

*Huckleberry Cheesecake
Child Development
Center*

Parent Handbook

Huckleberry Cheesecake is not just another “day care” center - it is the new generation of child development. What makes us different can make an important difference in your child’s life and your own. Because our center is located at or near the work place, parents have a unique opportunity to be closely involved in their child’s growth. Parents are encouraged to stop by to visit any time of day. You can join your child at lunch or relax with your child in the classroom. Our program is structured to meet the physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs of your child, to educate and support every stage of development from infancy through five years.

Our facility is designed to maximize a child’s potential in an active, cheerful and responsive environment. It is designed for safety, hygiene and fun. Huckleberry Cheesecake’s staff is highly educated and experienced in the field of early childhood development. Our low child -to- staff ratio ensures that a child gets the maximum individual attention he or she needs.

Application and Enrollment: *Huckleberry Cheesecake is available to meet the needs of children ages two months through five years of age, without regard to race, religion, color, sex, or national origin. We reserve the right to accept each child with the understanding that if Huckleberry Cheesecake can not care for him/her, we ask that the child be withdrawn. Huckleberry Cheesecake requires a completed registration form and a non-refundable application fee that is to be paid during time of enrollment. Also, prior to enrollment, a health certificate with all D.C. immunizations appropriate to the age of the infant or child is required. Each child's health certificate must be kept up to date by the child's parents. The parent must also take a new health certificate to each annual well-visit for certification that age-appropriate health screening requirements have been performed.*

Special Needs: *Huckleberry Cheesecake will attempt to meet the needs of all children enrolled at our center. Any special provisions needed by a particular child must be communicated between parents and center directors and reviewed on an individual basis. Our best efforts will be made to meet the child's individual and specific needs.*

Disclosure of Information: *All information provided to Huckleberry Cheesecake from parents will remain confidential with the exception of routine inspections from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and DC Immunization Program.*

Tuition and Fees: *Tuition is due by the first day of every month. Please place your check in the tuition box in the office. If the first of a month falls on a weekend or holiday, payment is due on the last business day. If tuition is late there will be a finance charge of \$15.00 per day. There is no grace period.*

Daily Operations: *Huckleberry Cheesecake is open weekdays from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, 12 months a year. Huckleberry Cheesecake will be closed for all Federal Holidays. Our snow policy follows the DC Public Schools for late openings and the Federal Government for closures. If you are unsure of our operating status, please call our mainline (202) 467-4202 to receive further information.*

Arrivals and Departures: *Huckleberry Cheesecake does not have a designated automobile drop off or pick up area. There is metered parking both on 19th and N Streets as well as other surrounding streets. Several parking garages are also located within a short distance of Huckleberry. Many parents however, work nearby and walk their child to the center on their way to the office or utilize public transportation. All parents must sign their child in and out each day on the roster posted outside of the classroom.*

Security Deposit and Withdrawal: *A security deposit, equal to the amount of one month's tuition, is due prior to enrollment of a child. The security deposit will be applied to each child's last month's tuition, provided that Huckleberry Cheesecake has received written notification of withdrawal no later than the first day of the month preceding the child's withdrawal date.*

Late Pick Up Fees: *Parents who do not pick their children up by 6:00 each day will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute. If you would like your child to be in our after-school program, you will need to call ahead and make a reservation. This service allows you to leave your child at Huckleberry Cheesecake until 6:30 PM for an additional charge of \$5.00. All fees must be paid directly to the after-school provider before leaving the center.*

Philosophy

A child thrives in a loving, warm, accepting atmosphere, whether it be at home or at Huckleberry Cheesecake. We've created an environment where children can thrive and grow, each as an individual. Huckleberry Cheesecake is committed to caring for children in a nurturing atmosphere near the workplace and implementing our philosophy of learning through play. All of the daily activities that the children participate in are purposeful and have a two-fold objective: learning and fun!

We strongly believe that parents are the foundation and center of their child's life. Our program has been created to give mothers and fathers the opportunity to pursue their own careers without having to compromise their standards as concerned parents. Therefore, we encourage them to share in their child's Huckleberry Cheesecake experience.

Program and Goals

Huckleberry Cheesecake has been established as a child development center to provide superior child care for children of working parents. Our goals are to be responsive to the emotional, social, intellectual and physical needs of infants and children in a safe, clean and supportive environment. Our program is unique from the innovative architectural design to meet the ever-changing needs of the children. Although our curriculum and schedules are structured,

the daily activities are creative and flexible to meet the developmental levels of the children in each group. Daily schedules provide a balance of activities that include: play (manipulatives, imaginative, gross/fine motor development) creative arts, language development, music, literature, science and math. The children in our program are divided in the following age groups:

Blueberries *Infants (2 months-approx. 1 year) 1:3
(Nursery)*

Raspberries *Toddlers (1-2 years)1:4
(Junior I)*

Strawberries *Toddlers (2-3 years) 1:4
(Junior II)*

Huckleberries *Preschool (3-5 years) 1:8
(Senior)*

Outdoor Time: *A portion of the daily program at Huckleberry Cheesecake includes outdoor activities. Depending on the weather and ages of the children, each class will spend 30 minutes or more outdoors each day. The youngest classes will stroll the surrounding neighborhood in our buggies and the older classes will walk to one of several playgrounds, visit the local library, or nearby museums and shops. Occasionally, the classes will go on a field trip utilizing public transportation. Parents will be notified of these special field trips in advance. Parents should have their child come to school dressed in weather appropriate clothing and should apply sunscreen to children when necessary.*

Staff

Our staff is carefully selected not just for their educational credentials, but for their warmth, sensitivity and respect for children. Before they are selected as staff members each teacher is required to present an activity from language development to art, illustrating their abilities. In addition, all staff must participate in a three month probationary period in order to closely evaluate their interactivities with children and parents. To insure that excellent care is provided for every child, the staff is trained in first aid and CPR. In addition, all staff members participate in continuous in-service training programs and attend conferences and workshops on child development issues.

Communication

Daily Activities: *Huckleberry Cheesecake will display, outside each room, a weekly plan of your child's activities. Teachers will list highlights of your child's day. Parents should feel free to express their comments and concerns at all times to your child's teachers and Center directors. Teacher - Parent communication is essential in maintaining an accurate account of your child's daily needs. We urge all parents with any serious issues or grievances to put their issue in writing. Upon receipt, the directors will schedule a meeting with all involved parties to work on a resolution to the issue.*

Parent/Teacher Activities: *Classroom meetings will be held with your child's teacher if necessary to evaluate your child's developmental progress. If, during the course of the year you have a special concern or a question, a conference time can be made available. Parents are always encouraged to become an active participator in their child's Huckleberry Cheesecake experience by spending time at the center and making suggestions on Center policy.*

Unusual Incidents: *The Office of State Superintendent of Schools (OSSE) will be informed of any unusual incident that occur involving a child enrolled at Huckleberry Cheesecake within 24 hours of the incident. Incidents that will be reported to the appropriate authorities include, but are not limited to, abuse, neglect, threat, and serious accident or injury and dispatch of Emergency Medical Services.*

Food and Clothing

Food: *Huckleberry Cheesecake provides a hot nutritious meal for your child at lunch and two snacks throughout the course of the day. We not only meet the nutritional guidelines set by the USDA and the D.C. licensing standards but most often exceed them. Great importance is placed on providing healthy food and limiting salt, sugar, preservatives, and artificial color additives. Fresh fruit and vegetables, whole grain breads, organic milk and other low-fat dairy products are used in planning meals. If your child has special dietary requirement, other arrangements can be made. Menus are posted monthly inside the office.*

Due to severe nut allergies, Huckleberry Cheesecake is a nut-free facility. Please do not bring any nuts or nut products to the Center.

Clothing: Each child at Huckleberry Cheesecake has his/her own cubby for their personal belongings. Everything your child wears and brings to the center must be labeled. Toddlers and preschoolers should have a complete change of clothes in her/his cubby at all times. Infants should have two complete changes. Clothes and linens soiled at the center will be sent home. We require that blankets and sheets be taken home every Friday to be laundered. Please check your child's clothes regularly to make sure your child has a change of clothes, that fit and that they are seasonally appropriate.

Additional Things to Bring From Home:

For children in diapers:

- At least one bag of disposable diapers
- Two or three bibs (optional)
- Two portable size crib sheets (one regular size crib sheet for the Raspberry room cots) and one blanket & one receiving blanket
- Formula and baby food
- Plastic bottles and plastic baby jars (non-glass)
- Other baby products upon request
- Sunblock (parents must apply sunblock to their child each morning)

For Preschoolers:

- Blanket for nap time
- Please DO NOT allow your child to bring money, play guns and knives, small pocket toys, candy or gum to the center.
- Sunblock (parents must apply sunblock to their child each morning)

Illness

Illness Policy: Huckleberry Cheesecake is not equipped to care for sick children. If a child becomes ill during the day, we will isolate the child from the other children and the parent will be notified. When you are called please come to pick up your child within the hour. If you can not be reached, one of the other individuals listed in our files for emergency notification will be contacted. Children who are ill should be kept at home. Please DO NOT bring your child to the center if:

- They are too ill to play outdoors
- They have a fever or have had one within the past 24 hours
- They have discolored discharge from one or both eyes

- *They have an unexplained rash or sore*
- *They have a heavy cough or thick, discolored discharge from their nose*
- *It has been less than 24 hours since an episode of diarrhea or vomiting*
- *They have been treated less than 24 hours with antibiotics for an infectious condition*

Medication: *At times it may be necessary for your child to receive medication at the center. For the protection of the staff and child, only medication prescribed by a doctor can be administered. A medication permission form must be filled out before the medication can be administered. A doctor's note, stating dosage and dates, is also necessary for medication administration. Bottles of medication must be labeled with the child's name, the dosage, and instructions for administering the medicine written on the bottle. All medicine must be in its original prescription container. Over the counter medications may not be kept in a child's cubby and will only be administered by staff if a doctor's note provided.*

Health Certificates: *The Department of Health requires that all children have a current health certificate on file in the Center. Each year, parents will receive a new D.C. Department of Health issued form that must be taken to your child's annual well-visit for certification of exam and updates to vaccination records. The District of Columbia requires all American Academy of Pediatrics immunizations to be given at the early side of the range as well as a lead test and tuberculosis test. Also, children age three and older are required to have an annual oral health exam and submit the **Oral Health Assessment Form** to Huckleberry Cheesecake.*

Discipline

Discipline: *Huckleberry Cheesecake believes in a positive approach to discipline. We offer guidance and direction, not punishment. Children are praised for displaying positive behavior; negative behavior is immediately discouraged and given minimal attention. At Huckleberry Cheesecake we expect our staff to:*

- *Praise and encourage good behavior*
- *Set realistic limits or behavior expectations which are clear and developmentally appropriate*
- *Be consistent once limits are established*

- *Redirect the child when possible to more positive behavior*
- *Help the child to verbalize feelings and not to act them out inappropriately*

In case of special problems, the director will contact the parent so that a joint effort at solving the problem will be made.

Security and Safety

Facility Security: *Huckleberry Cheesecake is located in the rear of the Steptoe & Johnson building at 1330 Connecticut Avenue, NW and is accessible through our main entrance at 1307 19th Street. Entrance to the center is locked at all times. Admittance is gained through visual recognition or via intercom identification. In addition, there is a rear door exit to be used in case of an emergency. All doors are equipped with an emergency crash bar for quick and easy egress.*

Fire Drills and Evacuation: *Fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis as required by D.C. licensing and the Fire Marshall. These monthly drills occur at different times of the day. Teachers follow Huckleberry Cheesecake's approved evacuation plan and procedure for exit routes and head count confirmation. Staff members carry an emergency exit bag containing blankets, flashlights, water, and other supplies. If a lengthy evacuation of the entire Steptoe and Johnson Building is required, teachers have been instructed to transport the children to the following locations:*

- *Sports Club L.A. Child Care Center, Ritz Carlton, 1150 23rd Street, N.W. (202) 835-0500*
- *Capital Kids, 1250 24th Street, N.W., (202) 293-1460*
- *Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld
Emergency Child Care Center
1333 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W. (202) 887-4000*

In the event of a prolonged evacuation, Center Directors will contact parents via text message or phone call; therefore parents should keep Directors aware of current contact numbers at all times. During an emergency you may call the following cell phone numbers to learn more information:

703.965-3468

703.967-1005

