

Dear Families,

Welcome to Steps to Success! We are grateful that you have chosen our program to support your child's early learning and development. We consider it a privilege to partner with you during these important early years and look forward to building a strong, respectful, and collaborative relationship with your family.

At Steps to Success, we believe that every child is unique and capable. Our program is designed to provide a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment where children can grow socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively. Through developmentally appropriate practices, play-based learning experiences, and caring interactions, we strive to foster curiosity, confidence, independence, and a lifelong love of learning.

Families are a child's first and most important teachers, and your role is valued and respected. Open communication and partnership are central to our philosophy. We encourage families to share their child's interests, strengths, culture, and needs so that we can best support each child as an individual. We welcome your questions, feedback, and involvement during their time with us.

This Program Handbook has been created to help you understand our policies, procedures, and expectations. It outlines important information regarding our daily routines, curriculum approach, health and safety practices, family communication, and program guidelines. Please take time to review this handbook carefully and keep it for future reference. If you have questions at any time, our staff is always available to provide clarification or support.

If at any time you need administrative support, you can reach our Main Office at 717-517-8470.

Warm Regards,

Michelle Harbaugh
Executive Director

Adriana Witman
Executive Program Administrative Director

Emma Rivera
SACC Administrative Director

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Early Education and Family Services Administrative Director

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About Our Programs

Steps to Success provides high quality child care throughout Lancaster County for children ages 6 weeks through 6th grade. Our licensed child care center in Leola offers care for infants through pre-k. We offer before and after school and full day summer camp in both Conestoga Valley and Donegal School Districts. In addition, we offer before and after school services for the Conestoga Valley Pre-K Counts program.

Philosophy

Steps to Success, Inc. believes that to work with children is to invest in the future. To foster a well adjusted, confident individual is to create a responsible community member. By providing children with the opportunity to learn respect for their environment, taking responsibility for their actions, and reaching their goals, the center desires to empower children. The staff strives to model cooperation and caring interactions to build the children's sense of community. We believe that it is important to emphasize the social and emotional development of the children as well as their physical, language, and cognitive development. Children need a consistent yet flexible schedule. By utilizing an eclectic use of learning opportunities, we believe we are able to meet the needs of the children's varying backgrounds, developmental needs, and learning styles. The progress and growth of the children are important to us. We believe modeling community relationships with the children enables them to appreciate their part in the community.

Celebrating the children's cultural uniqueness benefits the sense of community fostered in the classrooms and our holistic approach to education. Steps to Success, Inc. was founded to invest in the future. At Steps, we believe the best way to do that is to nurture the children today. By planting good seeds in good soil, we contribute to the present and the future. The founder of Steps to Success believes that children are best served when they are allowed to be children. We believe that children need love before loose leaf, security before phonics, and fun before homework. A child who grows up knowing that he's loved is more likely to indulge his imagination, allow himself to play, and to dream. Dreamers often accomplish wonderful things.

Our mission at Steps to Success is to enable children to grow to be productive citizens. Our vision is to partner with the community to provide resources and services to staff, children, and families to enable all to grow to be productive citizens.

OCDEL & Keystone STARS

All of our centers are licensed and regulated by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning. In addition we are designated by Keystone STARS, a state-supported and funded quality improvement program which has four STAR levels. Each STAR

designation measures quality performance standards.

Our Curriculum and Assessments

In 2024, our child care center switched to Frogstreet Curriculum. FrogStreet is a research-based, comprehensive early childhood curriculum for ages birth to five, focusing on school readiness through play, intentional instruction, and brain development, integrating social-emotional learning with Conscious Discipline® for self-regulation and featuring bilingual resources and digital tools. It covers key developmental domains (social-emotional, language, cognitive, physical, approaches to learning) and aligns with state and national standards.

For assessments we utilize Teaching Strategies GOLD. TS Gold is an authentic, observational assessment system for children from birth through kindergarten, helping educators track development in areas like literacy, math, social-emotional skills, and more, using everyday interactions to inform instruction and align with learning standards. Teachers offer conferences with parents twice a year to discuss the results of these assessments and utilize them to create individualized learning opportunities in their lesson plans.

In addition to TS Gold our child care center utilizes ages and stages questionnaires. The Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) are widely-used, screening tools for children from birth to age six, designed to identify developmental strengths and potential delays in areas like communication, motor skills, problem-solving, and social-emotional growth, guiding parents and professionals toward early intervention or further assessment, focusing on progress rather than just deficits. Ages and Stages are completed within 45 days of enrollment and any time concerns begin to arise in a child's development. If the completed ages and stages assessment indicates a potential developmental delay a meeting will be scheduled with the parents.

Steps to Success School Age Programs align learning standards with student interests to provide structured daily activities during out of school time. Our Summer Camp Program extends this structure into full day care to include weekly themes and field trips/in house experiences. We utilize DRDP assessments and Child Service Reports to track student growth inside the program.

Results from assessments are used to make modifications and adaptations to lesson plans.

Referrals

As early childhood professionals, the staff at Steps to Success has the best interest of your child's development at heart. During the process of observations, screenings, and assessments, staff may have concerns about a child's development. The staff will bring these concerns based on their observations to the attention of the Director. The Director may offer some suggestions for the staff and/or request a conference with the parents. At a conference, the Director will share the concerns

with the parents, discuss options and provide appropriate referral information for social, mental health, educational, wellness, and medical services.

Our Staff

All employees must have FBI criminal background clearances, child abuse registry clearances, NSOR clearances, state background clearances, bi-annual physicals, first aid and CPR certification, fire safety training, and emergency preparedness plans. Staff also participate in ongoing professional development.

Yearly Schedule

Steps to Success, Inc. is open 52 weeks a year, Monday through Friday. The centers are closed on: New Years Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, July Fourth, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Black Friday, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. In addition, Steps to Success closes early on New Year's Eve.

Our centers close on Columbus Day & MLK Day to focus on staff development.

Inclement Weather

Unplanned weather is never convenient. We understand the frustrations the unknown can cause and the inconvenience to your family. Our top priority is the health and safety of all our families and staff. We need to ensure that we can provide high quality care in these unexpected situations. Steps to Success will implement the following procedures at our locations.

Conestoga Valley School District 2 Hour Delay- In the event of a 2 hour delay, Steps to Success will also operate on a delayed opening schedule. All five Steps to Success locations including the child care center, located in Conestoga Valley School District, will open at 8:30 am.

Conestoga Valley School District or Donegal School District Unplanned Early Dismissal- Steps to Success will be open for all early dismissals. We will be continuously monitoring the weather conditions for the safety of all staff and families. Please be aware there may be times it is necessary to close early for these events. You will receive communication from Administration through the platforms listed below.

Conestoga Valley School District Closure- In the event of an unplanned closure, all Steps to Success locations inside Conestoga Valley School District will open on a delayed schedule of 9:00 am-5:30 pm. CV elementary school age programs will be operating at Leola Elementary (beginning the 26-27 School Year). Parents will need to notify Emma of attendance. Any school age child attending Leola Elementary will need a packed peanut/tree nut free lunch.

Donegal School District 2 Hour Delay- In the event of a 2 hour delay, Steps to Success will also operate on a delayed opening schedule.

Donegal School District Closure- In the event Donegal School District Closes, Steps to Success will also close.

The Administration of Steps to Success understands that communication is essential to families and staff. Below, please find the ways in which we will continue to communicate with everyone. We strongly encourage you to join each of these platforms to check when weather may be affecting the operations of Steps to Success.

Brightwheel: All families will be notified via the Brightwheel alert system.

WGAL: Steps to Success updates can be found on WGAL.

Facebook: Please join our Steps to Success Facebook page for all program updates!
https://www.facebook.com/Steps-to-Success-Christian-Early-Learning-Center-524314554247411/?ref=br_rs

There may be times communication on one or more of these platforms is delayed after a School District Announcement. This is due to administration traveling and finding a safe place to send or post communication. All families and staff will be notified as soon as possible.

Family Involvement

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the programs and visit children's classrooms. As part of the family at Steps to Success, we appreciate your input. Especially in the area of safety, your feedback is noteworthy and necessary. The Board of Directors and staff are conscientious of safety concerns. Anytime you are aware of a potential safety issue, please address it to a staff person. Opportunity shall be provided for parents to participate in the facility's program. The Executive Director shall maintain a yearly file, which documents general announcements to promote parent participation. Parents play an important role at Steps to Success. Our Parents In Action (PIA) group meets once a month to plan fellowship and fundraising events. Parents are also invited to attend and provide feedback on the program and policies at the Board of Directors' meetings. We are always looking for motivated individuals to serve on the Board and/or PIA.

Daily Communications occur through our Brightwheel App

Newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are distributed through email and our Brightwheel app.

We encourage you to join our Facebook page so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

Family participation is encouraged in our programs. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child. Notification is required for the safety and protection of our children. Family experience nights are scheduled on a regular basis. These nights include snacks, drinks and fun filled age-appropriate activities for families. Family Nights allow families and children time to share, learn, and have fun. Families have an opportunity to be a part of their child's learning experience and connect with other families.

Family & teacher conferences are offered at least twice a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. The parents, teachers, and/or directors may initiate conferences. We encourage you to communicate any concerns. When needs are noticed, options for intervention will be discussed. Steps to Success works with local early intervention agencies to provide services for children enrolled. If a family does not choose to participate in a conference, a written report will be shared. If any teacher or director requests a conference, parental refusal may constitute grounds for the child's dismissal from our care.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Equal Employment Opportunity

An open and equitable personnel system will be established and maintained. Personnel policies, procedures and practices will be designed to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race (to include hair type, hair texture or hair style), color, religious creed (to include all aspects of religious observances and practice, as well as belief), disability, ancestry, national origin, age (40 and over) or sex (to include pregnancy status, childbirth status, breast feeding status, sex assigned at birth, gender identity or expression, affectional or sexual orientation, and differences in sex), and retaliation.

Employment opportunities shall be provided for applicants with disabilities and reasonable accommodation(s) shall be made to meet the physical or mental limitations of qualified applicants or employees.

Nondiscrimination in Services

Admissions, the provision of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race (to include hair type, hair texture or hair style), color, religious creed (to include all aspects of religious observances and practice, as well as belief), disability, ancestry, national origin, age (40 and over) or sex (to include pregnancy status, childbirth status, breast feeding status, sex assigned at birth, gender identity or expression, affectional or sexual orientation, and differences in sex), and retaliation.

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provisions of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Any person who believes he/she has been discriminated against may file a complaint of discrimination with:

Steps to Success, Inc.
Board of Directors
1525 Oregon Pk. STE 1701
Lancaster, PA 17601

US Dept. of Health & Human Services
Office for Civil Rights
200 Independence Ave, SW
Room 509 HHH Bldg.
Washington, DC 20201

Department of Human Services
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Room 225, Health & Welfare Building
PO Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17102

PA Human Relations Commission
Harrisburg Regional Office
333 Market Street, 8th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Philadelphia District Office
801 Market Street, Suite 1000
Philadelphia, PA 19107

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

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed complaint form or letter to USDA by:

(1) Mail: US Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
(2) fax: (202) 690-7442
(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Inclusion

The “Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs,” released jointly by the Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS) on September 14, 2015, states that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations.

Steps to Success believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs. Steps to Success works with Early Intervention (EI), Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) and other local organizations to support children, families and staff in providing each child the best possible learning environment.

Supportive Steps for Inclusion

1. The Steps to Success teaching staff during routine observations will document a child's experiences that display any social, emotional and/or intellectual developmental delay.
2. When delays are documented, the teaching staff will complete an appropriate screening tool. The parents' feedback will also be collected.
3. A conference is held between the teaching staff, parents and administration to discuss the observations and screening tool results. An Action Plan will be created to ensure the best possible learning environment for the child.
4. Action plans may include referrals for specialized services such as EI and ECMH.
5. Parents, specialists and staff will work together to ensure the best possible learning environment.
6. On the occasion when parents, specialists or staff are unable to create a constructive environment, the administration will assist the parents in finding a different placement for their child and a termination date will be set.

IEP/IFSP

In order to ensure that the needs of children with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or an Individualized

Family Service Plan (IFSP) are met, the following procedures will be implemented.

Director will:

- Ask all families to complete a request form for a copy of a child's IEP/IFSP. This request will be placed in each child's file.
- File all copies of IEP/IFSPs in the child's file in order to be readily available to share with the teaching team.
- Provide copies of IEP/IFSP goals to the child's teacher(s) and discuss strategies for meeting the goals.
- Ensure all teachers are trained on how to implement an IEP/IFSP. Training will be documented in each teacher's professional development record (PDR).
- Contact early intervention staff/consultants to schedule periodic meetings with the child's family and teacher(s) to discuss the child's progress and to increase strategies in adapting IEP/IFSP goals in classroom activities and routines.
- Request permission from families to attend any meetings with the early intervention team related to changes to the IEP/IFSP.
- Monitor teachers' work towards supporting the child in meeting IEP/IFSP goals.
- Request additional help from the early intervention team if needed.
- Ensure teachers conduct family conferences to report on progress.

Teaching Team will:

- Observe and document the child's progress towards goals weekly and use their notes to individualize lesson plans.
- Provide daily communication between home and the teachers for each child with an IEP/IFSP.
- Prepare for and conduct family conferences at least 3 times a year to share progress on IEP/IFSP goals, the child's development, and participation in the classroom.
- Meet with the family to plan for and discuss transitioning to new classrooms or programs. An individualized plan will be created as needed to ensure successful transition for the child.

Positive Guidance

The staff at Steps to Success provide a positive and stimulating environment for all children that is free from discrimination, violence, and bullying. We work to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community. Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become

self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the result of their actions.

From the article, “*Supporting Young Children’s Social-Emotional Development*”, Social-emotional development includes the ability to interact and have positive, meaningful relationships with others. It enables children to recognize, express, and manage their emotions and appropriately respond to others’ emotions. Young children rely on adults to help them manage emotions and learn and practice these new skills. Social-emotional development is essential for children’s overall health and well-being, and caregivers play an important part in nurturing social-emotional skills in young children.

Nurturing and responsive relationships and a safe, secure environment are the biggest influences on children’s social-emotional development. When children have responsive caregivers who meet their needs and provide emotional support and positive interactions, they feel safe to express their emotions. They are more likely to develop a strong, secure attachment, crucial for healthy development.

Learn more about positive guidance here:
<https://www.pakeys.org/supporting-young-childrens-social-emotional-development/>

Challenging Behaviors

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self control and kindness. Each child at Steps to Success has the right to learn in a safe and friendly place, be treated with respect and receive the help and support of caring adults. When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When redirection is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns at any time, please report it to our staff. If a child’s behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child’s individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

Suspension and Expulsion

Every effort will be made to avoid suspension of care through observations, screening, referrals, parent conferences, and action plans. If we have exhausted all efforts and in severe cases, it may be necessary to dismiss children immediately from our program. In this situation, a child may no longer attend programs. The steps are as follows:

1. One week suspension from program.

2. Expulsion from the program. Initial expulsion will be for one (1) full calendar year. For example, if the child is expelled in May, he/she may not attend again until May of the following year.
3. After the one year expulsion, if a child returns to the program with no change, there will be no suspension and immediate expulsion will occur. In this event, they will not be able to attend any Steps to Success Programs in the future.

Confidentiality

PA Code Title 55, Chapter 3270, sections 183 & 193 protect confidentiality of all records. All records are confidential. A facility person may not disclose information concerning anyone, except in the course of inspections and/or investigations.

As such all information obtained while at the center is also considered confidential and cannot be revealed to other families. We appreciate your consideration of others' privacy as we appreciate yours.

Child Care Center Parent Responsibilities

1. Follow center procedures and policies outlined in this manual.
2. Conduct a daily symptom evaluation prior to attending.
3. Provide copies of child's IEP or IFSP, written plans and/or special needs assessments. We request that the teachers be part of the IFSP/IEP team.
4. Provide season-appropriate nap supplies. Nap supplies are to be cleaned weekly.
5. Provide at least one season-appropriate change of clothing
6. Complete child health appraisals for every well child checkup. Please notify your physician that your child is enrolled in a childcare facility.
7. Update emergency contact information as necessary and every March and September.
8. Clearly mark all items/toys with your child's name. We are not responsible for lost items.
9. Update state Food Program Applications annually.
10. Do not leave your car idling when dropping-off or picking-up your child.
11. Supply diapers and wipes as needed.

School Age Parent Responsibilities

1. Follow center procedures and policies outlined in this manual.
2. Conduct a daily symptom evaluation prior to attending.
3. Provide copies of child's IEP or IFSP, written plans and/or special needs assessments. We request that the teachers be part of the IFSP/IEP team.
4. Complete child health report within 60 days of enrollment.
5. Update emergency contact information as necessary and every March and September.

6. Connect with staff via Brightwheel to stay up to date on program happenings.
7. Clearly mark all items/toys with your child's name. We are not responsible for lost items.
8. Update state Food Program Applications annually.
9. Do not leave your car idling when dropping-off or picking-up your child.

Arrival & Departure

Only authorized adults as noted on the Emergency Contact form will be allowed to pick up children. We will ask for identification from any unknown adult before releasing a child. We strongly discourage parents leaving children unattended in vehicles.

All persons picking up or dropping off children are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Violent, threatening or abusive behavior will not be tolerated. Adults conducting themselves in a disruptive or disrespectful manner may have the following disciplinary actions.

1. Will be removed from the center and the authorities may be called.
2. Will be removed from the pick up list and asked not to return to the center
3. Police may be notified
4. Family may be dismissed from the program.

In the event a parent or guardian arrives by vehicle to pick up their child and is suspected by staff to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the following steps will be taken:

- Staff will discreetly negotiate with the person not to leave and encourage him/her to call a sober friend or companion to drive the individual and their child home.
- If the parent/guardian refuses, becomes violent, or leaves the program with the child, police will be called immediately with a description of the individual (including name and address), vehicle description, license plate number and direction of travel.

Custody

In accordance with the PA Code §3270.23, a parent of a child in care shall be permitted free access without prior notice, throughout the center whenever children are in care, unless a court of competent jurisdiction has limited the parental right-of-access to the child and a copy of the order is on file at the facility.

Transitions

Your child's transition to Steps to Success should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

Transition from home to center

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

Transition between learning programs

Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to propose a plan to introduce your child into the new program.

Transition to elementary school

We will provide you with information on local schools, what to expect, and ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school. With parental consent, we will supply the school with necessary observations and reports collected during the child's development at Steps to Success. We also assist new Kindergartners and parents through the CVSD Orientation process.

Transition for before/after school care

Children who are of school age may continue with before/after school care at our center. Information will be provided to the new location your child is attending.

Transfer of Care

Steps to Success Child Care Facility is committed to ensuring the safety, well-being, and appropriate supervision of all children in its care. This policy outlines the transfer of responsibility from the child care facility to the school and vice versa, along with the specific details regarding children walking unaccompanied between the two locations.

Transfer of Care and Supervision:

1. Morning Transfer (From Steps to Success to the School):
 - Time of Transfer: The child care facility assumes care and responsibility for children when they are brought to the location by their parents and signed in at the facility.
 - Location: Children in the program will become the responsibility of the school when the bell rings at 8:40 AM or when they are dismissed for school breakfast at 8:30 AM. Preschool aged children that take the bus will

become the responsibility of the school district when they are placed on the bus.

2. Afternoon Transfer (From the School to Steps to Success):
 - Time of Transfer: The child care facility assumes responsibility for children when they arrive at the designated Steps location & clocked into Brightwheel.
 - Location: Children become the responsibility of Steps to Success when they are at the program and clocked into Brightwheel. Preschool aged children become the responsibility of Steps to Success when they step off the bus in the afternoon.
3. Unaccompanied Walking: Children will not be accompanied during dismissals to or from Steps to Success. At this time they are the responsibility of the school district.

Child Health Reports

Steps to Success is mandated to report the immunization records of enrolled children to the Department of Health. It is extremely important that we receive a completed Child Health Report (CD-51) after each well child checkup. Children ages 6 weeks to 2 years will need a new health report every 6 months. Children ages 2 years to kindergarten will need a new health report every year. For school age children, they just need one completed health report at the time of enrollment. Forms can be found on our website, posted at the child care center, or by contacting your program administrator. The forms must be completed at your physician's office and contain an authorized signature. We are required to terminate child care services for any child that does not maintain current health records.

Immunizations

Students are required by law to have immunizations up to date. Exceptions to this law for medical reasons or religious beliefs must be documented with a handwritten letter.

Medication Policy

Our facilities will administer medication to children for whom a plan has been made. Because administration of medication poses an extra burden for staff, and having medication in the facility is a safety hazard, parents should check with the child's physician to see if a dose schedule can be arranged that does not involve the hours the child is in the childcare facility. Parents may come to administer medication to their own child during the childcare day.

- Caregivers will administer medication only if the parent has provided written consent on the medication log, the medication is available in the original

container, properly labeled, and the facility has on file the written instructions of a licensed physician to administer the specific medication.

- Medication will be kept in an area that is locked and out of the reach of children.
- If children are trying medication for the first time, the children should be removed from care for the first 24 hours.

Communicable Diseases

In accordance with PA Code §3270.137, An operator who observes an enrolled child with symptoms of a communicable disease or infection that can be transmitted directly or indirectly and which may threaten the health of children in care shall exclude the child from attendance until the operator receives notification from a physician or a CRNP that the child is no longer considered a threat to the health of others. The notification shall be retained in the child's file. Diseases and conditions which require exclusion are specified in 28 Pa. Code Chapter 27 (relating to communicable and noncommunicable diseases). The Department of Health will provide, upon request, a list of communicable diseases. Steps to Success uses Caring for our Children to alert families of potential communicable diseases inside the program and what signs to watch for.

Just as parents, the staff members learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of illness in children. Fever (above 100.4°F) is a well-known symptom that the parent and caregivers use to identify a child who may be ill. Fever may be a symptom of a contagious or serious illness. Regardless of the presence or height of fever, it is how sick a child looks or acts that is important. Have a doctor check any child with symptoms or signs of a possible serious illness (unusual drowsiness, fussiness, persistent or excessive crying, wheezing, uncontrolled coughing, difficulty breathing) or who refuses to play or complains of severe pain. Steps to Success staff will notify parents immediately in cases of fever, head injury, or wheezing.

Admission & Exclusion

Please do not increase the risk of other children becoming ill by sending your ill child to a program. Occasionally, it does become necessary to exclude an ill child from the program. Please have a plan for these instances, as you will be asked to pick up your child if they meet the exclusion criteria.

Families will be contacted to pick up their child if more than one of the following conditions exists:

- Illness prevents the child from participating
- Fever accompanied by behavior change or rash (oral temperature above
- Temperature above 100.4°F
- Lethargy that is more than tiredness
- Uncontrolled coughing

- Inexplicable irritability and persistent crying
- 2 or more episodes of diarrhea or vomiting
- Blood in stool
- Persistent abdominal pain (more than 2 hours) or complaints of intermittent pain with fever, sweating or fatigue
- Pink or red conjunctiva or crusting white or yellow eye discharge

Children will be excluded if:

1. The child's illness prevents the child from participating in routine activities.
2. The illness requires more care than the childcare staff is able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group.
3. Keeping the child in care poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.

If the child care staff are uncertain about whether the child's illness poses an increased risk to others, the child will be excluded until a physician or licensed nurse practitioner notifies the childcare program that the child may attend.

When a child exhibits symptoms of illness and discomfort, you will be notified to come and pick up the child within the hour. If after one hour you are unable to pick up your child, the emergency contact person will be notified.

Children must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine. A doctor's note must accompany your child after an absence that exceeds two days due to illness.

Infection Control

We take infection control very seriously. Sanitizing the toys and equipment not only assists in keeping your child healthy but also our staff. The staff clean the toys weekly using an appropriate bleach solution that is freshly mixed every morning. The staff is also responsible for the cleaning and sanitizing of the classrooms. In rooms where toys are frequently in the children's mouths, the staff sanitizes more frequently. Please refer to the Communicable Diseases section for more policies.

Accident Management

Steps to Success will take every precaution to ensure the well being of all children in our care. We also recognize that when children play together, accidents may occur. All accidents, which result in an injury, will be reported in written form. A copy of this form will be placed in the child's record and the original will be sent home.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency, we will contact the parents and fill out an accident report. Basic first aid will be administered at the site. If it is impossible to reach the parents or the situation demands immediate attention, an ambulance will be called. A staff member will accompany the child to the source of emergency care and remain with the child until a parent or a designated emergency contact person assumes responsibility for the child's care. All sites have emergency procedures posted.

Parental Notification of Emergency Plans

Our Emergency Operations Plan provides for response to all types of emergencies. Emergency drills will be conducted annually. Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use the following protective actions.

Immediate Evacuation: Children are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire, etc. In case of inclement weather, we may then proceed indoors at a relocation facility.

In Place Sheltering (lockdown): Sudden occurrences, weather, hazardous materials, or intruder related activity, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.

Off Site Evacuation: Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation facility.

Zion Child Care Facility Emergency Relocation Facility: Bareville Fire Company

Brownstown Emergency Relocation Facility: Ebenezer Evangelical

Congregational Church

Fritz Emergency Relocation Facility: Church of the Nazarene

Leola Emergency Relocation Facility: Bareville Fire Company

Smoketown Emergency Relocation Facility: Conestoga Valley High School

Donegal Primary Emergency Relocation Facility: Donegal High School

Donegal Intermediate Emergency Relocation Facility: Community Bible Church

If it ever becomes necessary to relocate, a sign will be posted on the door stating that we have evacuated to the Emergency Relocation Facility. If you are not sure how to get there, please ask for directions before there is an emergency.

Modified Operation: May include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities, these actions are normally taken in case of winter storm or building

problems (such as utility disruptions) that make it unsafe for children but may be necessary in a variety of situations. Please listen to WGAL and watch Brightwheel notifications for announcements relating to any of the emergency actions listed above.

We ask that you do not call during the emergency. This will keep the main telephone free to make emergency calls and relay information. We will call or message you to let you know if we relocate. We will also call or message you when we've resolved the situation and it's safe for you to pick up your child.

Our emergency plans are reviewed frequently to ensure that special accommodations are being met for infants, toddlers, persons with disabilities or chronic medical conditions. Some examples may include but are not limited to: use of spare blankets for children during cold weather evacuations, use of wheeled equipment for persons with mobility limitations, and use of medication containers so life sustaining medicines are available during an emergency.

It is extremely important that your child's emergency contact form be up to date. This form will be used every time your child is released. Please ensure that only those persons you list on the form attempt to pick up your child. We specifically urge you not to attempt to make different arrangements during an emergency. This will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties. In order to assure the safety of your child and our staff, we ask for your understanding and cooperation.

The entire plan is available for viewing in the classroom upon request.

Emergency Drills

All children in attendance will participate in drills. We will practice in-place sheltering (severe weather and intruder) twice a year. They will also practice immediate evacuations (fire) alternatively every month. Center-wide evacuations are reviewed once a year on a staff-training day.

Hand Washing

At Steps to Success, we take infection control seriously. All staff and children entering a classroom will wash their hands. This habit slows the spread of germs from other sources into the room. Hand washing will also occur after outdoor play, changing diapers, using bathrooms, using tissues, any messy activities, and before meals. We strongly encourage families to wash their children's hands before leaving the classroom to help combat the spread of disease to the home. Staff will follow Department of Health recommended procedures.

Diaper Procedures

In accordance with state regulation § 3270.135(e) A staff person shall check a child's diaper at least every 2 hours and whenever the child indicates discomfort or exhibits behavior that suggests a soiled diaper. A staff person shall change a child's diaper when the diaper is soiled.

Outside Play Policy

Steps to Success will provide an outside activity for all children on a daily basis when the modified temperature forecast is between 25 and 90 degrees with no precipitation, unless proper attire is provided for all children. PLEASE dress your child accordingly. We recommend winter coats, hats, boots & gloves when the weather is cold. We base this policy on the following law & guidelines. As a licensed child care facility through the Department of Public Welfare, Commonwealth of PA, we abide by law, 3270.114, "Weather permitting, children shall be taken outdoors daily."

The American Academy of Pediatrics has published findings that children incur less illness when they are allotted time to play outside in the fresh air. Keystone Stars has issued the following PA Position Statement based on the AAP's findings:

"Children are expected to go outside when the forecast temperature/wind chill are above 25 degrees, the forecast temperature/heat index is less than 90 degrees and there is no current air quality alert. It is understood that given these parameters, there may be portions of some days that do not meet the conditions of 'weather permitting' since forecasts are generally targeted to a point in time in the day. Please note if your child is well enough to come to the center he/she must go outside if weather permits.

Sunscreen

Steps to Success child care center supplies age appropriate Blue Lizard water resistant sun screen for use in all the rooms. Parents must sign a sunscreen log to permit its use. Sunscreen is applied on sunny days in the spring and fall and every day during the summer.

Our school age program supplies Banana Boat sunscreen during summer camp.

Parents are welcome to provide their own sunscreen or sign off that they do not want sunscreen applied to their child. We ask that you do not provide any aerosol spray sunscreens due to inhalants.

Staff Babysitting and Communication

We understand that families build warm and caring relationships with their child's teacher. All communication that occurs while your child is in care at Steps to Success or relates to the program, must be done via Brightwheel, email, or phone call to the center. No parent or staff should be communicating with personal devices during

program time. Steps to Success does not take responsibility for staff actions outside of regular program hours.

CACFP

We provide meals for every child enrolled at no extra fee. Our meals are served at specific times to ensure the food maintains proper temperatures. Water is always available to the children. We are required to supply a food equivalent for any food that may place a child in medical jeopardy. It is necessary to have the medical condition documented by a licensed physician and on file at the center.

Outside Food Food from home is not creditable and therefore places the entire CACFP at Steps to Success in jeopardy. We understand that some mornings your family may be running late and your child has missed breakfast but we cannot allow outside food in the program without a written Doctor's note on file.

The weekly menus are posted in our facilities.

Details about meal components and the related serving sizes are available upon request. The children are required to have each component on his/her plate at each meal. "To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, room 326-W, Whitten 19 Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202)720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

In accordance with PA Code §3270.166, meals for infants shall be provided in accordance with the following requirements:

1. A written statement giving formula and feeding schedule shall be obtained from the parent.
2. New foods shall be introduced only after consultation with the child's parent.
3. Parents **MUST** provide bottles
4. All bottles, nipple rings and caps **MUST** be labeled with the child's name or initials
5. An infant 6 months of age or younger shall be held while being bottle fed.
6. Neither an infant nor a toddler is permitted to sleep with a bottle in his mouth.
7. Bottled formula may not be heated in a microwave oven

Infant sleep position

In accordance with PA Code §3270.119, infants shall be placed in the sleeping position on the child's back as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, unless there is a medical reason an infant should not sleep in this position. The medical reason shall be documented in a statement signed by a physician, physician's assistant or CRNP and placed in the child's record at the facility.

Preventing and Identifying Shaken Baby Syndrome/ Abusive Head Trauma

Child Maltreatment (including shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma)

Child maltreatment includes all types of abuse and neglect of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, caregiver, or another person in a custodial role that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child. There are four common types of child maltreatment:

- Physical abuse is the use of physical force, such as hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or other shows of force against a child.
- Sexual abuse involves inducing or coercing a child to engage in sexual acts. It includes behaviors such as fondling, penetration, and exposing a child to other sexual activities.
- Emotional abuse refers to behaviors that harm a child's self-worth or emotional well-being. Examples include name calling, shaming, rejection, withholding love, and threatening.
- Neglect is the failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. These needs include housing, food, clothing, education, and access to medical care.

Abusive head trauma (AHT), which includes shaken baby syndrome, is a preventable and severe form of physical child abuse that results in an injury to the brain of a child. AHT often happens when a parent or caregiver becomes angry or frustrated because of a child's crying. It is caused by violent shaking and/or with blunt impact. The brain of the young child may bounce inside of the skull, resulting in brain damage, hemorrhaging, blindness, or other serious injuries or death. Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma (SBS) is the name given to physical child abuse that can occur when a young child is severely or violently shaken. The shaking may only last a few seconds, but the effects last a lifetime. Young children, especially babies, have very weak neck muscles and do not yet have full control of their head movements. When they are shaken, the head whips back and forth slamming their fragile brain tissue against the hard skull, causing bruising, bleeding, and swelling inside the brain. Shaking combined with throwing, dropping, or slamming the baby can be deadly. Steps to Success provides staff with annual training in identifying and creating strategies to assist in the prevention of maltreatment as well as an understanding of brain vulnerabilities.

All staff are mandated by the PA Child Protective Services Law and Pa Code §3270.19 to report any suspected cases of maltreatment or child abuse immediately. Our role is limited to reporting an incident and cooperating with the investigation. When a staff member suspects any form of abuse, he or she must report to ChildLine at 800-932-0313. Within 48 hours, Child Protective Services must investigate the allegation.

Identifying Maltreatment Symptoms vary and are caused by generalized brain swelling secondary to trauma. Victims of shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma may exhibit one or more of the following symptoms:

- Irritability
- Trouble staying awake
- Trouble breathing
- Vomiting
- Unable to be woken up
- Vision problems
- Developmental delays
- Physical disabilities
- Hearing loss
- Coma
- Convulsions or seizures
- Death

Physical Abuse Indicators

- Unexplained bruises, welts, burns, fractures, lacerations, abrasions, or retinal hemorrhages

Physical Neglect

- Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, fatigue, Unattended physical problems, or medical needs

Sexual abuse

- Difficulty walking or sitting, torn/stained underclothing, pain, itching, bruising bleeding in genital area

Emotional Maltreatment

- Habit or conduct disorders, neurotic traits, psychoneurotic reactions

The prognosis for victims of shaken baby syndrome varies with the severity of injury but generally is poor. Many cases are fatal or lead to severe neurological deficits.

Shaken baby syndrome is completely preventable. It is important to remember that it is never acceptable to shake, throw, or hit a baby or child. Guidance is how we help children know what it means to be a member of our community. It is how we help children learn the expectations for behavior in a variety of settings. Guidance means helping children learn from their mistakes to make positive choices.

Adults care for young children who may be fussy or constantly crying. Strategies for coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child.

- Take a deep breath.

- Try calming a crying baby by rocking gently, swaddling in a blanket, offering a pacifier, holding your baby against your bare skin, singing, or talking softly, taking a walk with a stroller, or going for a drive in the car.
- If the baby won't stop crying, check for signs of illness and call the doctor if you think the child is sick.
- If you are getting upset, focus on calming yourself down. Put the baby in a safe place and walk away to calm down, checking on the baby every 5 to 10 minutes.
- Be aware of new parents in your family and community who may need help or support.
- Offer to give a parent or caregiver a break when needed.
- Let the parent know that dealing with a crying baby can be very frustrating, but infant crying is normal, and it will get better.
- Be sensitive and supportive in situations when parents are dealing with a crying baby.

Positive Guidance Techniques for children over one year old:

- Appropriate expectations for children's behavior
- Managing space, time, and energy
- Experiences that engage the whole child
- Maximizing relationships
- Expressing feelings
- Notice and recognize positive behaviors
- Provide short, clear directions
- Provide choices
- Redirect children to appropriate behaviors
- Use gestures, pictures, or other cues to help children understand
- Facilitate social problem-solving

Child Supervision Policies

In accordance with PA Code §3270.113, children on the facility premises and on facility excursions off the premises shall be supervised by a staff person at all times. Outdoor play space used by the facility is considered part of the facility premises. Each staff person shall be assigned the responsibility for supervision of specific children. The staff person shall know the names and whereabouts of the children in her assigned group. The staff person shall be physically present with the children in her group on the facility premises and on facility excursions off the facility premises. The requirement for supervision on and off the facility premises includes compliance with the staff: child ratio requirements. A facility person may not use any form of physical punishment, including spanking a child. A facility person may not single out a child for ridicule, threaten harm to the child or the child's family and may

not specifically aim to degrade the child or the child's family. A facility person may not use harsh, demeaning or abusive language in the presence of children. A facility person may not restrain a child by using bonds, ties or straps to restrict a child's movement or by enclosing the child in a confined space, closet, or locked room.

Steps to Success will follow the state mandated ratios listed below.

Infants (Birth - 1 year) 1 staff: 4 children

Young Toddler (1-2 years) 1 staff: 5 children

Older Toddler (2-3 years) 1 staff: 6 children

Preschool (3 yrs-5 years) 1 staff: 10 children

School Age 1 staff: 12 children

Staff: Children ratios double during nap periods, except for the infants.

Client Fee Policy

Upon registration and prior to starting with Steps to Success, Inc., there will be a non refundable \$50 registration fee per family. Re-enrollment for each school year will be held annually in April and charged in May.

Tuition fees are calculated for a period of time from Monday through Friday. All fees are due by Friday of the week prior to care. Friday afternoons at 1:00pm all payments will be checked by a Steps to Success Administrator. Families will be contacted to reconcile failed payments. All tuition remaining unpaid will then incur a \$35 late fee the next business day.

Failure to pay in a timely fashion jeopardizes the scheduling of care for subsequent weeks. Effective October 1, 2022 Steps to Success is enacting the following failed payment process.

Missed Payment Procedure

Week 1- \$35 Late Fee applied the next business day following missed payment

Week 2- Additional \$35 Late Fee applied the next business day following missed payment and Suspension of Care until payment is made

Week 3- Removal from Program and Sent to Collection Agency

All payment plans must be approved by your child's administrator to ensure continuation of care. Any payment plan not approved by the administrator will be considered failure to pay. A non refundable retainer fee is required to reserve or maintain enrollment status for extended leaves of absences. A retainer fee of 50% of your contracted rate will be assessed.

Subsidized child care is available to those who qualify through the Early Learning Resource Center. Be aware that qualifying individuals may have to wait for funds to become available before childcare at Steps to Success, Inc. can begin. Individuals,

who are waiting, will be charged the current weekly rates. If ELRC retroactively pays Steps to Success, you will be entitled to a refund. ELRC Families that fail to make their copay will be reported to ELRC the following business day. They will incur all late fees and be subject to the Missed Payment Process stated above. Holidays and snow days that centers are closed you will still be charged your normal contracted weekly rate.

A 10% family discount will be applied to the oldest child in a family. If you choose to discontinue care with us, we require a 3 week notice. You will be charged for that remaining time. A non-refundable retainer fee is required to reserve or maintain enrollment status. A retainer fee of 50% of your contracted rate will be assessed.

All fees are subject to change at any time. In addition, annual Cost of Living fee increases will occur in August.

Scholarships

This scholarship policy was written for those families that have substantial needs but do not get ELRC Funding. Scholarships will be used for short term support.

Guidelines for funding:

1. No more than 100% for three weeks per quarter
2. No more than 50% for six weeks per quarter
3. Scholarships are not to be used to supplement weekly payments.
4. Match payments to encourage regular payments up to 2 months.

Anything outside of these parameters will need approval of the Board.

The board approved that 10% of year end net profit is dedicated to the scholarship fund annually.

Early Learning Resource Center

Some families may qualify for financial help for their child care. If you would like more information on subsidized care, please call Early Learning Resource Center at 717-393-4004 or by visiting:

<https://caplanc.org/access-resources/household-stability/early-learning-resource-center/>

Leaving the Program

Steps to Success requests at least three weeks written notice before withdrawing your child from care. The child's records will be transferred with a written request. Steps to Success, Inc. reserves the right to collect three weeks of fees if notice is not given to the director prior to withdrawal.

If time permits, an exit interview will be conducted. Each family will be given an exit survey to complete and return.

Steps to Success or the parents of a child may choose to terminate the agreement of care at any point. Steps to Success, Inc. is willing to do all it can to assist parents by providing referral information. We need to consider the physical and mental well being of the children and the staff.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child has a documented history of behaviors that pose a danger to self or others.
- Continued care could be harmful to or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, mental health or social service professional.
- Undue burden on program resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

Payments are due prior to services being rendered. Steps to Success will terminate care if payments for services or payment arrangements are not received. We are also mandated to keep current records for all children enrolled. Services may be terminated if files are incomplete.

Continuity of Care

The program seeks to minimize changes of teachers and caregivers during the school year so that children and families can enjoy the comfort and security of a familiar face and consistent learning environment. If a change in staff is necessary, the program will prepare children and families and ease the transition by following the procedure below. The transition process is a team effort which involves everyone at the center, regardless of organizational position.

The Executive Director is responsible for enforcing policy by ensuring that staff understand the policy and follow the procedure. The departing staff member, replacement staff member, and staff assigned to fill positions temporarily are accountable for executing the policy and procedure.

1. A letter will be sent home to the affected children's families to inform them of the upcoming change in staff.
2. The new teacher will arrange to meet the children and families and promote familiarity and recognition.
3. The new teacher will visit the classroom to observe the daily routine and interactions between the teacher and children.
4. The new teacher will be given a clear overview of each child's development and progress.
5. The departing staff member will talk with the children about his/her departure.

6. If there are two teachers in the room and one teacher leaves the program, the second teacher will help the children cope with the change.
7. When possible, job openings will be filled with qualified substitutes and part-time personnel who are already familiar with the children.

Community Resources

A list of community resources can be found at our website:

<https://www.stepstosuccessinc.com/resources>

Getting In Touch

Steps to Success is grateful for the support and cooperation of Conestoga Valley and Donegal School Districts. However, we are solely responsible for the administration, planning and implementation of our programs. Any concern should be brought to the attention of the School Age Program Administrator, not to school personnel.

Contact Administration:

Olivia Riley- Early Education and Family Services Administrative Director
717-517-8470
oliviariley@stepstosuccessinc.org

Emma Rivera- School Age Administrative Director
717-517-8470
Emmarivera@stepstosuccessinc.org

Adriana Witman- Executive Program Administrative Director
717-517-8470
Adrianawitman@stepstosuccessinc.org

Michelle Harbaugh- Executive Director
717-517-8470
Michelleharbaugh@stepstosuccessinc.org

Direct Program Contacts

Brownstown 717-874-7060
Fritz 717-715-7742
Leola 717-808-6246
Smoketown 717-808-7247

Zion 717-656-3363
Donegal Primary 717-799-9999
Donegal Intermediate 717-481-0502

Leola and Donegal Intermediate are the contact locations for “No School Days”.