

turn to

JOY

Early Care & Learning Center

Handbook for Families

## **Welcome to Turn to Joy Early Care and Learning Center.**

*Thank you for choosing Turn to Joy. We look forward to serving your family and caring for your child. Being present to the growing, changing life of a child is our great privilege and our true JOY.*

**Mission:** *The mission of Turn to Joy is to provide nurturing and joyful care in a setting that honors each child's individuality and unique gifts; providing a safe and intentional environment with opportunities for sensory exploration, social-emotional learning and experiences to support individual interests and cognitive development. Turn to Joy is working to collaborate with existing early care programs and agencies to provide high-quality care and services to young children.*

**Philosophy:** Turn to Joy Early Care and Learning is rooted in relationship-based care that supports the natural stages of development by creating a setting that offers time and space for exploring, playing, and interacting. Our goal is to strengthen the bridge between work and family life, by creating a space that supports both. Turn to Joy offers consistent care with trusted adults and skilled teachers in a clean, safe environment where the growth and development of each child is celebrated and honored.

**Definition of Family:** In our handbook, we refer to the family as a parent, legal guardian, or adult who provides for the well being, best-interest, and responsibility of the child.

**Admission & Enrollment:** All enrollment forms must be completed, with deposit and the first week of tuition received prior to your child's first day of attendance. The enrollment deposit is non-refundable, which will be applied to the final tuition payment. A 3% reduction will be applied to tuition paid monthly in full by the first day of the month.

Currently, Turn to Joy admits children ages 6 weeks to 60 months.

### **Non-Discrimination and Inclusion::**

Children are admitted without regard to race, culture, sex, religion, national origin or disability.

Turn to Joy 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 the full participation of all children in our program based on her/his individual capabilities and needs.

**Family activities:** Family is the child's first teacher. We value and respect families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and family members to be involved in Turn to Joy's programs, to visit the classrooms, to participate in events, and to provide feedback on our program. We invite families to spend time at arrival or dismissal, visit the classroom space, and see how your child will spend the day.

**Confidentiality:** Information regarding your family and your child is kept confidential and will not be released without written consent.

**Staff Qualifications:**

The staff at Turn to Joy has been carefully selected to provide high-quality care and learning for your child. Caregivers participate in professional learning and ongoing training and are dedicated to the field of early learning.

Typical staff qualifications are as follows:

Teacher/Director: Master of Education or Bachelor's Degree plus experience.

Teacher Assistants: Child care Associate, 1 -3 years experience

**Child to staff ratios:** Children are supervised at all times. Caregivers receive scheduled breaks to reduce fatigue and to help ensure quality interactions and engagement.

We maintain the following standards for child to adult ratios:

6 wks - 24 months                      1 adult - up to 4 infants

24 - 36 months    1 adult - up to 5 toddlers

36+ months                      1 adult - up to 10 preschoolers

**Communication & Family Partnerships:**

**Daily notes** will keep you informed about your child's daily activities and experiences. Notes will be e-mailed, posted, and/or placed in your child's cubby at the end of the day. Bulletin boards will provide daily news and the schedule, special events and general updates or notices.

**Newsletter:** Newsletters provide center news, events, and announcements and will be available at the sign in area.

**Conferences:** Family and teacher conferences will be held throughout the year. A conference can be requested at any time there is a concern or question. We look forward to sharing observations, information about your child's preferences, and style of learning. We encourage communicating any concerns with the Director.

**Open Door Policy:** Turn to Joy has an open door policy. Parents and guardians are welcome to visit the program at any time during program hours. Family members are welcome to visit for nursing or feeding their infants.

For safety and security reasons, doors will remain locked at all times.

**Photos:** Photos will be taken of the children for use in the classrooms. Occasionally, photos may be used on our website or shared publicly as our center gains recognition. Written permission will be requested for any use of photos of your child.

**Days, Times & Pick up :**

Turn to Joy hours are Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Each week a staff member will confirm your child’s schedule, in writing. Please let us know any changes in your weekly schedule.

In the event that you will not be picking up your child, you will need to notify the staff in writing letting us know who the adult is and the dates. We ask for your help in following this procedure for the safety and protection of your child. In case of an unexpected change or emergency, please call as soon as you are aware that there will be a change. If someone other than a family member is picking up your child, they may be asked to show a photo i.d. to assure that we are releasing your child to the correct person.

**Calendar & Emergency Closings:**

You will be receiving a calendar, with closing and vacation days highlighted. In case of emergency closings, such as illness, weather-related events, families will be notified as soon as possible. We will make every effort to remain open during snow or ice storms, unless roads have been closed. Please communicate with the director if you will not be sending your child during a weather event.

**Closing due to Weather:** Should there be a weather event preventing Turn to Joy to open on time or at all, families will be notified by email, text or phone. If we should need to close early we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your cooperation and support are needed as we arrange for the safety of everyone at Turn to Joy.

**Communication:**

Please call or email with any questions or concerns. *Our phone number is (802) 378-5036 and email is: [learnmore@turntojoy.com](mailto:learnmore@turntojoy.com).* If a staff member is not available to talk when you call, please leave a message and they will return your call as soon as possible.

You may email your child’s teacher or the director at any time.

**Care Necessities:**

1. **Bag:** We suggest that you send your child with a tote bag each day for items that need to be sent home.

A complete change of clothes, diapers, and wipes, socks, inside shoes, and a blanket or snuggle item for rest time can be left at the Center.

2. **Clothing:** We suggest comfortable play clothes. We may be doing activities that may be messy, although we'll try our best to use smocks and aprons, clothes may get dirty.
  - a. A **soft hat** (for inside) is recommended for children under 18 months old.
  - b. To prevent items from being lost, please label items if possible.
  - c. If your child wants to wear **sandals, flipflops, party shoes**, please send sneakers for active playtime.
3. **Bottle, Meals, and Snacks:**
  - a. Infants: please send formula or breast milk in labeled and dated bottles for your child. If your baby is beginning to eat solids please let the staff know your child's preferences. You're welcome to send specific foods that you've introduced at home.
  - b. Toddlers: Lunch plus a mid morning and afternoon snack will be provided. Please notify us if your child has food sensitivities or allergies.
4. **Absences:** If your child won't be coming to Turn to Joy because of illness or a family event, please notify us as soon as possible. Please review the health policy if your child is absent due to illness.
5. **Medication:** We recognize that your child may need medication during program hours. If possible give medicines at home. If your child should need medication during the hours of care, please provide :
  - ★ Written orders from a physician detailing the name of the child, drug dosage and time, and the reason for giving included on the medication's original container.
  - ★ Written permission from the parent/guardian of the child, requesting that the program administer medication per doctor's orders (see Medication form).
  - ★ Medication will be stored in a locked cabinet.
  - ★ Unused medication will be returned to the parent/guardian.
6. **Outside time every day:** We will spend time outside every day when temperatures and weather permits. Please send appropriate outdoor clothing, including rain boots, snow pants, boots, hats and mittens.

### **Health Policy:**

Enrolled children must have immunizations and a birth certificate on file. Emergency contact information must be accurate and current. If the parent/guardian or emergency contact can not be reached, designated staff will stay with the child in a quiet place, until the parent is contacted.

Turn to Joy will make every effort to prevent the spread of illness. It is the family's responsibility to keep a child home if the following illnesses are evident:

- Pink eye: redness, itchy crusty eyes, swelling or draining, crustiness on the eyelashes. Keep home until the child has been on medication for 48 hours or drainage from eyes is completely gone.
- Chicken pox: runny nose, fever, rash on face or hands or body that looks like pimples filled with clear liquid. Keep home for 7 days after onset or rash, or until scabs have dried.
- Impetigo: Lesions, usually on hands or face that appears pinkish, then changes to darker crusty areas. Keep home until 48 hours of medication has been taken, or lesions have dried.
- Pin worms: Child scratching bottom area, especially at night, tiny white worms usually seen in the child's stool. Keep home 24 hours after treatment has been completed.
- Head lice: itching of head, especially around ears and nape of neck, Tiny white oval nits (eggs) and live lice may be visible. Keep home until hair has been treated with medicated shampoo. Live lice should be combed out. Nits close to the scalp should be removed. Be sure to check all family members. Treat all clothing and bedding.
- Other conditions to keep your child at home:
  1. vomiting and / or diarrhea, with in the past 24 hours
  2. fever within the past 24 hours
  3. colored, thick discharge or drainage from the nose or eyes
  4. unexplained rash
  5. crusty or draining sores
  6. sore throat, hacking cough, or earache.
  7. Severe headache or stomach pain
- PLEASE note: In addition to our sick child policy and to prevent the spread of illness, we request that parents inform us when their child may have an illness such as strep throat, whooping cough, pink eye, chickenpox, impetigo, pinworms, lice, etc. If you have any questions please call, 378-5036, [learnmore@turntojoy.com](mailto:learnmore@turntojoy.com).

### **Smoking:**

Smoking is prohibited on the grounds and parking area of Turn to Joy.

Reminder to families that Vermont Law prohibits parents from smoking in vehicles while children are present.

Thank you for your help in protecting children from second-hand smoke and the many related health issues.

### **Transportation:**

Transportation at dismissal, if an adult appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, Turn to Joy will not release the child. We will:

- ❖ offer a ride to that adult and the child
- ❖ offer to call someone to come and pick them up

- ❖ if the person refuses the ride offered, and insists on taking the child, our policy is to notify the Grand Isle Sheriff's Department, reporting the driver and the license plate number.

### Car Safety:

Vermont State Law says:

- All children under the age of one, and all children weighing less than 20 pounds, regardless of age, shall be restrained in a rear-facing position, properly secured in a federally-approved child passenger restraining system, which shall not be installed in front of an active air bag.
- A child weighing more than 20 pounds, and who is one year of age or older and under the age of eight years, shall be restrained in a child passenger restraining system (This means convertible, combination and booster child safety seats).
- For more information about child passenger safety visit [beseatsmart.org](http://beseatsmart.org) or contact the Governor's Highway Safety Program: 888.868.7328.

If you need assistance obtaining a car seat or checking your car seat for safety please let us know.

### **Toys from Home:**

Children are asked not to bring toys from home. Toys may be misplaced or borrowed by another child, which can be upsetting and difficult for the group. We recognize that "transition items," such a stuffed animal, doll, or blanket may make the transition from home to child care easier. Special items that help a child with the transition to child care may be brought to the Center and will be kept in the child's bag or cubby area until rest time.

### **Holidays and Celebrations:**

Holidays are exciting times for ALL of us. Each family celebrates holidays in their own way and with their own customs and traditions. We welcome family involvement in teaching about and celebrating holidays together. If there is a family custom or tradition that you'd like to share please let us know.

Holiday times may bring stress, anxiety and overwhelming activities and sensory experiences. We will attempt to help children during these times by keeping our routines consistent and as normal as possible. For example; at Halloween we will not plan a party with costumes or masks, but we may talk about pumpkins and the fall; at Valentine's we may talk about love, friendship and hearts, but will not expect families to bring Valentine cards or treats.

During the year there are opportunities for gift giving. If you would like to give a gift, we suggest that it be something to be shared by ALL of the children and teachers at the center, such as a book, game, art materials, or an item for the classroom.

### **Birthday Celebrations:**

Children's birthdays are celebrated by ALL. A special snack may be made in honor of the birthday child. As birthdays can also be overwhelming and stressful, celebrations are kept low-key.

### **Abuse and Neglect Policy:**

Child abuse and neglect is always a difficult subject to discuss. However, it is very important that families are able to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse. The national hotline is available 24/7 at (1-800) 4-A-Child or (1-800) 422-4453.

According to Vermont's regulations all staff are mandated reporters of suspected physical or emotional abuse and neglect. Once a staff person believes that abuse or neglect may have occurred, the program director will be notified immediately. The staff person will then contact the Child Protection Line 1-800-649-5285.

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, please call Vermont's Child Protection Line to report it (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). **1-800-649-5285**

If a child is in immediate danger, dial 911 or the local police first. Then, call to make a report.

## **Learning and Curriculum**

The **philosophy** of Turn to Joy is based on relationships and early brain development. We believe that a carefully designed learning environment will engage each child in exploration, movement, social interactions and language development. Adult's support learning through attentive guidance and observation. It is our responsibility to create an environment that is rich and stimulating, following the children's interests and curiosities, and meeting their needs for social connection and nurturing. Our daily routines will provide opportunities for hands-on learning, independence, and problem-solving.

Developing nurturing relationships with caregivers is a priority as we learn and grow together. Honoring each child's strengths and unique personality while supporting their growth by providing a high quality, enticing environment for the development of physical, cognitive and social-emotional skills.

**Curriculum:** Turn to Joy uses an *emergent curriculum*. This means that the children are the center of the curriculum and the curriculum involves the whole child.

Activities in the classroom will be centered on the interests of the children. This is done by closely observing children's explorations, play and their interactions with each other and the environment. The curriculum supports and expands each child's



exploration and the expression of their ideas, questions and interests through language, movement and creativity.

**Physical Environment:** We believe that the physical environment is very important for young children. To support young children's learning we try to provide a thoughtful, carefully planned indoor and outdoor environment. The materials in the classroom will be high quality, natural materials when possible, in designated areas for literacy and books, dramatic play, blocks, art, music and movement, and sensory exploration such as , sand or water play.

We will encourage independence, language development, problem solving and social interactions, through classroom activities and through our daily routines.

**Transitions:** The transition to child care should be positive and nurturing. It is a new adventure in your development as a family. We will work together to make the transition into care as smooth as possible. It may take time, and you're invited to call anytime to check in on your child, or to discuss how to best support a positive transition.

**Before the first day of care:** Before your child's first day, you will have the chance to spend time in the classroom and meet with the adults providing care. You will be able to share your concerns and communicate special needs or considerations you have. You may check in during the day by calling Turn to Joy.

**Rest time:**

*Infants* will sleep according to their own schedule's and will be allowed to sleep when they appear tired. Infants are put to sleep on their backs. Caregivers will be directly observing infants by sight and sound at all times. Please take time to discuss your child's sleep routines and schedule.

*Toddlers* will have a rest time after lunch. Children are encouraged to have a quiet time but are never forced to rest. Quiet music, soothing sounds, subdued lighting will be used to encourage rest and quiet. Your child is invited to bring a favorite blanket or stuffed animal for rest time.

**Toilet learning:** The most important factor in making toilet learning a success and as low-stress as possible is a family-teacher partnership that supports the child. Research shows that children cannot successfully learn to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder or bowel movements. Most positive toilet training occurs after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to ensure toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

## **Guidance**

### **General Procedures**

Turn to Joy is committed to each child's success in learning within a caring, safe and responsive environment, free from discrimination, bullying or violence. Our center works hard to ensure that all children are honored, supported and given every opportunity to develop to their fullest potential.

Thoughtful planning and structure are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent routines and rules and involving children in positive problem solving helps children develop their ability to become self-aware, confident and successful with others in their community. We encourage children to be fair, to be caring, and respectful of others. Children are also encouraged to understand the results or consequences of their actions in gentle and developmentally appropriate ways.

### **Challenging Behavior:**

Children are learning to treat others with respect and kindness.

Each child has the right to

- ❖ learn in a safe and nurturing environment
- ❖ be treated with respect
- ❖ receive help and guidance from caring adults

If a child becomes physically or verbally aggressive, we will intervene to protect all children. Our approach will be to help children solve a problem using appropriate interactions.

Some useful strategies include:

- distraction
- humor (find something silly in the moment to ease the tension)
- motivation ("where does your cup go?" instead of "put your cup away now.")
- Novelty (singing, whispering or using a funny voice to get the child's attention)

If a child has a tantrum, waiting and ignoring will be used until the child is calm enough to talk with and then a solution to the problem will be addressed. Adults will model self-control and calm to help children find their own sense of calm and help them learn to regulate their emotions.

Identifying and acknowledging strong feelings can help defuse an emotional situation and helps create a greater sense of empathy and caring in the classroom community.

### **Notification of Behavioral concerns to Families:**

If a child's behavior is of concern, the teacher or director will contact the family as a way of better understanding the child's needs and challenges. We will work together to form a plan for providing guidance and support in addressing behavioral issues. If behavioral concerns continue, a parent-teacher conference may be required to develop a plan for support and safety.

Please note, we are not able to discuss the needs or challenges of any other children with you, and will only comment to support your child.

Regular on-going communication between parents and caregivers is essential. Trusting and supportive relationships between adults and children is the foundation for our work in the community.

**Tuition and Fees:**

All payments will be handled by the director. Please share any concerns about tuition costs with the director. The finances of each family are confidential and will not be discussed among staff.

A non-refundable deposit, equivalent to 1 week of tuition, is due at the time of registration. Tuition is to be paid monthly, please discuss any financial matters with Carol.

Turn to Joy's hours of care are : 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM, extended care refers to care that exceeds 8 hours per day.

**Infant care (6 weeks to 18 months) : Monthly tuition=\$1,268**

RATES	weekly	Deposit	monthly	Annual Tuition Sept-June
5 days	\$295	\$295	\$1,268	\$12,680
3 Days	\$175	\$175	\$752	\$7525
Extended care	\$95 week		\$408	\$16,760

**Toddler care (18 months - 36 months): Monthly= \$1,070**

RATES	weekly	Deposit	monthly	Annual Tuition Sept-June
5 days	\$275	\$275	\$1,820	\$11,820
3 Days	\$165	\$165	\$722	\$7224
Extended care	\$85		\$365	\$15,475

**Preschool (3 yrs by September 1) Monthly= Full time \$875**

***following the school schedule, ADDITIONAL payment is required for child care during vacation, school closings, or holidays unless enrolled in full day child care.***

RATES	weekly	Deposit	monthly	Annual Tuition Sept-June
5 Mornings	\$135	\$135	\$580	\$5800
3 Mornings	no charge			
5 Full day	\$225	\$225	\$967	\$9,670
Extended care	\$60		\$258	\$12,250

***To apply Act 166 PreSchool funding subtract \$3,356 from the annual tuition.***

A 3% discount will be offered, when tuition is paid by the first of the month.

A sibling discount of %5 will be applied to families with more than one child enrolled at Turn to Joy.

Families will complete all required paperwork for registration including the Enrollment Agreement Form.

*You can request additional child care hours/days or extended care in advance, in writing please. All requests will be considered and determined based on availability.*

***PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!***

**Vacation:** Families will be given **5 vacation** days and **5 sick** days to use each calendar year. Vacation days can be used on days that your child is scheduled to attend. Families would not pay for the vacation days or sick days that are used. These days must be documented in writing with agreement from the Director.

**Withdrawing from Turn to Joy:**

If you are withdrawing from the program you must give a minimum of 2 weeks' notice, in writing to the Director. You are obligated to pay tuition during the final 2 weeks, even if your child does not attend. Your deposit may be applied to the final tuition bill.

**Pick up time guidance: *Please remember that Turn to Joy closes at 5:30 PM. We expect that all children and families will leave the Center before 5:30 PM.***

The transition to child care at arrival and pick up time at the end of the day can be sensitive times for parents and children. Please allow for a few extra minutes at arrival and dismissal to ensure a smooth transition.

Please be on time; it can be very difficult for a child to wait.

Teachers will work with you to plan for a smooth transition. Spending a few minutes playing or just sitting with your child may ease the high emotions of the transition at the beginning or end of the day.

If there is an emergency and you know you will be late, please make arrangements or notify the Director.

**Overtime rates:** Only apply to families enrolled in part-time care and are based on the prior agreement of hours or days of care needed. When / if your family needs additional care hours, the hourly rate will be added to your tuition bill. Overtime hours for part-time care needs must be scheduled in advance and is dependent on staffing and slots available per licensing regulations.

**Methods of payment:** Several methods of payment are available for families' convenience. Tuition can be paid by cash, check, or electronic transfer. To set up automatic payments please contact the business manager or director.

**Payment:** Tuition payment is due on the first of the Month. Payment for September - June is divided into 9 payments based on your annual tuition rate. Payment is due on the first of the month with no deductions for absences, holidays or closures due to weather.

During July and August, scheduling and payment options will be available, the same rates will apply.

If you are experiencing difficulty making payments please contact the business manager or director.

**Late payments:** Late payments can pose serious problems for our program. Turn to Joy is not able to allow families to carry a balance of more than 1 week of tuition. Late payment fees will be added if tuition is not paid in full per the terms of the Enrollment Agreement.

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still be applied if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date.

If payment is more than 30 days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and or your account may be sent to a collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including court fees and attorney fees.

**Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges:** All checks returned or rejected debit or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$45. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned or rejected transactions may result in your account being placed on a "cash only" status.

**Donating to Turn to Joy:**

As with many early care and learning programs, the cost of caring for children is far more than the cost of tuition. Throughout the year we will offer opportunities to raise funds for scholarships and building or equipment upgrades. We encourage you to participate by sharing our news with family and friends.

You can make a donation at any time by contacting the Director or by making a gift on our website. All donations are greatly appreciated and are used to provide scholarships, outdoor materials, and high-quality educational materials for the classrooms. There is also a gift registry for Turn to Joy at Amazon.com.

If you have special talents that you'd like to share with our program please let us know.

We welcome creativity and inspiration in all forms!

Thank you for taking the time to read the Turn to Joy Family Handbook.

Please see the director of Turn to Joy, Carol Egan, if you have any questions.