



# **DAYSTAR FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**UPDATED JANUARY 2021**



## **WELCOME TO DAYSTAR KIDS!**

Dear Families:

Thank you for choosing Daystar Kids- New York State's only Pediatric Enrichment and Respite Center helping children with complex health care conditions learn, thrive and shine.

We look forward to partnering with you to help your child develop their individual strengths and skills. Daystar Kids will give your child the chance to play, develop new friendships, learn, and explore with other children facing similar health care challenges.

Daystar's specialized Pediatric Respite Center offers expert pediatric nursing and intensive respite care, individualized therapies, structured educational programs, and a wide array of family support services to children ranging in ages from four (4) months old, until kindergarten. Daystar's comprehensive approach includes:

- Skilled pediatric nurses in every classroom and case conference meetings to help coordinate health care needs
- Family Support Services to help you access the resources your family needs to meet your child's individualized goals
- Therapy sessions hosted onsite; ensures consistent reinforcement and repetition of your child's therapeutic goals
- Inclusive educational learning environment guided by Daystar's evidence-based early childhood curriculum, The HighScope Curriculum
- Transitional supports to help guide families through preschool and school placement decisions
- Partnership with families through daily progress reports, newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, and regular health care consultations with Daystar's teams of special education and early childhood education teachers, nurses, and therapy partners

We look forward to working with you to support your child and family in every way. Our team approach promotes strong communication and fosters a culture of continuous learning and growth-key factors in your child's continued success. I encourage your feedback to help us improve our practice and invite you to contact me with any questions or concerns. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your child's journey. We are deeply honored for the privilege.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kim Condon".

Kim Condon  
Executive Director

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **About Daystar Kids (“DK”)**

Daystar Kids is New York’s first and only **Pediatric Respite Center** designed to help empower infants and young children with special health care needs with the skills they need to promote their health care, developmental, educational, and social-emotional goals.

Founded in 1988 by a group of Catholic nuns, the Sisters of Saint Joseph, Daystar Kids has evolved to become the definitive leader in community-based, pediatric complex care services for children whose early learning and development have been disrupted by extended periods of hospitalization and medical treatments.

Daystar’s comprehensive model includes skilled pediatric nursing services, individualized therapeutic services, inclusive group early childhood educational enrichment programs, special education services, music therapy, and Family Support Services to help children prepare for kindergarten and nurture a lifelong love of learning. Daystar Kids is an independent, charitable 501(c)(3) organization, and relies on support from generous donors in the community to help fund its specialized programs and services.

Daystar Kids is authorized by New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), and New York State Department of Health (DOH).

## **ADMISSIONS**

### **Admission Criteria**

Daystar Kids offers comprehensive services to children ages 4 months through 5 years. Eligible enrollees must meet the health care criteria set forth by the program. Typically, children who are eligible for Daystar’s services have chronic and/or acute health care conditions that require on-going medical supervision, involve an intensive medication regimen or other regular medical interventions to sustain their health status and avoid hospitalization. Daystar Kids may also rely upon medical devices for life-sustaining support, including but not limited to feeding tubes, tracheostomies, central lines, colostomies; or require oxygen administration. Daystar Kids will determine if the child’s level of care meets the program requirements and will re-evaluate your child’s medical acuity and level of care every six (6) months, or as frequently as needed.

While a child may also be diagnosed with developmental delays, these do not automatically qualify a child for enrollment. Children must have a qualifying medical diagnosis to become eligible for services and to maintain their enrollment. Services are available to enrollees through their fifth birthday, or until they become eligible to transition into educational programs funded by their local school district or county of residence.

Daystar’s services are reserved for families with children who require significant nursing supervision and/or interventions and whose level of care can be safely fulfilled in a center-based environment. If your child no longer meets the eligibility criteria or his/her care falls outside of the agency’s scope of work and/or level of care guidelines, Daystar Kids reserves the right to discharge your child within 30 days of written notice.

## **Admissions Requirements**

***The following documents must be signed and completed prior to placement and must be renewed regularly to maintain your child's enrollment:***

- A. Protected Health Information (PHI) Consent Form
- B. Daystar Kids Service Agreement
- C. Parent & Pediatrician Consent Form
- D. OCFS Health Care Plan
- E. CACFP Enrollment Form & Income Eligibility Form
- F. Child Pick-Up Authorization and Emergency Contact Form
- G. Up-to-date health history including most recent physical, record of immunizations and specialists' reports; including annual flu shot
- H. Authorization to administer medication- these must be updated every six (6) months by your child's health care provider(s)
- I. Medication/ Prescriptions ordered for your child, properly labeled with the correct dosage, your child's first and last name, and other relevant information
- J. Medicaid Waiver enrollment (if applicable)
- K. Tuition payments (if applicable)

## **Trial Period**

The first 30 calendar days from a child's start date constitute a trial period. During this period, either the parent/guardian or Daystar Kids may terminate services without notice.

## **Termination of Services**

After the trial period, parents/guardians may withdraw their child from the program by giving a minimum of two weeks written notice. If less than two weeks written notice is given, Daystar Kids will retain your security deposit, if applicable.

After the trial period, if Daystar Kids should find it necessary to terminate its agreement with you, the agency will provide at least 30 days written notice unless otherwise specified.

## **ESSENTIAL INFORMATION**

### **Partnering with Your Child's Medical Team**

We reserve the right to contact your child's pediatrician and health care providers directly with concerns or questions about your child's special health care needs. Information regarding any medical consultation initiated on your child's behalf will be documented and shared with designated family members.

A complete, up-to-date health history including most recent physical and record of immunizations, signed by your child's medical provider(s), must be submitted at the time of registration. Updated reports of physical examinations, specialists' reports, new immunizations, and changes in medications are necessary on an ongoing basis to ensure Daystar Kids has the most current information relevant to your child's specific needs.

- Signed medical orders are required to be updated whenever a change occurs and minimally, every six (6) months. **Failure to provide updated medical information will result in an immediate suspension in services and may result in termination of your child's enrollment without notice.**
- Daystar Kids will not administer medications or perform medical procedures without a current written medical order.

- All prescription medication(s) must be provided by the family to Daystar Kids with your child's first and last name, the prescription label with the authorized prescriber's name, telephone number, the date authorized, the details for administering the medication, and the duration and dosage.
- Daystar will not administer medications that have expired.

Daystar's Nursing Program is governed by the agency's adopted Health Care Plan, which is renewed every two (2) years and approved by OCFS. You may request a copy of the Health Care Plan at any time.

### **Medical Emergencies**

Medical emergencies are not uncommon at Daystar Kids due to the complex health care conditions of the children we serve. To ensure we are fully prepared to handle medical emergencies your child may experience, the following items are essential:

- Authorization for emergency medical care must be complete and up-to-date at all times;
- **Parents/guardians must be available for on-demand communication with our staff;**
- Health care providers and other members of your child's medical team must submit written orders for any changes in medications or other health care related activities expected to be carried out by Daystar Kids;
- Emergency contact information must always be up to date; and
- Advance directives must be documented to ensure your wishes are followed.

If emergency medical care is necessary, Daystar Kids will:

- Attempt to contact parent/guardian;
- Attempt to contact child's pediatrician and/or primary medical provider;
- Attempt to contact the parent/guardian via any of the other persons listed on the emergency information form provided.

If at any point we feel it is necessary, we will also do any or all of the following:

- Call 9-1-1;
- Have your child transported via ambulance to Golisano Children's Hospital;
- Administer life-saving oxygen if necessary (with signed consent from your medical provider).
- If hospital transfer is required, parents/guardians are responsible for taking over your child's care within 30 minutes of notice. Thereafter, Daystar staff will return to the center and will transfer care to the hospital's social work department if parents/guardians are absent and/or unable to be reached.

### **Hours of Operation**

Daystar Kids is open weekdays only (Monday through Friday). The building is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The regular program hours are 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. Admittance to the building is prohibited prior to 8:00 a.m. and a nurse must be onsite for parents/guardians to leave their child. Parents/guardians must sign child(ren) in and out whenever dropping off and/or picking up child(ren).

Daystar offers two (2) Extended Day options including a Morning Program and Afternoon Enrichment. These options are provided to families on a pre-authorized, contracted basis and will be set for each program year, commencing September through August. Failure to maintain attendance may result in suspension of the extended day options and possible suspension and/or termination of your child's enrollment.

### Daystar's Program Hours are as follows:

	<u>Drop-Off</u>	<u>Pick-Up</u>
<u>Regular Program</u>	9:00 am	4:30 pm
<u>Morning Program</u>	8:00 am	4:30 pm
<u>Afternoon Enrichment</u>	9:00 am	5:30 pm
<u>Full Extended Day</u>	8:00 am	5:30 pm

#### **Late Arrival/Pick-Up Policies**

Daystar closes promptly at 5:30 p.m. Please allow yourself enough time at the end of the day to arrive prior to closing. Late arrivals cause the agency to incur significant over-time fees for staff and can result in supervision and safety issues if staff are unavailable to cover additional shifts. Therefore, penalty fees will apply for late pick-ups:

- **A late fee of \$10.00 is assessed every 15 minutes, beginning promptly at 5:30 pm.** The late pick-up fee will automatically be charged to your account.
- **Your child's enrollment may be jeopardized if you do not pick-up or drop-off on time per the schedule outlined in your Service Agreement.** Daystar Kids retains the right to terminate services for any child who fails to meet the attendance standards and/or comply with the times contracted in the Service Agreement without prior notice.

#### **Parking**

Please park your vehicle in the rear of the building, nearest to the main entrance. Enrollees may use the handicapped parking spaces, as available.

- Children/siblings younger than age 12 may not be left unattended in parked vehicles, per OCFS.

#### **Attendance**

##### **Regular and consistent attendance is mandatory for continued enrollment in the program.**

Placement cannot be held for children who fail to attend on a regular basis. Daystar Kids reserves the right to terminate services without notice if attendance is not kept consistent (excluding excused absences due to hospitalization or illness). However, if your child will be absent due to health care reasons for more than thirty (30) consecutive days, his/her enrollment may be suspended. If your child's enrollment is suspended, his/her placement is not guaranteed, and your child may be placed on a wait list to return.

- Vacations and/or voluntary extracurricular activities are not excused absences.
- Only medical appointments, illness due to exclusionary criteria, and/or or hospitalization are excused.
- Children are expected to attend partial days on dates when there are medical appointments.
- Daystar expects your child to attend at least 80% of his/her contracted days. Failure to comply with attendance expectations will result in an immediate review of your child's placement and eligibility and may result in termination of your child's services.

\*\* if termination is due to inconsistent attendance your security deposit will not be refunded (if applicable).

#### **Sign In/Out**

Each day upon arrival parents/guardians are required to sign their child in, noting the time arrived, and signing where indicated. The same procedure is used to sign the child out.

Parents/guardians must communicate with the child's Teacher and/or Nurse daily to keep them informed of any changes and/or important updates in your child's health and/or progress.

## Drop-off & Pick-up

While we welcome the presence of siblings at Daystar Kids; for safety reasons, children must be supervised. Children under the age of 12 years old may not be left unattended anywhere on our premises, including in a vehicle in our parking lot. Daystar staff are unable to supervise siblings while on premise and must attend only to the needs of our program enrollees.

- Siblings and family members on premise must be free of any signs of illness (runny nose, fever, cough, etc.). If you require assistance, please contact reception (ext. 1000) to request pick-up in the lobby to minimize the risk to your child's classmates.
- Siblings and other visitors may be excluded from entering the Program Wing during cold and flu alerts and may be restricted to the lobby and/or asked to wear a mask.
- If you exhibit cold and/or flu symptoms and need to access the Program Wing, you will be asked to wear a mask to protect the health of the other children in our care.

## Release

Children may be released only to persons indicated on the release form. No child will be released without written parent/guardian consent. When arrangements are made for someone not identified on the release form to pick up your child, parents are responsible for notifying Daystar Kids in writing. Please inform your emergency contacts that we will ask for identification. This is a measure taken for the child's protection.

## Unexpected and Planned Absences

**You are responsible for informing Daystar Kids when your child is absent and communicating with our Team about their return.** Please do not rely on your provider, child's bus driver, and/or therapist to communicate this information. We need to hear from you and may have additional questions.

**If your child will be absent, you must call Daystar Kids by 8:00 a.m. at 585-385-6287- dial 1000 for Attendance/Reception.** Your notification allows our team to begin our scheduled activities on time and eases our concern for your child's well-being. Be sure to let us know if your child will be absent for any reason, including:

- For a doctor's appointment, surgery or treatment;
- Due to hospitalization;
- Illness; or
- Any other pre-planned absence.

It is your responsibility to contact your child's therapy providers and/or Medicaid transportation company (i.e., Medical Motors) when your child is absent. Daystar Kids is not responsible for communicating schedule changes to outside providers including but not limited to therapy partners, transportation services, and/or medical providers.

## Medicaid-Funded Transportation Services

Families may contract with Medical Motor Services (MMS) or other vendors to provide transportation for children who have active Medicaid benefits. MMS and similar vendors provide unsupervised transportation via a car, van, or wheelchair bus.

- Enrollees are typically grouped together based on location and driven together. However, there are no other adults on the vehicle available to supervise your child in transit.
- Please have your child(ren) dressed appropriately and ready for transport at the time of pick-up as drivers do not have the ability to wait for families to gather items or dress their child(ren) as this puts them off schedule and is a hardship for the other children who are already in the vehicle.

- In the evening, families are responsible to have a designated adult at home for drop-off.
  - If an adult is not home to receive your child, your child will not be returned to Daystar Kids and your child's rides may be subject to cancellation.
- Contact MMS if your child is absent at **585-654-6030**, press "0" to reach a dispatch worker and request that your child(ren)'s ride be canceled for that particular day.
- Daystar Kids reserves the right to cancel your child's ride if the agency determines that your child requires supervised transportation due to their health status. We will contact you to make alternative arrangements for pick-up.

**Daystar Kids is not responsible for Medicaid-funded transportation services and waives responsibility for issues that arise with their employees, assignees, or services. Any dispute or concerns should be directed to the appropriate transportation provider.**

### **Feeding Tubes and Medicaid-funded Transportation**

For your child's safety, nurses will pause your child's prescribed feed via their NG, G, J, or GJ tube and will disconnect the tube from the feeding pump prior to your child's departure time.

Your child's medical provider(s) may make recommendations on your child's ability to use Medicaid transportation vendors. Please consult with your provider with any questions about the risks involved in sending your child by a Medicaid-funded transportation carrier.

Daystar Kids can assist in coordinating your child's scheduled busing for the year ("standing order") but is not responsible for any day-to-day changes that occur due to changes in your child's schedule. Parents/guardians are responsible for communicating any changes to their child's transportation provider directly.

### **Readmission to Daystar following Hospitalization**

Daystar Kids reserves the right to reassess your child's eligibility to attend Daystar Kids following hospitalization or any prolonged absence. Daystar Kids requires the following to be completed prior to your child returning to program:

- Clearance from the physician/health care provider that attended to your child while hospitalized or your child's Primary Care Physician (PCP)
- Discharge summary notes from the hospital
- Updated medical orders
- New medications or medical supplies that will need to be administered/used at Daystar Kids (medications are required to be in their original containers with their original labels)
- New therapy recommendations/restrictions

### **Emergency Closings**

In the event of an emergency closing due to inclement weather or other unexpected situations, Daystar Kids will broadcast an announcement on the local news stations and will text and/or email families/guardians. Daystar may contact you to pick up your child if extreme weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances develop which will make closing the center necessary.

### **Daystar Holidays and Breaks**

Please refer to the published Program Calendar for specific dates the program will be closed. Families are responsible for tuition payments for all weeks in the Service Agreement period.

Tuition accounts will not be credited for holidays. Tuition is based on an annual rate and the payments are spread throughout the 12-month period. This policy reflects the center's ongoing operating expenses. Any changes to the Program Calendar will be communicated in advance.

### **Visitation**

Daystar Kids maintains an open-door policy for families. Authorized family members are welcome to visit at any time during regular operating hours. However, if your presence disrupts our regularly scheduled programs and activities, or other therapists, providers, or children in the classroom, you may be asked to leave.

Due to the health status of the children in our program, Daystar Kids reserves the right to limit access to the building to minimize the risk of contagion when deemed necessary (i.e., during flu season, COVID-19 restrictions, etc.). Direct contact with children other than your own is strictly prohibited.

- Other restrictions may apply for visitors during cold/flu season. If you have cold/flu symptoms, you will be prohibited from visiting and/or picking up your child(ren) in the classroom. Please be considerate of everyone's health.

## **TUITION & PAYMENTS**

### **Security Deposit**

Upon registration (and submission of a signed Service Agreement), a deposit equal to two weeks of tuition is due to secure your child's enrollment.

- Upon exiting the program, your security deposit will be returned to you if all terms of the Service Agreement have been met and your account is current.
- If you decide to waive enrollment after signing the Service Agreement, your security deposit will not be refunded.

### **Tuition**

- Tuition agreements are based on Daystar's fiscal year (Jan – Dec) and will be reassessed annually.
- Tuition is based on contracted days and not actual days of attendance, regardless of absenteeism, family vacation, illness, or hospitalization.
- **Tuition is due in advance:** Tuition may be paid weekly but must be received in advance of services being provided.
  - **Payments are due on the Monday of the current week or on a monthly basis prior to the upcoming month.**
  - **A late charge of \$10.00/week will be automatically charged to your account for late payments.**
- Acceptable forms of payment are check, MasterCard, Visa, or money order. We strongly discourage cash payment.
  - For payment by check: please place your weekly tuition in the tuition box located by reception. Be sure to include your child's first and last name on your check.
  - Returned checks unpaid from your bank will result in a \$45 Returned Item Fee billed directly to your account. Appropriate late payment charges will apply.
  - **Failure to pay in full will result in termination of services and your account will be referred to a credit collection agency.**
- Monthly statements will be sent home via your child's Daily Communication Folder.

## **Financial Assistance**

If your family qualifies for financial assistance based on household size and family income, your tuition may be discounted. Families interested in applying must complete Daystar's confidential application for financial assistance. **Tuition assistance is not guaranteed and is subject to availability.** Applications must be resubmitted and reviewed annually.

## **Account Receipts**

Receipts will be furnished upon request and a year-end payment summary will be provided for tax purposes.

## **Funding Eligibility**

Daystar's Pediatric Respite services are not fully funded by New York State. Only some children will qualify for funding through Medicaid Waiver programs. Upon intake, your child will be assessed for eligibility for these programs and services and will be referred to outside providers to assist in enrolling your child in these programs. Our current program partners include:

- Comprehensive Home and Community Based Services Medicaid Waiver - administered through OPWDD
- CompassionNet – administered through Lifetime Care/Excellus

If your child meets the eligibility criteria for any of these programs, Daystar will assist you through the enrollment process and will help guide you in understanding the benefits of enrollment. Once your child gains eligibility you are required to comply with the referral process within one month of eligibility status. **If your child becomes eligible and you opt not to participate in these programs, Daystar Kids reserves the right to terminate your Service Agreement** without prior notice.

- Daystar Kids has an obligation to its charitable funders to dedicate its resources to children and families most in-need; including those who do not have other funding streams available and/or who may not qualify for community programs.
- Daystar's family tuition is offset by charitable donations and does not cover the full cost of services. Therefore, the agency relies upon its partnerships to help offset its daily costs of service. Tuition payments alone do not constitute full funding and will not be considered as a replacement for Medicaid Waiver or CompassionNet benefits.

## **ABOUT OUR PROGRAM**

### **Multidisciplinary Team & Approach**

Each classroom consists of Teachers, Pediatric Nurse(s), and Teacher's Aides (TA's) who work together to provide for your child's unique health care, social, and educational needs.

- Daystar Kids employs a very robust average child to staff ratio of 3:1, though these ratios may vary based on each group's required level of care. Each team is assigned a pediatric nurse who is not included in the classroom supervision ratio.
- Daystar Kids partners with Early Intervention (EI) and preschool therapists to help meet every child's individualized goals.
- The program team is supervised by the Executive Director, and Daystar's Director of Preschool and Curriculum ("DPC") is responsible for the delivery of Daystar Kids' evidence-based educational curriculum.

### **Pediatric Nursing Services & Medical Supervision**

Your child's daily health routine and health care checks are conducted by highly qualified pediatric registered nurses. They are responsible for assessing your child's health to help maintain their

health care status. If the nursing team determines that the child's condition puts him/her or others at risk and/or is beyond the scope of care Daystar Kids can safely provide, they will contact you immediately. Daystar's Pediatric Nursing Team will evaluate your child's health care status on an ongoing basis. Should your child no longer require daily skilled pediatric nursing, our team will schedule a time to meet with you to discuss transitioning your child to another program (i.e., community referrals). Daystar's Pediatric Nursing Team is supervised by our Health Care Consultant and hospital liaison, and Daystar Kids employs a full-time Nurse Manager who supervises the agency's nursing services delivered onsite.

Daystar Kids also engages the region's leading pediatric providers in its Medical Advisory Committee, which helps inform and guide the agency's health care programs. Please visit our website for an updated list of members.

### **Family Support Services ("FSS")**

Daystar Kids partners with OPWDD to provide regular Family Support Services (FSS) programs for Daystar Kids and their families.

Daystar's FSS Program is available on an ongoing basis to assist your family with community referrals and to help families navigate the complex systems of support. **Parent-Teacher conferences with your child's classroom Teacher and Nurse are required twice per year** to ensure that Daystar Kids is providing the right blend of supports to help in your child's progress. We will also lend support to your family in helping manage your child's transition to school-age programs.

- **Participation in Parent-Teacher Conferences is mandatory for all program participants and is required to update your child's OCFS Health Care Plan and OPWDD's PONS.**
- Annual Family Satisfaction Surveys will be sent home periodically; please give your confidential feedback to us to ensure that we are meeting your expectations.

### **Family Social Hour**

Daystar hosts regularly scheduled Family Social Hour gatherings for family members of program alumni and current enrollees to connect with one another and learn about available resources for your children and families. These programs cover a wide array of topics and may include expert panelists and presenters. Notices of the dates, times, location, and topics will be distributed to families and posted at Daystar Kids. All events are free to attend but require advance RSVP.

- Childcare is not provided unless otherwise specified.

### **HighScope Curriculum & Special Education Early Development Strategies (SEEDS)**

Daystar's educational team provides daily educational enrichment instruction and programs for participants. Classroom Teachers implement a wide array of techniques to engage and support the social, developmental, and intellectual needs of the children in each classroom. Daystar's *Special Education Early Developmental Strategies*, or SEEDS program, supplements Daystar's individualized health care plan to include curricula that provides a solid foundation from which children may fully engage in developmentally appropriate ways- physically, socially, and cognitively.

### **Educational and Therapy Partners**

Daystar Kids welcomes independent therapists, Early Intervention therapists, and Preschool Special Education partners to schedule sessions with children on-site at prescribed times. Occupational, physical, speech, vision, and music therapies are just some of the key services children require to help maximize their development.

Daystar Kids partners with local Early Intervention (EI) agencies to identify therapists approved to work onsite. This may require you to change your child's therapy team members to providers approved for services at Daystar Kids.

Per request and advance notice, Daystar Kids will host your child's Early Intervention/Preschool Special Education evaluations, Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meetings, and IFSP Team Meetings on-site. Daystar Kids strives to integrate your child's developmental goals into its daily programming.

- With your consent, Daystar Kids Teachers and Nurses are available to participate in your child's educational meetings including but not limited to each IFSP meeting, school district meeting, and/or assisting with the tours of recommended preschools. Families may coordinate directly with your child's teacher to schedule these meetings.

### **Music Therapy/Enrichment**

All Daystar Kids are eligible to participate in music therapy. Music therapy is provided to small groups within each classroom on a weekly basis to help foster skill development in all areas.

Daystar Kids also provides each child with dedicated Sensory Room experiences in its Linda Zarrella Sea-Saw Sensory Room. Children will be paired with peers who share similar sensory preferences to help them engage and connect with the environment around them.

### **Continuity of Care**

At intake, your child will be placed in his/her assigned classroom or "Team." Daystar Kids supports a continuity of care model which permits children of mixed ages to be comingled and remain with the same classroom teams. Continuity of care is an evidence-based educational practice that promotes high-quality early learning experiences through the development of secure attachments and consistent relationships with trusted team members who are trained, focused, and responsive to each child's individual needs, progress, and goals. In a continuity of care model, children also learn from one another. Over time, they develop lasting friendships and demonstrate deepening social awareness for others. Continuity of care allows children to fully explore peer to peer relationships and develop new skills with confidence. If you have questions about our continuity of care model or educational programs, contact Daystar's Director of Preschool and Curriculum at ext. 2400.

### **Moving Up**

Each year, Daystar Kids celebrates the accomplishments of its enrollees and invites family members and friends to its annual Rising Stars Ceremony. Please refer to the Annual Program Calendar for details.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

### **Transitioning Your Child to Daystar**

Every child approaches new environments and experiences in his/her own unique way. Parents/guardians are welcome to stay the first day to help inform our classroom team about your child's needs and to familiarize yourself with our program schedule and expectations.

- Your child's team will spend the first day easing them into the daily routine and helping them to learn what to expect.
- Please feel free to bring a familiar toy or blanket to help smooth the transition.
- During those first few weeks of adjustment, please allow extra time to settle your child in at drop-off if your schedule permits.
- Feel free to share any concerns and ask questions. Don't hesitate to check-in with your child's classroom Teacher and/or Nurse in person or by phone anytime during the day.

## **What Should I Bring?**

- Two complete changes of clothes appropriate for the weather including socks (please remember to replace any clothes we send home for washing). Please send outdoor wear appropriate for all seasons.
  - Children participate in a variety of sensory and art activities. Please send your child to program in activity-appropriate clothing
  - While we use washable products, Daystar Kids is not responsible for any damages incurred to clothing or personal items
- Disposable diapers and wipes
- Bottles labeled with first and last name, with a daily supply of prepared formula
  - Daystar Kids does not keep formula in stock. Families are responsible for supplying your child's bottles and/or feeding supplies.
- A security object such as a teddy bear or pacifier that will help your child be more comfortable
- Medications in their original containers with original labels
- Any special medical equipment and appliances your child requires
- Adaptive equipment
- Special ointments for treatments with signed medical order
- Sunscreen of your choice (or use Daystar's supply)
- For all over-the-counter medications, Daystar Kids requires an Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medication Consent Form.

## **Please label ALL belongings, medications, bottles, and other items with your child's first and last names.**

Daystar Kids is not responsible for any personal property that is lost, damaged, or left behind after your child's services are terminated.

- Any personal belongings left onsite will be donated and/or discarded after 14 business days from your child's last day of services at Daystar Kids.
- Unused, expired medications will be returned to family members for disposal unless prior arrangements are made.

## **Meals**

Parents/guardians must provide bottles and prepare all formula/ breast milk to be given to their child throughout the day. Bottles must be filled and ready to serve upon arrival each day. Daystar will administer feedings as outlined in your child's approved PONS/Health Care Plan.

Daystar Kids participates in a federally funded food program (CACFP) that provides for snacks and lunch throughout the day. You will be asked to sign up for this program upon enrollment. All meals and snacks follow USDA guidelines.

- If you choose to provide your child's food, please label all containers with your child's first and last name.
- Menus are posted and will be sent home for review. There are no substitutions allowed. If your child prefers something else, parents/guardians will be responsible for providing alternative meal items.

## **Plan of Nursing Services ("PONS")/Health Care Plan**

Every enrollee has a written PONS and Health Care Plan that is co-developed by Daystar's educational and nursing team with family and therapist input.

- PONS is adhered to by the classroom team entrusted with your child's care. The PONS is updated frequently to keep pace with your child's developing needs and will be reviewed with you every six (6) months and/or at Parent-Teacher Conferences to ensure alignment with your family's goals for your child.
- PONS are required by OPWDD, and annual Health Care Plans are required by OCFS and will be updated bi-annually, or as frequently as changes are made.

### **Daily Care Sheet**

Families are required to complete a Daily Care Sheet for their child and send it in to Daystar using the Communication Folder provided.

- If you are dropping off your child in person, family members are required to verbally review the Daily Care Sheet with the Teacher/Nurse or assigned staff.
- This provides the classroom team with pertinent information about feeding, medications and any other information relevant to your child's care. We require family members who send their child to Daystar via Medicaid transportation vendors to complete a "Daily Care Sheet" each day and return it in using your child's Communication Folder.
- Please look for important reminders in your child's Communication Folder.

Teachers and Nurses complete an update to provide to family members at the end of the day. This report provides families with progress information, including eating, drinking, therapy, naps, medication given, therapies received, and other key information about your child's activities and progress made during each day.

### **HEALTH POLICIES**

#### **Daily Health Check**

Children will be visually screened and assessed by Daystar's pediatric nurses upon arrival. If a child exhibits signs of illness, he/she may be sent home. In the event a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up, parents/guardians are expected to come to Daystar immediately. Daystar Kids advises you to consult with your child's health care providers for any follow-up care or directives.

#### **Illness**

Maintaining a healthy and safe learning environment is a responsibility we share with you. **PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO CLASS WHEN THEY ARE SICK.** Please make alternative arrangements for care when your child is ill.

Your child may be excluded from daily programming if nursing staff determines that:

- Illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
- Illness results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- Illness poses a risk of spreading disease to others.

If any of these criteria is met, the child will be excluded, regardless of the type of illness. When a child becomes ill while at Daystar Kids, they may be placed in isolation under the supervision of a designated staff member. It is important that sick children are picked up as soon as possible to minimize risk to other children in the program.

**FAMILIES MUST PROVIDE UPDATED AND ACCURATE EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER(S) AND AUTHORIZED PICK-UP INFORMATION AT ALL TIMES.**

## **When Should My Child Stay Home?**

Your child must remain home if he/she is showing signs of illness, new signs, or symptoms of illness beyond their baseline conditions, or has any of the following symptoms. In addition, if our nursing staff determines that your child's health status is concerning or beyond the level of care provided at Daystar Kids, you may be asked to consult with your child's medical team and/or Daystar's Nurses may contact your child's providers for additional guidance.

- **Uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying**
- **Fever:** temperature of 100.0 degrees F or higher
- **Diarrhea:** an increased number of abnormally loose stools in the previous 24 hours or a noticeable change in their current habits
- **Vomiting:** if it is determined that vomiting is outside the scope of their normal state and likely caused by viral infection and/or accompanied by another symptom such as fever
- **Eye/nose drainage:** when the eye is red or pink with white or yellow eye discharge; thick mucus or pus draining from the eye or nose
- **Sore throat:** especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present
- **Appearance/behavior:** child looks or acts differently, unusually tired, pale, lacking appetite, confused, irritable, or difficult to awaken
- **Seizure** for the first time
- **Skin problems:** skin rashes, undiagnosed or contagious; infected sores with crusty, yellow, or green drainage, which cannot be covered by clothing or bandages
- **Itching:** persistent itching (or scratching) of body and scalp
- **Unusual color:** eyes or skin-yellow (jaundice); stool-gray or white; urine-dark or tea colored (these symptoms can be found in hepatitis and should be evaluated by a physician)
- **Hospitalization or emergency room care** for any illness within the last 24 hours

## **Communicable Disease**

Parents are asked to notify Daystar within 24 hours if their child has been exposed to any communicable disease.

Daystar Kids will notify all parents in writing when a child who attends Daystar or an employee has a confirmed case of a communicable disease (i.e., chicken pox, whooping cough). Further, Daystar Kids will notify the Monroe County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) when any illness or condition specified by law or regulation (i.e., hepatitis) is present in the program within 24 hours of awareness of the situation.

## **When Is It Safe To Return To Daystar After An Illness?**

Please refer to the following policies. Children should also be able to participate comfortably in activities before returning. In some cases, a doctor's note may be required.

- Chicken Pox- after all blisters have dried and crusted (generally 6 days after rash)
- Croup- after cough has subsided
- C-difficile- after diarrhea resolves
- E-coli or shigella infection- after diarrhea resolves and 2 negative stool cultures
- Fever- after the fever has returned to normal without fever reducing medication for 24 hours
- Hepatitis A virus- one week after onset of jaundice
- Head lice- after one complete treatment
- Influenza- after the fever has returned to normal without fever reducing medication for 24 hours
- Impetigo- after 24 hours of medication, lesions covered with water-tight dressing
- Mumps- 5 days after parotid gland swelling
- Measles- 4 days after onset of rash

- Open sores/lesions- until considered non-infectious (lesions crusted and dry)
- Pertussis- after 5 days of appropriate antibiotic
- Pink eye- after 24 hours on medication with no matter in eyes
- Ringworm- after medical treatment with a fungicidal ointment
- Rotavirus- after one formed stool
- Rubella- 6 days after onset of rash
- RSV- after the wheezing and coughing have subsided
- Salmonella serotype Typhi infection- until diarrhea resolves and 3 negative stool cultures
- Salmonella nonserotype Typhi infection- until diarrhea resolves
- Scabies- until after treatment
- Shingles- after all blisters have dried and crusted (same as chicken pox)
- Staphylococcus skin infection- when skin lesions can be covered with water-tight dressing or are no longer draining
- Strep throat- after 24 hours on medication
- Tuberculosis- until determined to be non-infectious by physician or health department
- Vomiting/diarrhea- none for 24 hours
- Hospitalization or emergency room care- 24 hours after discharge, with doctor's note

*\*Daystar Kids abides by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and MCDPH for general exclusion guidelines. Parents are encouraged to visit the AAP's website [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org).*

## **HEALTH & MEDICATION MANAGEMENT**

### **Health Care Provider Orders & Consent Forms**

All children enrolled at Daystar must maintain up-to-date medical forms, which include:

- Annual Physical Exam and current immunization record
- Updated medical orders, medications and consent forms – updated every six months and as needed.

It is your responsibility to notify Daystar in writing immediately of any changes in your child's health care status and/or regimen.

- Verbal notifications will not be adhered to until placed in writing and provided to classroom staff as part of your child's updated PONS and Health Care Plan.
- For changes to the child's medication schedule, prescribed feeds, and/or other medical procedures, a written physician/provider's order is required.

Children are often prescribed several medications, with dosing and type subject to frequent change. Accuracy and up-to-date physician's orders are essential to ensure proper management of your child's medications.

Daystar Kids does not administer expired medications under any circumstances, and will not administer medications without an updated, signed medical order.

### **Authorized Consent**

Parents/Guardians must give written prior consent to permit Daystar Kids to administer medications. Parents/Guardians must complete the **Parent & Pediatrician Consent Form** provided by Daystar Kids. Permission is required prior to enrollment and again after every six

months. If consents are not updated, your child's services may be suspended until such time as all medical orders and consents are updated.

### **Prescription Medication**

If your child is required to take a prescription medication while attending Daystar Kids, a medical order from the health care provider stating all necessary information including dosage amount and time given must be provided. All prescription medication must be in its original container and properly labeled with child's full name, date the prescription was filled, expiration date and instructions for administration.

If you fail to send in a required medication for your child, Daystar reserves the right to suspend and/or terminate your child's respite services until the required medication is provided. A disruption in administration of medication can cause significant complications in your child's care.

### **Non-prescription Medication**

A physician's authorization is needed for non-prescription (over-the-counter) medications as well. A signed request with administration directions is required.

### **Administering Medication**

Daystar's pediatric nurses are authorized to administer medication to your child. Nurses administering medication will note the date, time, and their initials on the child's Medication Administration Record ("MAR"). Daystar Kids will not administer medication that is expired.

## **DAILY PRACTICES**

### **Diapering**

Parents are required to provide diapers and diaper wipes. Cloth diapers are prohibited. Diaper changes are scheduled approximately every 90 minutes to 2 hours, or as frequently as needed, except for nap time, in which case each child will be diapered as soon as he or she awakes. Diaper changing procedures will be followed as posted in the changing area.

### **Nap Time**

Infants will be placed on their backs while napping in cribs, unless medical conditions dictate otherwise; in this case Daystar Kids will require detailed, written authorization from your child's health care provider (Napping Waiver).

Daystar Kids supplies crib sheets and blankets. Stuffed animals or bumpers are not permitted in cribs. These practices ensure the safety of the child. Children will nap in designated napping areas and will be placed either in a crib or on a cot depending on his/her age and development. Children are supervised during the duration of nap time and visually checked at least every 15 minutes by classroom staff.

### **Positive Behavioral Reinforcement**

It is our mission to create a welcoming environment where children feel safe and secure being themselves. Our team is trained to employ developmentally appropriate, positive reinforcement techniques and strategies that respect each child's communication preferences and styles.

### **Toys and Equipment**

Classroom toys and equipment are cleaned, sanitized and disinfected daily or as often as needed with recommended FDA-approved cleaning solution and per CDC recommendations.

### **Bedding and Soiled Clothing**

Bedding is laundered weekly and as needed. Soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and returned home for washing. Please be sure to dress your child in comfortable, play-appropriate clothing and replace any extra clothing items as needed.

### **Choking Hazards**

According to DOH, children under age five are at greatest risk for choking injury and death. Daystar Kids seeks to minimize the risk of potential injuries related to accidental choking by prohibiting all items that are potentially hazardous. Examples of restricted personal items include:

- Rings
- Earrings- especially dangling earrings or earrings without a post backing
- Safety pins
- Beads and/or small sized barrettes, bobby pins, and/or other hair decorations that may easily fall out and be accidentally swallowed
- Necklaces and pendants
- Any other object that are potential choking hazards or which contain small parts that may become potential choking hazards if broken

If such items are brought to Daystar Kids, we may remove them. Daystar Kids is not responsible for these or any articles that may be lost or damaged.

### **Accidents and Injuries**

First Aid will be administered to any child requiring care. These incidents will be recorded and parents will be notified.

### **First Aid/CPR/AED**

Nurses are certified in first aid and infant and child CPR/AED. Daystar Kids has an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) onsite for emergencies.

## **OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION**

### **Staff Training**

Staff are required to complete a minimum of fifteen (15) hours of professional development and in-service training annually. Daystar Kids will close periodically for Staff Development Days. Please refer to your Program Calendar for dates when Daystar will be closed to enrollees. Daystar Kids provides on-site training (in-service) to program teams to ensure best practices and maintain the highest quality standards for our program.

### **Fire Drills**

Monthly practice drills are conducted as required by the Fire Marshall and New York State. Shelter-in-Place drills will be conducted twice per year as required by New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Parents will be notified in advance of when our Shelter-in-Place drills will take place.

- Children with verified medical needs may be exempted from leaving the building for fire drills during inclement weather, with a signed Emergency Evacuation Waiver Form issued by your child's physician and signed by a parent/guardian.

### **Evacuation Plan**

Our team members are trained in procedures for safely evacuating the building and ensuring the safety of all children entrusted in our care. The evacuation plan is posted by the exits in all classrooms and in common areas. To request a copy of Daystar's Evacuation Plan, please contact the Executive Director.

## **Mandated Reporting**

Daystar Kids is governed by New York State's mandated reporting laws. Staff is required to report all suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the NYS Child Central Registry.

- If you suspect child abuse or maltreatment, call NY's Statewide Toll-Free Telephone Number at 1-800-342-3720.
- If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call TDD/TTY at 1-800-638-5163 or have your Video Relay System provider call 1-800-342-3720.
- If you believe that a child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1 or your local police department.

## **Family Conferences**

Our staff is always available to answer your questions, to review your child's progress, or to discuss any concerns you may have. We encourage you to speak to your child's teacher and nurse regularly, and to work together to identify the best possible time and method for you to connect.

Drop off and pick-up times may be difficult to confer extensively about your child's progress. However, we encourage you to schedule a conference with your child's Teacher, and/or with the Executive Director. We also encourage families to participate in our Family Social Hour gatherings, as these provide additional opportunities for staff to provide important updates to families.

## **Updating Information**

It is your responsibility to update your child's emergency contact information and medical information. Please notify Daystar in writing immediately concerning any changes in health status, health care providers, family contact information, pick-up authorizations, and/or any other relevant information pertaining to their care.

- Restrictions in child custody and/or visitation must be provided in writing to the agency. Daystar Kids is unable to restrict visitation from a legal parent/guardian without documentation of a legal/active court-order.

## **Announcements**

Important notices or other information will be sent home in your child's Communication Folder and/or:

- On display at Reception
- By e-mail if you have provided an updated email address
- By text if you have completed a Text Consent Form
- On Daystar's website at [www.daystarkids.org](http://www.daystarkids.org)

## **Employment Policies**

To avoid potential conflicts of interest, team members are strictly prohibited from accepting outside employment from Daystar families. Daystar Kids does not accept employment applications from immediate family members of current enrollees.

## **Community Participation**

Daystar Kids collaborates with a variety of community partners and volunteers, including the University of Rochester Medical Center, Golisano Children's Hospital, URM Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics Division, St. John Fisher College School of Nursing, Nazareth College School of Nursing, and the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Rochester, among others.

You may observe nursing students, pediatric residents, volunteers, or other professionals on-site. All visitors adhere to Daystar's strict policies while on-site and are governed by HIPAA privacy laws.

## **General Authorization**

By enrolling your child at Daystar Kids, you are granting permission for your child to:

- Participate in all program activities, including the use of all indoor and outdoor equipment.

- Be photographed or videotaped in connection with daily program activities, and have these images displayed at Daystar, on our website and social media sites, in our advertising, marketing, public relations, and other promotional materials, and for any other promotional purpose, unless you decline authorization in writing. You further understand that no compensation will be made in exchange for using these photos or any likeness of your child or family.

### **Confidentiality**

Daystar Kids respects the right of all families to privacy and confidentiality. Information relating to your child and/or family will not be released unless written authorization is provided by a parent/legal guardian.

### **Oversight**

Daystar Kids is licensed through OCFS and by the OPWDD. Daystar Kids is also subject to DOH regulations. A copy of our current license and regulations are posted onsite for review. For more information, please contact the Executive Director for copies of our regulations and requirements.

### **Acknowledgement**

Thank you for taking time to review this handbook. We hope the information provided is helpful to you and your family and will help guide your understanding of Daystar Kids, its services, culture, and core management principles.

We are grateful to you for allowing us to share in your child's life. It is our honor and privilege to serve as a trusted resource for your family and child during this important time in their development. We look forward to a wonderful time together!

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