



3300 College Ave, Terre Haute, IN 47803

2059 E. Springhill Dr., Terre Haute, IN 47802

Staff Handbook

Childcare Center

www.VIPKinderCollege.com

Orientation Policy and Procedure

Professionalism Expectations for Staff Members

As childcare professionals, every staff member is expected to uphold the highest standards of professionalism. The following guidelines must be consistently maintained:

- **Punctuality and Commitment:** Arrive on time and remain for the entirety of your shift, addressing any staffing needs proactively by arranging substitutes when necessary.
- **Appropriate Attire:** Dress in a manner suitable for engaging with children. Attire should be comfortable, clean, and convey a professional image.
- **Responsiveness to Feedback:** Embrace directions, suggestions, and constructive criticism, demonstrating a commitment to ongoing improvement.
- **Confidentiality:** Respect and safeguard confidential information regarding children, families, and colleagues at all times.
- **Positive Attitude:** Foster a supportive atmosphere towards the entire center, including the program, children, families, and coworkers.
- **Participation in Events:** Attend all staff meetings and center events, contributing to team cohesion and professional development.
- **Training Compliance:** Complete all Indiana State Licensing required training courses within 30 days of hire.

Orientation Program for New Staff Members

During your orientation, the Lead Teacher or Director will cover essential topics, including:

- Familiarization with the names and developmental needs of the children you will support
- Classroom routines and transitions
- Approved behavior management techniques
- Meal patterns and food handling policies
- General and emergency health and safety procedures
- Handwashing and diapering protocols
- Injury prevention and safety practices

Upon completion of the hiring process, new teachers will undergo the following orientation steps:

- Review of all policies and procedures, including the staff handbook
- Classroom observation
- Introductions to children, coworkers, and administrative staff
- Participation in a supervisory observation to assess the new teacher's capacity to engage effectively with young children
- Involvement in "in-service training" sessions

Dress Code: The Three C's

Staff members are expected to adhere to the 3 C's for appropriate attire at work:

- **Comfortable:** Staff must wear clothing that allows for movement and activity, suitable for engaging in play with children. Outfits should be practical for getting dirty and should include appropriate footwear such as sneakers.
- **Clean:** All clothing should be free from stains, rips, or tears and should be freshly laundered. Personal hygiene must also be maintained.
- **Courteous:** Staff interactions with children and parents require a professional appearance. Clothing must not feature references to alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes, nor should it contain vulgar language or suggestive imagery. Items such as halter tops, tube tops, excessively short skirts/shorts, torn jeans, and low-rise bottoms that reveal undergarments are inappropriate for the work environment.

Failure to adhere to the dress code may result in being asked to change into appropriate attire.

Focus on Children and Use of Technology

Staff must remain attentive to children at all times. Distractions can lead to accidents that could otherwise be prevented. Therefore:

- **Cell Phone Policy:** Cell phones are not permitted in program rooms except for lead teachers for documentation. Personal phones should be turned off and stored securely while on duty. Use of cell phones is allowed only during approved breaks and never in the presence of children. In emergencies, one staff member should carry a cell phone outside the classroom, only to be used for emergencies, not personal calls or messages.
- **Communication Protocols:** In an emergency, inform the Lead Teacher, Director, and Assistant Director. Cell phones should be set to vibrate. Calls may be answered only after a substitute has taken over responsibilities, outside the classroom to maintain child supervision.

Team Collaboration and Supervision

To ensure safety, staff members should always work collaboratively. No staff member should be alone with a child; another staff member must be within sight or sound at all times.

Continuing Education and Professional Development

All staff members are required to complete a minimum of 30 clock hours of job-related continuing education within the first year of employment and at least 24 clock hours annually thereafter. Training includes but is not limited to:

- Understanding typical and atypical child development
- Designing and implementing developmentally appropriate lesson plans
- Positive discipline and behavioral management strategies

- Mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect
- Health practices and infectious disease control
- Emergency preparedness and response procedures
- Strategies for working with diverse families and promoting cultural sensitivity
- Implementation of child assessment measures

Health and Safety Policies

The Director oversees health and safety issues, with lead teachers stepping in when the Director is unavailable. Responsibilities include:

- Managing day-to-day health and safety concerns
- Providing resources for families with health-related needs
- Ensuring compliance with health and safety protocols

Medication Administration Policy

Only designated individuals trained in Medication Administration Training (MAT) or equivalent are authorized to administer medications, following strict guidelines including:

- Obtaining signed parental consent
- Documentation of medication administration maintained onsite

Environment and Cleaning Protocols

Staff are responsible for maintaining cleanliness in their designated areas, including:

- Regularly cleaning and disinfecting toys and surfaces
- Following a daily cleaning schedule to uphold health and safety standards

Relationship Development and Continuity of Care

To ensure continuity, our program limits the number of qualified teachers assigned to any child, fostering stable and nurturing relationships.

Infant Care Protocols and Breastfeeding Support

Our program adheres to the latest guidelines for infant sleep safety and supports breastfeeding mothers by providing training on proper breast milk handling.

Curriculum Planning

In June and July, the Director and Lead Teachers will review and adjust curriculum plans based on children's individual needs, developmental appropriateness, and teacher feedback to ensure an enriching educational experience.

Orientation Policy for Childcare Staff

Purpose:

To establish guidelines for the orientation of new staff members and ensure they understand their roles, responsibilities, and the structure of the organization.

Hierarchy:

1. **Director**
 - Responsible for the overall operation of the childcare center.
 - Reports to the board or governing body.
 - Oversees the Assistant Director, Lead Teachers, and all staff.
2. **Assistant Director**
 - Supports the Director in managing the center's daily operations.
 - Reports to the Director.
 - Responsible for overseeing Lead Teachers and Assistant Teachers.
3. **Lead Teacher**
 - Responsible for planning and implementing the educational curriculum.
 - Reports to the Assistant Director.
 - Oversees Assistant Teachers and classroom aides.
4. **Assistant Teacher**
 - Supports the Lead Teacher in delivering educational activities and caring for the children.
 - Reports to the Lead Teacher.
 - Responsible for assisting in the supervision of children and maintaining a safe environment.

This orientation policy outlines the essential expectations and responsibilities for all staff members at our childcare center. Understanding the hierarchy and reporting structure is crucial for maintaining effective communication and ensuring the safety and well-being of the children in our care.

End of Orientation Policy and Procedure

Policy Must Knows

Before employment, the Director/Administrator completes the following for all staff members, regardless of position, including substitutes:

1. Check the applicant's references.
2. Verify past employment.
3. Complete all criminal background checks as required by state regulations.
4. Review and sign the discipline/behavior management policy, which specifically identifies the consequences for not adhering to this policy.

Evaluations will be performed annually, and informal evaluations will be performed throughout the year during scheduled and unscheduled classroom observations. Parent surveys will be passed out shortly before a staff member's evaluation meeting, and feedback will be included in the staff member's evaluation. The Director and Assistant Director will conduct evaluations of a staff member's performance, and staff members must self-evaluate before meeting with the Director and Assistant Director.

The following policies are intended to protect staff members' rights and ensure full understanding and cooperation. VIPs staff members are expected to:

- Be on time and alert when scheduled to be at work.
- Be careful and conscientious in performing duties, including using positive words and actions.
- Be respectful, thoughtful, and considerate of other people.
- Be courteous and helpful when dealing with children, parents, visitors, and other staff members.

All staff members must be discreet in sharing information regarding the children and their parents in public areas. Names and identifying characteristics of children and families should not be shared with anyone other than staff members working in the classroom and the Director and Assistant Director. Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances arise; staff members who discuss issues with individuals not directly related to the situation may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.

Staff should also be careful in discussing details of the center's operation, particularly problem areas, with others in public.

Staff members may not distribute or post children's last names, addresses, phone numbers, etc., except to VIPs employees. Personal information should never be used for personal purposes. Indiana law specifically prohibits sharing information about children or staff members within a childcare setting without written consent from the parent, guardian, or individual. This also applies to outside professionals, and you must seek written parental consent before consulting with an outside agency about a child.

All staff members are mandatory child abuse reporters. Suspected cases of child abuse or neglect must be reported to the hotline: 1-800-800-5556. Staff members may directly report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect to the hotline and will complete all necessary paperwork. The staff member should inform the Director and Assistant Director of the report and decide whether or not to inform the parents of the report.

Suppose a staff member is accused of abuse and/or neglect by a parent or co-worker. In that case, such an accusation will be reported to the Director, and a determination will be made as to whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse and neglect. If there is reasonable cause, a report must be made to the Department of Human Services. VIPs will cooperate with any investigation. In addition, the accused staff member will be informed of the allegations and be given an opportunity to respond to those allegations. Termination of employment after a child abuse allegation is at the discretion of the Director.

As childcare professionals, all staff members are expected to make reasonable attempts to resolve conflicts directly with the individual(s) concerned. If a solution cannot be reached, staff members should then seek assistance from the Director and/or Assistant Director in resolving the conflict.

Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances arise. Staff members who discuss issues with other staff members not directly related to the situation may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure. This policy applies both during paid hours as well as on a staff member's personal time.

Open communication between staff members, parents, and children is crucial to a successful program. Before leaving a classroom for any reason (bathroom, making a copy, calling a parent), an employee should inform his/her cooperating teachers of the reason he/she is leaving. For all involved, it is important that all issues be addressed and resolved as they arise. All employees are expected to function as a team member at all times.

Each classroom has a yearly budget for purchases. Lead Teachers are responsible for complying with the budget and submitting supply/material requests to the Director and/or Assistant Director. Any additional purchases above the allotted budgets must be approved by the Director and/or Assistant Director.

Staff members should park in the staff parking lot. Ask your Mentor or Assistant Director for clarification. The other parking lot is reserved for parents picking up and dropping off. If the staff parking lot is full, staff may park along the curb of the entrance and exit.

VIPs is always seeking suggestions that will improve methods, procedures, and working conditions; reduce costs or errors; and benefit the children, staff, and center. Staff members who have suggestions or innovative ideas are encouraged to discuss them with the Lead Teacher or Director and/or Assistant Director.

VIPs maintains a permanent personnel file for each staff member. These files are confidential, and staff must arrange a time with the Director and/or Assistant Director to review their file.

Staff members are prohibited from accessing the personnel file of another staff member for any reason. Staff members should report to the Director and/or Assistant Director if there is a change in address, phone number, emergency contact, e-mail address, marital status, or number of dependents.

Any staff members reporting for work under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances will be asked to leave immediately. If the Director and/or Assistant Director or other staff member has probable cause to believe a staff member's faculties are impaired while on the job, the staff member may be suspended or terminated immediately.

Cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products are prohibited on the premises, including parking lots and outdoor play areas. Staff members who smoke are strongly suggested against doing so immediately before or during their shift, as smoke can stay on clothing and hair for an extended time. Staff members must wash hands immediately after smoking before returning to work.

The Director must first approve all purchases made by a staff member using personal funds. Any unapproved purchases may not be eligible for reimbursement. Original sales receipts should be submitted to the Director and/or Assistant Director within one week of purchase to receive reimbursement.

VIPs does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran. VIPs is an equal opportunity employer.

VIPs prohibits harassment of and by its staff members on the basis of gender, race, age, color, national origin, religion, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, citizenship, disability, and other characteristics. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, making derogatory remarks about any of these characteristics, making jokes or stereotypical comments about ethnic or other groups, and engaging in verbal, physical, and visually offensive behavior. A staff member who feels harassed has the right to file a complaint with the Civil Rights Commission and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Consistency is crucial to creating a successful program. We make every attempt to put as few staff members as possible in each classroom. Therefore, all staff members are expected to be in regular attendance to provide a consistent environment and routine. Regular absences will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

In the event a staff member requires time off due to personal illness, a child's illness, or other urgent matters and cannot provide the required two weeks' notice, they must inform the Assistant Director via call or text at least 8 hours before their scheduled shift, or as early as possible. Ensuring smooth operations and meeting the needs of our families is a top priority, and last-minute call-ins can cause significant disruptions.

If frequent or recurring absences become an issue, an action plan will be created and signed by both the Assistant Director and the staff member. If there are three violations of this plan without a valid doctor's note, the staff member may face dismissal.

In cases of illness, the staff member should notify both the Director and Assistant Director immediately by phone. Whenever possible, the staff member should assist in arranging a substitute. If the absence extends beyond two consecutive days, a doctor's note will be required, detailing the illness and the expected date of return to work.

One full-time staff member must always be in the classroom. Situations in which all full-time staff members of a classroom are gone must be avoided. Staff members are expected to communicate with each other to ensure that both full-time staff members are not absent on the same day. Time off may not be taken during the first week of transitions/new semester.

Staff may not come in on their day off to make up hours without approval from administrative staff. Approval will typically only be made due to a staff shortage.

VIPs is open Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 5:30 pm. All scheduling requests should be submitted in writing to the Director and Assistant Director. Schedules will be created based on the needs of VIPs, the children, and staff member availability. Occasionally, staff members may need to dedicate time outside their regular work schedule to complete and carry out VIPs responsibilities (parent-teacher conferences, staff meetings, training, lesson planning, etc.).

Lead Teachers and Full-Time Assistant Teachers should submit a resignation letter to the Director and Assistant Director when resigning. VIPs appreciates at least two weeks' notice. If a staff member wishes to resign in lieu of disciplinary action, the resignation must be made in writing and cannot be retracted.

If a staff member resigns, he/she is asked to participate in an exit interview. Participation is encouraged to assist with improving staff relations.

A copy of this policy will be given to all staff members at the beginning of the school year, and all staff members will sign an acknowledgment form verifying that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by this policy.

Evaluations will be performed annually, and informal evaluations will be performed throughout the year during scheduled and unscheduled classroom observations. Parent surveys will be passed out shortly before a staff member's evaluation meeting, and feedback will be included in the staff member's evaluation. The Director and Assistant Director will conduct evaluations of a staff member's performance, and staff members must self-evaluate before meeting with the Director and Assistant Director.

The following policies are intended to protect staff members' rights and ensure full understanding and cooperation. VIPs staff members are expected to:

- Be on time and alert when scheduled to be at work.
- Be careful and conscientious in performing duties, including using positive words and actions.
- Be respectful, thoughtful, and considerate of other people.

- Be courteous and helpful when dealing with children, parents, visitors, and other staff members.

All staff members must be discreet in sharing information regarding the children and their parents in public areas. Names and identifying characteristics of children and families should not be shared with anyone other than staff members working in the classroom and the Director and Assistant Director. Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances arise; staff members who discuss issues with individuals not directly related to the situation may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.

Staff should also be careful in discussing details of the center's operation, particularly problem areas, with others in public.

Staff members may not distribute or post children's last names, addresses, phone numbers, etc., except to VIPs employees. Personal information should never be used for personal purposes. Indiana law specifically prohibits sharing information about children or staff members within a childcare setting without written consent from the parent, guardian, or individual. This also applies to outside professionals, and you must seek written parental consent before consulting with an outside agency about a child.

Paid Time Off (PTO) Policy & Forfeiture Upon Separation

1. Purpose of PTO

Paid Time Off (PTO) is provided as a discretionary employment benefit to eligible employees for use during active employment for vacation, personal time, or illness. PTO is not earned wages and does not vest. PTO is granted in accordance with company policy and remains subject to employer approval and operational needs.

2. PTO Usage Requirements

- PTO must be requested in advance through the designated approval process.
- PTO is subject to supervisor approval based on staffing needs and business operations.
- PTO may not be applied retroactively to cover unapproved absences.
- The company reserves the right to deny PTO requests that interfere with classroom ratios, licensing compliance, or operational stability.

3. PTO During Resignation Notice Period

Employees who voluntarily resign are expected to work their full, scheduled notice period.

- PTO may not be used during a resignation notice period unless the time off was requested and formally approved **prior to submission of the resignation notice**.
- New PTO requests submitted after notice is given will not be approved.
- Employees must actively work their scheduled shifts during the notice period unless otherwise directed by management.

Failure to work the full notice period may result in immediate separation.

4. Forfeiture Upon Separation

PTO is available for use only during active employment. In the event employment ends for any reason — including resignation, termination, job abandonment, or failure to complete a notice period — all unused and remaining PTO is forfeited effective on the date of separation.

- PTO will not be paid out upon separation.
- PTO will not be converted to wages or otherwise compensated.
- No additional time will be permitted to submit, request, or retroactively apply PTO after the separation date.

5. Employer Discretion

The company reserves the right to interpret, modify, or discontinue this policy at any time in accordance with applicable state law. This policy does not create a contract of employment and does not alter the at-will employment relationship.

Urgent Medical Care and Incident Response Plans

Lost Child Protocol

Children are under continuous supervision at all times. Parents are encouraged to connect with their child's teacher during pickup and drop-off. Children should inform the classroom teacher whenever they leave the room, such as to use the bathroom, to ensure safety is prioritized.

In the event that a child goes missing within the facility or during a field trip, a thorough search will be conducted in all potential areas. If the search is unsuccessful within five minutes, the VIP emergency contact will be alerted, and parents will be notified immediately. We will continue to search diligently even after contacting parents and law enforcement. Additionally, licensing authorities will be informed immediately, regardless of whether the child is found safe.

Follow-Up Procedures for a Missing Child Incident:

1. **Notify the Child Care Facilities Licensing Office:** Complete an incident report within 24 hours.
2. **Staff Evaluations:** Conduct evaluations of the event with staff members.
3. **Implement Safety Enhancements:** Make immediate changes to protocols to enhance safety.
4. **Educate Children:** Review procedures with children regarding what to do if they become lost or approached by unfamiliar individuals to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Reporting Suspected Maltreatment of a Child

Under Indiana Code IC 31-33-5 and IC 12-17.2-3.5, child care staff and volunteers are mandated to report any suspected child abuse or neglect by calling 1-800-5556. Failure to do so may result in a Class B misdemeanor.

Reporting Abuse or Maltreatment of Staff, Volunteers, or Parents/Guardians

Similar reporting requirements apply for suspected sexual, physical, or emotional abuse involving staff, volunteers, or parents/guardians that occurs within the program. Reports must be made to the same hotline, as outlined in the aforementioned Indiana Code.

Medical, Dental, and Mental Health Emergencies

Our program is committed to providing high-quality health, oral health, mental health, and nutrition services that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate to support each child's growth and readiness for school.

1. Child Health Status and Care:

- **Source of Health Care:** Within 30 days of a child's enrollment, parents must be consulted to ensure that each child has ongoing access to a health care professional who maintains their health records.
- If a child lacks access to such care or health insurance, the program will assist families in obtaining necessary resources as swiftly as possible.
- **Ensuring Up-to-Date Health Status:** Within 90 days of enrollment, the program must confirm that children are up-to-date on preventive and primary health care.
- **Ongoing Care and Monitoring:** The program will help parents follow recommended health care schedules and will implement strategies for staff and parents to identify any new or recurring health concerns.

2. Oral Health Practices:

The program promotes effective oral hygiene practices by ensuring children with teeth receive assistance in brushing with fluoride toothpaste once daily.

3. Nutrition Services:

Meals and snacks provided must comply with USDA nutritional guidelines, ensuring they are high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar, and salt. Safe drinking water must also be available throughout the program day.

4. Family Support Services for Health, Nutrition, and Mental Health:

- Collaboration with parents is essential to promote children's overall health. The program will provide educational resources on preventive health, nutrition, and safety practices at home.
- Ongoing support will be offered to assist parents in navigating health systems and understanding health insurance options.

5. Safety Practices:

The program will develop and implement comprehensive management systems to ensure child safety, including:

- All facilities will be equipped with safety supplies, including up-to-date first aid kits and fire safety equipment.

- Staff will adhere to rigorous hygiene practices to minimize exposure to blood and body fluids in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.

Community Partnerships and Coordination with Early Childhood and Education Programs

(a) Community Partnerships

(1) The program will establish ongoing collaborative relationships with community organizations through joint agreements, procedures, or contracts. This includes arranging for onsite service delivery as needed to facilitate access to community resources that effectively address the needs of children and families, as identified in the community assessment.

(2) Essential collaborative partnerships may include, but are not limited to:

(i) Health care providers, encompassing child and adult mental health professionals, Medicaid managed care networks, dentists, nutritional service providers, and professionals offering prenatal and postnatal support, as well as substance abuse treatment providers.

Enrolled Pregnant Women

(c) The program will facilitate access for all enrolled pregnant women to comprehensive services through referrals. These services will include, at a minimum, nutritional counseling, food assistance, oral health care, mental health services, substance abuse prevention and treatment, and emergency shelter or transitional housing for cases involving domestic violence.

Unauthorized, Controversial, or Intoxicated/Impaired Parents/Guardians/Family Members

- Individuals not listed as authorized contacts will not be permitted to pick up the child. Primary contacts will be notified, and unauthorized individuals will be asked to leave the premises. If they refuse to comply, law enforcement will be contacted.
- In cases of contentious or intoxicated/impaired individuals, staff will request emergency contact names authorized to pick up the child. A taxi will be called if needed. The parent may be advised to return home for their car seat before collecting their child. If cooperation is not achieved, law enforcement will be notified. This policy also applies to individuals not using a car seat.

End of Policy Must Knows

Child Abuse/Discipline

VIPs Child Care Policy on Reporting Child Abuse and Violations of Licensing Standards

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to clarify the reporting procedures for suspected child abuse and violations of licensing standards.

Scope: This policy applies to all VIPs staff.

A. Child Abuse Reporting Procedures

The law clearly states that any person who suspects that a child has been abused or neglected must immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services (CPS).

1. There must be no attempt to verify the suspicion by investigating or confronting the parents or suspected abuser.
2. An employee may not delegate or rely on another person to make the report. The first person to whom the child discloses the abuse or neglect, or the first person who suspects a case of abuse, must make the initial verbal report. This report may be made anonymously. Call Child Protective Services at 1-800-800-5556.
3. If the call to Child Protective Services is not anonymous, staff must complete the Alleged Child Abuse Incident Management Checklist Forms #1 and #3.
4. The Director will notify the parents of the report if the child is alleged to be abused by an employee.

B. Violation of Child Abuse and/or Neglect

Upon an accusation of child abuse or neglect against an employee, the Director should not initiate an investigation. Child Care Licensing (CCL) will conduct the investigation, as any additional questioning by staff may contaminate the evidence. The following steps will occur after an employee has been accused of child abuse or neglect:

1. The employee who first receives the report of alleged abuse or neglect by another employee shall contact the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-800-5556. A report will automatically be generated to the Police Department.
2. The reporting employee will complete and submit the Licensing Violation Incident Management Checklist Forms #2 and #3 immediately to the Director. The Director will notify the parents of the report.
3. The Director will notify the Associate Director by telephone and hand-deliver the Licensing Violation Incident Management Checklist Forms #2 and #3 immediately before the end of the working day. The Director will also call the CCL representative to inform them of the report.
4. The Director and Associate Director will determine whether the employee should be placed on administrative leave with or without pay, reassigned to the administrative office pending the investigation, or permitted to stay in the classroom.
5. If the employee is reassigned or placed on approved leave, they will be notified via either hand delivery or mail by certified letter— with a request for a return receipt, dated and signed by the recipient.
6. No staff member will discuss the incident until the Director decides the employment status of the accused staff member. Any suspected violations must be reported to the center's licensing representative as required by the State of Indiana.

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- a. Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only on unacceptable behavior;
- b. Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- c. Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
- d. Using brief supervised separation or time-out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

7. The Standards

- a. Discipline and guidance of children must be consistent and based on an understanding of individual needs and development.
- b. Positive methods that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction must be used.
- c. Violations of minimum standards include, but are not limited to, the following occurrences:
 - i. Lack of supervision of children;
 - ii. Inappropriate discipline and guidance of children;
 - iii. Actions that affect children's self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction;
 - iv. Cruel or unusual treatment of children, including corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment; pinching, shaking, or biting a child; hitting a child with a hand or instrument; putting anything in or on a child's mouth; humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child; subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language; placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed; and requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for their age.

8. Following an Accusation of Violation(s)

The following reporting procedures will be followed. Disciplinary action may be taken up to and including termination if these procedures are not adhered to:

- a. The VIPs employee who first receives the report of an alleged licensing violation by another employee shall contact the Center's Licensing Representative.
- b. The reporting employee will complete and submit the Licensing Violation Incident Management Checklist Forms #2 and #3 immediately to the Director. The Director will notify the parents of the report.
- c. The Director will notify the Associate Director by telephone and hand-deliver the Licensing Violation Incident Management Checklist Forms #2 and #3 to the Associate Director immediately before the end of the working day.
- d. The Associate Director and Director will determine whether the employee should be placed on administrative leave with or without pay, reassigned to the administrative office pending the investigation, or permitted to stay in the classroom.
- e. If reassigned or placed on approved leave, an administrative leave letter will be hand-delivered or mailed by certified letter—with a request for a return receipt, dated and signed by the recipient.
- f. No staff member will discuss the incident until the Director decides the employment status of the accused staff member.

C. Actions/Results of Child Protective Services Findings

1. If this is a violation of licensing statutes, a conference will be held with the Director and Associate Director to determine the type of disciplinary action to be taken.
2. If it is agreed that the findings do not involve physical contact, the Director will place the employee on disciplinary action, with a plan of action and follow-up and review dates to address the outcomes/results of the training.
3. A copy of the plan will go to the following:
 - a. Employee
 - b. Director
 - c. The Associate Director will be notified of the results. If it is found that the employee has not adhered to this plan of action, the Director will review their status of employment.

D. Procedure for Employees, Volunteers, and Paid Parents Arrested for Criminal Offenses of the Penal Code

1. If a staff member, volunteer, or paid parent is arrested for any criminal offenses under the Penal Code, it must be reported within 24 hours of the arrest.
2. The staff member, volunteer, or paid parent will be suspended until the matter is resolved by the legal system. Staff members will be suspended without pay pending the investigation. If the investigation lasts more than sixty days, the employee's position will be staffed according to the agency's needs. If the investigation lasts more than 120 days, then the employee will be terminated.

Child Guidance and Behavior Policy

At VIPs, we are committed to fostering a positive learning environment where children can effectively manage their own behavior and develop essential skills for school readiness. Our approach to child guidance and classroom management prioritizes the promotion of positive social skills, mutual respect, self-esteem, and a safe environment for all children.

Procedures

1. **Creating a Supportive Environment**

Teachers will design a safe and developmentally appropriate environment that encourages pro-social behavior by:

- Establishing clear routines to provide predictability and security for children.
- Ensuring that all adults in the classroom engage positively with children, modeling pro-social behaviors in their interactions.
- Structuring the classroom to clearly communicate expectations for behavior and proper use of equipment and materials.
- Regularly checking classroom furnishings and equipment for safety and arranging spaces to facilitate movement, while separating loud areas (like musical instruments, dramatic play, and blocks) from quiet areas (such as the library, writing corner, and listening area).
- Reflecting the diverse cultures of the children in the environment in a positive and inclusive manner.

2. **Positive Behavior Strategies**

Our strategies for guiding and managing children's behavior include:

- Utilizing praise, encouragement, redirection, and other positive methods to recognize appropriate behavior.
- Clearly articulating expectations for appropriate behavior.
- Directly teaching positive social skills through modeling, peer practice, and integrating mental health and social skills activities into lesson plans.
- Offering alternative choices and redirection to steer children away from inappropriate behavior.
- Avoiding power struggles with children whenever possible.

3. **Establishing Classroom Rules**

We will develop clear, reasonable, and consistent classroom rules at the beginning of the year, involving children in the process. These rules will:

- Be prominently displayed in the classroom, with visual aids where possible.
- Be reviewed, modified, and discussed regularly as part of the daily routine.
- Align with VIPs policies and procedures.
- Focus on what children should do, rather than what they should not do.

4. **Progressive Intervention for Behavior Issues**

Interventions for behavioral problems will be progressive and situational, including:

- Redirecting children who forget the rules and reminding them of expectations, referring to posted rules as needed.
- Addressing repeated instances of inappropriate behavior through problem-solving discussions.

5. **Immediate Response to Dangerous Behavior**

When a child exhibits dangerous behavior that poses a risk to themselves or others, staff will intervene immediately by:

- Removing the child from the situation to allow time for calming, problem-solving, and planning a safe return to the play environment.
- Using gentle but firm physical guidance only to ensure the child's safety and that of others. Physical restraint will not be employed as a routine measure without an approved, signed behavior plan specifying its use.

- Strictly prohibiting corporal punishment in any form, with violations leading to immediate termination.
- 6. Prohibited Practices**
- The following practices are strictly forbidden:
- Withholding food, restricting bathroom access, name-calling, or any other form of demeaning treatment. Violations will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- 7. Ongoing Support and Communication**
- Chronic unacceptable behavior may indicate the need for additional support and assessment. This may involve:
- In-house referrals to a mental health professional.
 - Collaborating with management staff to plan necessary support during the referral and assessment process.
 - Maintaining continual communication with parents about their child's behavior through observational notes and anecdotal records.
- 8. Cultural Sensitivity**
- Staff will remain sensitive to the diverse cultural beliefs and values of the children and families we serve.

Standards of Conduct

At VIPs, we uphold high standards of conduct for all staff, consultants, and volunteers to ensure a safe and respectful environment for children and families.

Procedures

1. **Standards of Conduct**

All staff, consultants, and volunteers are expected to:

- Respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family, refraining from stereotyping based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability.
- Adhere to program confidentiality policies regarding information about children, families, and fellow staff members.
- Ensure that no child is left alone or unsupervised while in their care.
- Avoid any form of emotional abuse, including public or private humiliation, rejection, terrorizing, extended ignoring, or corrupting behavior toward a child.
- Utilize positive methods of child guidance and refrain from engaging in corporal punishment, defined as any physical striking or hitting of a child intended as punishment.
- Avoid disciplinary methods that involve isolation, the use of food as a punishment or reward, or denial of basic needs.
- Not bind or restrict a child's movement or use tape on a child's mouth.
- Refrain from any form of verbal abuse, including profane or sarcastic language, threats, or derogatory remarks about a child or their family.
- Not use physical activity or outdoor time as a punishment or reward.

2. **Financial Conduct**

All employees involved in awarding or administering contracts or financial awards will sign statements affirming that they will not solicit or accept personal gratuities, favors, or items of significant monetary value from contractors or potential contractors.

3. **Integrity in Reporting**

Staff members must not falsify any information related to VIPs for any reason, including attempts to mislead parents or families to help a child qualify for services.

4. **Handling Allegations**

If a staff member is accused of abuse against a child enrolled at VIPs or of using corporal punishment, they will be immediately suspended from interacting with children pending an investigation. If the claim is substantiated, the individual's employment will be terminated.

Daily Health Checks Policy

At VIPs, we prioritize the health and safety of our children. Daily health checks will be conducted to identify signs of illness or injury that could affect their well-being or that of others.

Procedures

1. Health Observations

- Teaching staff will observe children as they enter the classroom each morning for any signs of illness or injury.
- Special attention will be given to children who have been absent due to illness or have been exposed to communicable diseases.

2. Child Participation

- Children who appear alert, responsive, and in good health will be allowed to begin their daily routines.
- If a child is unable to participate actively due to illness, the parent or authorized person from the Emergency Contact List will be contacted to pick up the child as soon as possible.

3. Documentation

- Staff observations regarding any illness or injury will be documented using the Remind app, including descriptions of concerns and any recommendations or referrals.
- Parent comments will also be documented in the Remind app and added to the child's folder.
- Any absences due to illness will be recorded on the DCMI Food Program.

4. Reporting Abuse or Neglect

- If staff suspect that a child's illness or injury may be the result of abuse and/or neglect, the child will remain in the classroom, and an immediate report will be made to the Department of Child Protective Services, in accordance with our Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect policy.

VIPs Code of Ethics

As an employee of the VIPs program, I pledge to uphold the following standards:

- **Child-Centered Care:** I will care for every child entrusted to me with love, understanding, and respect.

- **Individual Recognition:** I will treat each child as an individual, recognizing and celebrating their unique qualities.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** I will view every child and family as equal, regardless of any external factors.
- **Confidentiality Assurance:** I will maintain the confidentiality of all child and family information shared with me.
- **Respectful Collaboration:** I will treat my colleagues with kindness and respect, fostering a positive working environment.
- **Commitment to Goals:** I will actively work toward achieving all current and future program goals.
- **Enhancing Lives:** I will dedicate my efforts to enhancing the lives of the children and families we serve.
- **Supervision and Safety:** I will focus my attention entirely on the children in my care to ensure that they are never left alone or unsupervised.
- **Policy Adherence:** I will adhere to all program policies and responsibilities outlined in my job description.
- **Appropriate Discipline:** I will employ only appropriate forms of discipline that are recommended for this age group.
- **Prohibition of Negative Methods:** I will not engage in any negative methods of discipline, including corporal punishment or denial of basic needs.

Creating a School Family with Conscious Discipline

At VIPs, our staff is dedicated to establishing a nurturing school family environment that promotes safety and fosters meaningful academic and social learning experiences. Building this school family involves giving each child a meaningful role, creating rituals, setting classroom

commitments, and cultivating connections among all members. Our school family encourages kindness and helpfulness in every interaction.

- **Safe Keeper Ritual:** "My job is to keep you safe. Your job is to help keep it that way!" Safety is our top priority, and we emphasize the importance of collective responsibility in maintaining a secure classroom atmosphere.
- **Respect and Dignity:** Verbal abuse or derogatory remarks about a child, their family, or their race, religion, culture, or economic status are strictly prohibited.
- **Welcome to Our School Family!** Each child will learn vital skills such as anger management, helpfulness, assertiveness, impulse control, cooperation, empathy, and problem-solving.
- **Relaxation Techniques:** We will teach breathing techniques—like Star, Balloon, Drain, and Pretzel—to help children relax, regain composure, and maintain control when faced with overwhelming emotions.
- **Safe Place:** Our classroom features a Safe Place where children can retreat to calm down and regain composure when feeling upset, sad, angry, or frustrated. This space may include breathing techniques, family photos, squishy balls, comfort bags, and other resources to help manage feelings. Time-outs will not be employed.
- **Constant Supervision:** All children will remain within sight of an adult at all times, ensuring no child is left alone.
- **Behavior as Communication:** We view all behavior as a call for help and an opportunity to teach children skills to better manage similar situations in the future. Children will be actively involved in the conflict resolution process.
- **Supportive Approach:** Instead of attempting to “get” children to behave, we will focus on how to help them succeed. For example, we will shift from asking, "How can I get this child to clean up?" to "How can I help this child be more likely to choose to clean up?"
- **Positive Guidance:** We will emphasize what we want children to do. Instead of saying, "No pushing, you know better than to push your friend," we might say, "When you want your friend to move, say, 'Move, please.' Now, tell him for practice."
- **Offering Choices:** Children will be given choices and informed of the consequences. For instance, "Throwing blocks can hurt a friend. You can throw the ball outside and build with blocks here. If you choose to throw the blocks again, you will have to leave the block area because we need to keep our friends safe."

Positive Behavior Support/Discipline

Purpose: This policy provides guidance for all VIPs staff, volunteers, and contractors regarding the support of positive behavior and the definition of acceptable discipline methods.

Scope: This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors at VIPs, ensuring all children receive support that fosters social competence and maintains order in the classroom while safeguarding the well-being of all children and staff.

Policy: At VIPs, we commit to nurturing positive behavior that encourages social competence and creates a safe learning environment. Each classroom will conduct an Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) prior to start-up, with follow-ups by the Area Supervisor. A second ECERS will occur by the end of January, along with a Social/Emotional assessment throughout the program year.

Procedure:

- Staff will directly teach classroom rules, expectations, and behavioral requirements to children in a manner appropriate to their age.
- Staff will document challenging behaviors and responses by adults, using child case notes for tracking patterns. When patterns emerge, staff will seek advice from their immediate supervisor.
- Collaborative plans will be developed to assist children in finding acceptable ways to meet their needs, including potential referrals to professionals for assessment, with the Director notified prior to any referrals.
- Staff will develop curricular plans that address behaviors without humiliating or punishing the child.
- Each staff member, volunteer, and contractor's role in implementing these plans will be clearly defined to ensure a coordinated approach to supporting positive behaviors.
- For children whose behaviors present minor challenges, informal plans will be established for regular and consistent implementation. For more aggressive and disruptive behaviors, a formal plan will be created to reinforce appropriate behaviors.
- Staff will examine antecedents or triggers for challenging behaviors and assess the consequences that may be reinforcing these behaviors.

Guidance:

- Build positive relationships with children, families, and colleagues by being consistent and communicative.
- Establish preventive practices in the classroom, including clear boundaries, smooth transitions, and a well-balanced schedule of activities.
- Utilize social-emotional teaching strategies to foster self-esteem, empathy, and emotional regulation.
- Implement intensive individualized interventions when necessary, including teaming with families to develop support plans.

Common Rules:

1. Anticipate situations that may trigger inappropriate behavior and work to diffuse them beforehand.
2. Requests to children should be stated positively, recognizing appropriate behavior.

3. Provide quality time for children needing extra attention through walks, reading, or special projects.
4. Praise and encourage good behavior rather than focusing on the unacceptable behavior.
5. Use redirection as the first method when challenging behavior begins to emerge.
6. Only constructive, age-appropriate discipline methods should be employed to help children develop self-control and responsibility.
7. Children will not be subjected to shame or ridicule; no humiliating or threatening discipline techniques will be used.
8. Ensure no child intimidates or harms others or themselves. If a child becomes combative, attempt to lead them from the room while documenting the incident.

Documentation will include observations, interactions, and strategies employed during incidents. Ongoing communication with parents will be encouraged to brainstorm solutions collaboratively. After evaluating various factors that may influence behavior, if a child continues to exhibit challenging behavior, contact the Director for further assistance.

Professional Development Plan

I. Introduction

This Professional Development Plan for VIPs describes a vision for adult learning that is collaborative, continuous, embedded in daily practice, and focused on student achievement. This model builds on and strengthens the successes already evident at our facility. We strive to enhance this culture that supports adult learning by providing a framework that allows every educator to enrich their practice. Throughout this document, we reference the ultimate goal of professional development: improved student learning. While being mindful of that core purpose, it is important to acknowledge the additional benefits of this comprehensive professional development plan:

- Improving job satisfaction
- Improving our ability to recruit and retain new educators
- Increasing our knowledge of innovative practices
- Meeting the NECPA/NAEYC requirements for professional development planning
- Promoting shared decision-making and inclusive leadership

The scope of professional development (PD) at VIPs will not be limited to attending a workshop or participating in a seminar with a visiting expert. Professional development will consistently be an ongoing process that involves sustainable improvement in student learning and instructional practices. This requires evaluating student performance and teacher self-assessment, identifying possible courses of action, testing new approaches, assessing results, and then beginning the process anew. This work is best done with colleagues and not alone because our perception of the problem and knowledge of possible solutions limits us.

Each teacher will have a minimum of a CDA with a plan to earn, at minimum, an Associate degree within three years.

Although professional development can be defined in several ways, we prefer the description Judith Warren Little gives in an article entitled “Organizing Schools for Teacher Learning.” Little describes professional development as “a focus on and responsibility for student learning and the formation of professional community inside and outside the school” (1996, p.1).

Linda Darling-Hammond and Milbrey W. McLaughlin define professional development as “deepening teachers’ understanding about the teaching/learning process and the students they teach,” which “must begin with pre-service education and continue throughout a teacher’s career.” They state that “effective professional development involves teachers both as learners and teachers and allows them to struggle with the uncertainties that accompany each role” (1996, p. 203).

At VIPs, our professional development approach ensures that all educators have the best possible skills, content knowledge, and preparation for teaching. The needs of learners in the twenty-first century demand innovative, progressive, and cutting-edge instruction. As such, the qualities of our professional development programs are influenced by various factors. The National Staff Development Council recognizes these variables as the essential standards for professional development in education. The standards are:

CONTEXT

- **Learning Communities:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and Director.
- **Leadership:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.
- **Resources:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration.

PROCESS

- **Data-Driven:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.
- **Evaluation:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.
- **Research-Based:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to apply research to decision-making.
- **Design:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.
- **Learning:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students applies knowledge about human learning and change.
- **Collaboration:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.

CONTENT

- **Equity:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for students' academic achievement.
- **Quality Teaching:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.
- **Family Involvement:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students provides educators with the knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.

Quality professional development is a dynamic and fluid process. If appropriate structures are in place (context), a variety of best practices (processes) are used, and appropriate knowledge and skill acquisition are occurring (content), then professional development will impact student achievement.

II. Teacher's Job Description and Requirements

This Professional Development Plan meets the requirements of the 2023 Teacher Job

Description. This plan aims to improve student learning by providing meaningful, focused, professional development opportunities aligned with the NECPA Learning Standards. This professional development plan describes how it will provide all teachers and teaching assistants with substantial professional development opportunities and how it will provide professional certificate holders with opportunities to maintain such certificates in good standing based upon completing a minimum of 12 hours of professional development for teachers per 12 months.

III. Mission, Learning Outcomes, Philosophy, and Goals

The VIPs Family Child Care Mission Statement is: partnering with parents to nourish the natural curiosity in the youngest learners with our hands-on learning environment.

The learning outcomes at VIPs Family Child Care are:

- Students will develop positive social skills, appreciation, and respect for differences in all people, including backgrounds, physical characteristics, developmental levels, and family groupings.
- Students will discover how to work, play, cooperate with others, and function in a group beyond their family.
- Students will demonstrate they can move confidently and imaginatively with increasing control and coordination and an awareness of space and others.
- Students will acquire fine and gross motor, cognitive and creative skills in literacy, language, math, science, art, and social studies appropriate for the developmental level. Students will use independence, self-discipline, self-esteem, and decision-making confidence.
- Parents will be aware of the developmental milestones for the various age groups and screening options in our area.

FAMILY CHILD CARE PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

We believe children learn through play, concrete experiences, and interactions with their environment, peers, and adults. By using individual, small, and whole-group activities, plus a variety of experiences, we encourage children to develop to their full potential. It is the teacher's role to develop activities and curriculum that:

- Promote the development of independence and self-discipline.
- Encourage and foster the development of self-esteem and confidence.
- Promote the development of fine and gross motor, cognitive and creative skills in literacy, language, math, science, art, and social studies.
- Promote the development of a safe and healthy lifestyle through physical activity, personal hygiene, safety awareness, and nutrition education.
- Promote the development of positive communication skills.
- Promote the development of positive social skills and appreciation and respect for differences in all people, including cultural backgrounds, physical characteristics, developmental levels, and family groupings.

Research in education and professional development has revealed a series of characteristics and practices observed in exemplary programs. These principles focus a school district's attention

and resources on professional development strategies for improving student learning and achievement. In addition, there are a variety of conditions that are salient when implementing sound and effective professional development programs. As such, professional development at VIPs will:

- Reflect a commitment to ongoing and continuous professional development based on the analyses of multiple sources of data.
- Include sufficient time and follow-up support provided to staff to master new content and strategies.
- Ensure that the content of professional development focuses on what students need to know and be able to do and is explicitly linked to the effect on student learning.
- Make certain that the content of professional development will provide opportunities to gain an understanding of the theory underlying the knowledge (context) and skills being learned.
- Support the implementation of best practices as evidenced by research.
- Provide both a focus on instructional repertoire and content-specific skills. Instructional improvement requires that teachers possess a deeper understanding of both their academic disciplines and specific pedagogical approaches.
- Impart opportunities to explore, question, and debate to integrate new ideas into classroom practice.
- Maintain a differentiated and developmental approach to meet individual needs relating to the teaching and learning process.
- Involve teachers in the identification of what they need to learn and in the development of the learning experiences in which they will be involved.
- Include the use of flexible times and models essential for the successful implementation of professional development.

Although professionals at VIPs continually improve their craft and hone their skills through their self-improvement efforts, systemic change and growth require collective and sustained efforts. Our comprehensive professional development plan promotes student achievement by providing learning opportunities for staff aligned with major school and district goals identified through regular needs assessments and a professional development planning process. The professional development planning process is as follows:

- 1. Identify educational goals**
 - Review existing educational goals
 - Analyze student achievement data: past, present, and projected trends
 - Diagnose areas of student need
 - Establish improvement with measurable goals expressed in terms of desired outcomes and within the context of the learning standards and Director's priorities whenever possible
- 2. Plan for implementation**
 - Outline flexible and integrated professional development strategies and activities that address the needs as identified through VIPs goals
 - Identify sources of expertise to assist with identified needs and goals
 - Select PD content and process at each level

- Identify sources and uses of financial resources
- 3. **Implement professional development strategies**
 - Integrate learning models that provide choice, differentiated learning, sustained collaboration, and ongoing support
 - Incorporate best practices into teaching, learning, and leadership
 - Identify critical

VIP Kinder College