Print) Child's Name (Please Print)

Signature Date