



Parent Handbook

- **GOALS**
- **POLICIES**
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- **GENERAL INFORMATION**

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I am taking this opportunity to welcome you and yours to the R'Club family. We are committed to providing the best possible programming and the highest level of customer service and will do our best to meet your needs and those of your children whom you have entrusted to us.

As a pioneer and community leader in the provision of youth development programs and services, R'Club provides before and after school programs, exceptional student education centers, in-home and center-based early education, high quality Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten, and middle school youth development programs in the Tampa Bay Area.

Our mission statement defines our corporate values and everything we do is driven by those values – the 4-R's of R'Club: Respect, Responsibility, Resourcefulness, and Responsiveness. These core values form a strong foundation for children that helps set the stage for success in life.

We are excited about your choosing R'Club and want you to know that we will strive to make this experience a very positive one for you and your family. Working together, we know this will be a great experience for everyone.

We look forward to this partnership and want you to feel free to call us anytime you have a question, concern, comment, or just want to tell us how much your children are enjoying R'Club. We encourage you to visit our website at www.rclub.net, visit us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

Sincerely,

Arthur O'Hara

Arthur O'Hara, MSW
Executive Director

HISTORY

R'Club is a not-for-profit agency that has been providing early childhood education programs and youth development services since 1976. During that time R'Club has earned a national reputation for its high quality and creative early childhood and youth development programs.

Today, R'Club provides quality care at convenient locations in the Tampa Bay area. Our programming encompasses early childhood education centers and in-home literacy services for preschoolers ages 3-5, middle school youth development, exceptional student education and school age youth development programs. R'Club employs a highly-qualified staff of full and part-time child development professionals.

R'Club's early childhood education and before & after school youth development programs are fully licensed. Many of our programs are nationally accredited or in the process of national accreditation and recipients of the Governor's Gold Seal Award.

MISSION STATEMENT

Provide quality early learning and development programs that strengthen children, families, and communities through quality child/youth development programs which focus on Respect, Responsibility, Resourcefulness and Responsiveness .

PHILOSOPHY

R'Club provides early childhood education and youth development programs based on a three fold commitment to appropriate developmental practices, quality and professionalism. We strive to teach children and youth what they need to know to be successful in life, solve problems, cooperate with others, and contribute to their community. Our goal is to support the development of responsible children who will become capable, productive adults.

CORE VALUES

R'Club Child Care, Inc. does not discriminate and builds its systems of service upon the following values and principles:

Respect – We respect and uphold the worth and dignity of all individuals and embrace the diversity we bring from life's experiences. We are committed to assuring that our workplace, programs, and community participation advocates for and reinforces cultural competency, fair employment practices and teamwork.

Responsibility – We shall maintain the highest standards of quality in our programs and operations under a total quality model. We shall earnestly steward our financial and human resources while remaining ever faithful to our mission and conducting our business in the highest ethical and professional manner.

Resourcefulness – We aggressively seek and encourage the involvement of all of our stakeholders in providing effective, innovative services for children and families. We shall maintain adequate resources to address the needs of the clients we serve, our staff and the community as a whole while exploring new approaches to further develop and maintain the highest quality programs and operations available.

Responsiveness – We shall always be responsive to the needs of children, families, staff and communities and shall promote and support causes that are devoted to serving their best interests. We shall work to achieve mutual goals through establishing good faith communication, fostering trust and honoring commitments.

GOALS

- To provide a safe and well supervised child care program.
- To provide a warm, caring atmosphere for each child.
- To encourage positive standards and values.

GOALS (cont.)

- To help children develop a sense of belonging and competency.
- To nurture the child's ability to relate to others, to appreciate individual differences and improve self-control.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Most R'Club programs operate year-round from 6:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. We serve infants, toddlers, children/youth ages 2 - 14 and children/youth with special needs ages 3 - 22 at our Exceptional Student Education Centers. Our programs are closed up to 12 days per year. An R'Club calendar is included in your child's enrollment packet.

STAFF

R'Club programs meet and exceed all License Board requirements and are monitored by state and local agencies. Employees meet established CPR, First Aid, education and experience requirements. Staff are fingerprinted and undergo Level II background checks required by law and employment history checks. R'Club is a drug-free workplace. We require forty hours of annual in-service training for all full time program employees.

R'Club maintains License Board approved child to staff ratios at all locations. Sites that are accredited maintain the national accreditation standard for child to staff ratios. Please speak with your Director for the specific staffing ratios at your site. A staff member certified in first aid/CPR is present at all times.

TRANSPORTATION

Parents/guardians are responsible for transporting their children to and from the program. R'Club contracts with transportation companies for field trip transportation.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The primary goal of our early childhood education program is to help children develop to their greatest potential and become enthusiastic learners. In support of school readiness, we encourage children to be active, creative explorers by trying out their ideas and thinking their own thoughts. Our priority is to help children become independent, self-confident and inquisitive. The children receive direction to learn at their own pace.

Our curriculum identifies goals in all areas of development :

- **Social:** To help children feel comfortable in school, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are part of a group.
- **Emotional:** To help children experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude toward life.
- **Cognitive:** To help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success. We help them acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings.
- **Physical:** To help children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about their physical coordination.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM

The knowledge that human development can be stimulated and encouraged is the foundation for R'Club's early childhood education program. The child's abilities, developmental level, learning styles and interests are the framework of the early childhood education curriculum. Our research-based curriculum promotes school readiness and includes both teacher directed and child initiated activities and daily opportunities for hands-on learning in the following.

- Language Development and Library
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
- Creative Indoor and Outdoor Play
- Music and Movement
- Creative Art Experiences
- Computers
- Cooking

Exploration, discovery, problem solving and decision making are part of each day.

Play is an important factor in a child's development. It is through play that a child acquires knowledge of the environment, has an opportunity to express and represent what they know or imagine and develops motor skills.

The development of a positive self-concept and independence are inherent in the program. As children gain recognition of their accomplishments they become eager and interested learners.

SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS

R'Club's school age programs offer children/youth a wide range of hands-on activities including special interest clubs, tutoring/homework assistance, special events, guest speakers and field trips.

PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT CLUBS

R'Club's curriculum is designed to provide a variety of hands-on activities that promote each child's physical, emotional and cognitive development and seeks to encourage the basic values of respect, responsibility, resourcefulness, and responsiveness to the needs of others. Personal and academic enrichment clubs offer open-ended experiences that promote exploration, experimentation and creativity; learning then becomes a fun and natural part of the process.

To promote alignment with the school day, we felt it was essential to incorporate the Sunshine State Standards into our curriculum. The Sunshine State Standards provide grade level expectations for student achievement. Our curriculum supports these expectations by focusing on language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, music, visual arts, theatre, dance, health, physical education and foreign cultures.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Outdoor activities are offered daily at all programs. The outdoor choices include activities that enhance fine and gross motor skills, teamwork, cooperation, recreational pursuits and physical well-being.

TUTORING/HOMEWORK ASSISTANCE

R'Club is committed to supporting your child's academic success and highest student achievement. Homework assistance is offered for a minimum of 30 minutes daily at each location. Individual tutoring in some academic subjects may be available for your child and is provided in some locations by a certified teacher. Parents are responsible for insuring the accuracy and completion of their child's homework. Please see your Center Director for details.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are a part of minimum program standards. Field trips will be noted on the monthly calendar and posted at the site. There must be written permission from the parents/guardians of all children attending the field trip. Verbal permission is not accepted.

SCHOOL AGE OUTCOMES

R'Club programs focus on the following outcomes. The successful completion of each outcome is determined relative to the developmental functioning of the individual.

- **Getting Along and Appreciating Differences:** Youth will demonstrate the knowledge and skills to participate collaboratively as a contributing member of a diverse, interdependent, multi-cultural, gender and disability-aware society.
- **Character Development and Leadership:** Youth will display self confidence, belonging, social interest, responsibility and self worth. They will understand the importance of cooperation, problem-solving and team work. They will have the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to their peers, families and communities.
- **Mentally/Physically Healthy Lifestyles:** Youth will exhibit the skills, attitudes and behaviors needed for life-long planning in the areas of personal safety and leisure time development that supports their physical, intellectual and emotional well-being.
- **Academic:** Youth will be able to identify and use resources for problem-solving, decision-making and critical thinking. Youth will communicate effectively with words, numbers, visuals, sounds, and symbols, using technology to enhance personal and interpersonal skills.
- **Creativity:** Youth will demonstrate characteristics of a creative, flexible and complex thinker and will experience enhanced personal expression through involvement with the fine arts.

FEE POLICIES

R'Club offers three fee categories:

- **Full time** - Full time clients may access care typically from 6:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (hours may vary). Full time school age clients are eligible to attend all Early Dismissal days, School Improvement Planning days and holiday weeks at no additional charge.
- **Part time** - Early childhood education programs do not accept part time clients. School age part time clients must select morning only or afternoon only care. This category of care does not include any full days or extended hours. Extended and full day care is available at the drop-in rate.
- **Drop-in** - Drop-in clients are accepted on a space-available basis. These clients pay a daily rate for care.

R'Club has established fee and enrollment policies. Your cooperation is important to ensure you and your child receive the highest quality in programming and staff. Please refer to your Fee Policy Agreement and ask the Director for clarification if you have any questions.

- A **non-refundable** registration or activity fee is due upon registration for fall and summer programs.
- Enrollment requires payment of the registration or activity fee plus the first week's fee.
- Enrollment begins on the first day of attendance.
- Payment is due on Monday or in advance of service.
- Clients are billed weekly regardless of attendance, except during vacation as described in our Fee Policy Letter.
- A per child late fee is assessed for every 15 minutes, or portion thereof, for pick up after the 6:00 p.m. closing time.
- A late payment fee is assessed when payment is not received by Monday at 6:00 p.m. or in advance of service.
- Clients may not transfer or re-enroll with a balance due.
- Subsidy and grant funded clients are responsible for paying the full cost of care in the event that the funding source denies their reimbursement for any variety of reasons including insufficient or lack of full parent/guardian signature on sign in/out sheets.

FEE POLICIES (cont.)

- Refunds are available for account credits when a client terminates from the program. Processing requests for refunds may take 2-3 weeks.

While these fee and enrollment policies are subject to change, clients will be notified in advance of any changes. Please refer to your copy of the Fee Policy Agreement.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

The following forms are required for our files upon enrollment:

- Child Identification Form
- Two Emergency Treatment Release Forms (must be notarized)
- Signed Fee Policy Agreement
- USDA Food Application and Child Participation Form
- Current Health and Immunization Record (for Early Childhood Education Centers and Pre-Kindergarten only)

All forms must be complete and submitted with the Activity fee and first week's fee prior to the actual enrollment and attendance.

Clients receiving child care subsidy must provide the appropriate documentation at the time of enrollment. Sites must charge full fee to clients who fail to provide the appropriate subsidy documentation or maintain their subsidy eligibility.

R'CLUB SCHOLARSHIPS

R'Club provides scholarships to help out in situations where the cost of child care may be a financial challenge. In order to qualify for the program, you must complete an application form, provide documentation of your income and proof that you are on the waiting list for subsidy. If the application is approved, your family will be awarded a 3 month scholarship for a reduced rate. You may reapply at the end of this period. Scholarships are limited and will be granted solely at the discretion of R'Club.

ATTENDANCE/ABSENTEEISM

Your child's attendance is important if he/she is to benefit fully from the program. R'Club requires that you contact the site anytime your child is absent from the program. This includes early pickup of school age children from school for doctor / dentist appointments or other occasions. Our staff are required to follow up on each unexcused absence within one (1) hour of normal arrival time. This includes calling the parent/guardian at work and home, calling all emergency contacts and lastly, if there is no answer at any of the above, calling law enforcement. Repeat occurrences of failure to communicate your child's whereabouts to the site may result in termination of service. Please help us, your phone call or note is greatly appreciated. Many subsidy programs have strict attendance guidelines. Please be sure that your child meets these requirements.

VACATION POLICY

Clients are billed weekly regardless of attendance except under the following vacation policy. (see Fee Policy Agreement)

- Preschool—Full time clients receive 2 weeks of vacation to be used in week or day increments
- Grant or Subsidy clients must adhere to the requirements of the grant or subsidy.

School age—

- Full time clients enrolled August – December receive 4 weeks of vacation to be used in week increments Monday-Friday only.
- Full time clients enrolled January – April receive 2 weeks of vacation to be used in week increments Monday-Friday only.
- Summer only clients enrolled in May – July are not eligible for vacation weeks.
- Part-time clients receive 4 weeks of non-billed time during the 4 weeks of Thanksgiving, Winter and Spring breaks only.

ILLNESS

Your child's health and comfort are a primary concern. If your child becomes ill, please keep him/her home. Do not send your child to the program with a fever as he/she may be contagious.

If your child is suspected of having a communicable disease such as a skin rash, pink eye, diarrhea, lice or skin infection, etc., he/she will be placed in an isolation area. You will be contacted to pick your child up as soon as possible from the program. Any child who has had a communicable disease may not return to the program until all signs and symptoms are no longer present or has a doctor's statement. In the case of head lice, the child must be nit free before he/she may return to the program.

Parents/Guardians will be notified immediately of any illness or injury to the child needing specific instruction or care. If you cannot be reached, the emergency contacts designated on your child's enrollment intake forms will be contacted to pick up the child. Please make sure this information is current in your child's records.

UPDATING YOUR RECORDS

Please notify your Center Director immediately of any change in your home or work address, home or work phone numbers, email addresses, emergency contact phone numbers, emergency contact names or custody arrangements. This information is vital for the safety of your child.

Families enrolled in subsidy programs must also notify R'Club of any changes in marital status, family size or household income. Failure to report these changes may result in the loss of your subsidy. We appreciate your immediate communication regarding this very important information.

Any family circumstance that involves a court ruling on parent/guardian custody or legal visitation must be documented by a legal court order that is kept on site in the child's file. R'Club staff will not be drawn into parental disputes and will uphold the instructions of the court order that is on file. In the absence of a legal court order, natural parents are recognized as guardians.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to continually update

CUSTODY ISSUES

R'Club about custody issues which will effect their child. Those issues may include:

- Custody arrangements including visitation and pick up
- Preferred order of parental contact
- Sharing program information with both parties
- Responsibility for payments
- Names of other significant adults in the child's life and their role/relationship

CHECK IN / CHECK OUT

R'Club is responsible for the accountability of all children in our care. Parents must comply with the check in/check out policy to ensure the safety and supervision of the children. We employ the following system:

- Parents/Guardians must sign in and out daily using their full signature. Signatures must be written in ink.
- Parents/Guardians must sign their child in, note the time upon arrival, and deliver their child to an R'Club staff member. R'Club can not guarantee the safety of children that are not signed in and delivered to our care.
- Parents/Guardians must sign their child out, note the time upon departure, and receive acknowledgement from an R'Club staff member that the child is leaving the program.
- Subsidy clients will be responsible for the full cost of care if the funding source denies their reimbursement for failure to sign their child in and out daily or failure to sign in ink using their full signature.
- Only those individuals 16 years of age or older who have a current, valid driver's license or Florida State Identification card and are authorized by the legal guardian are permitted to pick up a child.

CHECK IN / CHECK OUT (cont.)

- R'Club will not allow a child to be picked up by anyone other than those listed on the child's identification form. Unfamiliar persons must provide picture identification to an R'Club staff person.
- R'Club does not allow children to walk to or from R'Club. Children must be delivered to, checked in and checked out from the program by an approved adult. Approved adults are those persons designated in writing by the parent/guardian as allowed to pick up their child.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

R'Club centers provide a participatory setting that foster the basic values of mutual respect, responsibility, resourcefulness and responsiveness to the needs of others. The basis of the R'Club discipline policy is to encourage appropriate behaviors, provide positive opportunities for children to contribute, and to develop a sense of belonging in all children. Staff strive to understand the developmental functioning of the child, the underlying goals of misbehavior, involve the child in problem solving, allow for individual choice, and permit the logical consequences of those choices.

R'Club believes in positive guidance and behavior management. Our role in guidance is to work with the parent/guardians to teach children how to make good choices and help them develop self-discipline. We encourage individuality and independence, but each child must be able to interact within the group's limits.

The center does not subscribe to spanking or other forms of physical punishment, the withholding of food, rest or toileting, abusive or profane language or any form of public or private humiliation with the intent to embarrass. No child will be subject to discipline which is severe, humiliating or frightening.

Specific guidelines are outlined in the R'Club discipline policy included in your child's enrollment packet.

SPECIAL NEEDS / INCLUSION

Please advise your Center Director of any allergies, physical or mental challenges, fears, strong dislikes or any other condition which may affect your child's health, happiness or ability to function in a group setting. Concerns or restrictions will be addressed with parents on an individual basis.

Care of students with exceptional needs should be discussed individually with the Center Director to determine their ability to meet those needs. It is the intent of R'Club Child Care, Inc. to serve all children and families with sensitivity to differences, physical/mental abilities and/or other identified exceptionalities. R'Club strives to make all reasonable accommodations which meet the needs of individual clients. R'Club meets all state and local standards and adheres to the guidelines established by the Americans with Disabilities Act. R'Club does not provide one-on-one care.

MEDICATION

Center staff will not administer prescribed or over the counter medication until the parent/guardian provides a signed Administration of Medication Policy form, requesting that the Center Director or designee administer the medication. Parent/Guardians must provide the medication in a original prescription bottle container which has been designated for agency use only. The container must be labeled with complete directions and the child's name, and shall contain no more than one week's worth of the precise dose. Parent/Guardians will be expected to provide weekly refills if necessary. Each time a prescription is renewed, a new release form must be provided by parent/guardians.

ACCIDENTS

Minor injuries will be communicated to the person picking up at the end of the day. Parents will be contacted immediately in the event of a serious injury. Staff trained in first aid and CPR are present at all times.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

R'Club Child Care, Inc., along with Pinellas County Schools, follows the guidelines of the "Alliance for a Healthier Generation." This includes offering at least 30 minutes of outdoor physical activity daily, nutrition education, and serving healthy snacks and meals that meet the Alliance Competitive Food and Beverage Guidelines. For more information on this initiative please visit: <http://www.healthiergeneration.org/>. When parents choose to furnish snacks or meals for their child, R'Club encourages healthy, nutritious choices and discourages sending soda, candy, high sugared beverages or snacks. Please report any food allergies or special needs to the Center Director.

APPROPRIATE DRESS

Children should wear comfortable, clean and appropriate clothing. Closed toe shoes such as tennis shoes are required. Our daily schedule includes outdoor activities. Please make sure your child dresses appropriately for the weather. We recommend that you label clothing with your child's name. A "lost and found" system is maintained to help you reclaim missing articles but there are no implied or express guarantees that missing articles will be located.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Personal belongings such as cell phones, electronics, toys, candy and money are to be left at home unless specifically approved for a daily special event. Parents are responsible for approving any item that is brought in for special event sharing. Toys may not include anything that could be considered as a weapon. R'Club will not be responsible for lost, misplaced or damaged items.

Food prepared at home may not be brought into the center to share. Parents may donate store bought foods for special events and celebrations.

CLIENTS RIGHT TO KNOW

Your children's files may be reviewed from time to time by representatives of the licensing board and other funding agencies. R'Club considers everything in the child's file to be confidential. This information will not be shared or distributed to others without prior written approval or an appropriate court order/subpoena.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

R'Club is committed to working with families and recognizes that there must be cooperation between the center and home for children to be successful. You have access to the center for observation and visitation of your child as long as it does not create a major disruption of the program. Drop-in visits by parents/guardians are welcome at any time. You may schedule an appointment with the Center Director to discuss your child's development, accomplishments or behavior. R'Club provides ongoing communication and opportunities for involvement in the program. Please refer to the Center's monthly newsletter for upcoming events/opportunities for participation. Your involvement is important for your child's success.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONCERNS

When dealing with concerns affecting your child's care, please resolve the issue with the Center Director. Each complaint or problem will be addressed appropriately to maintain positive relationships. If additional assistance is needed, please do not hesitate to call the Administration office at (727) 578-5437. Your satisfaction regarding your child's care is a priority for R'Club.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INPUT

Bi-annually, every parent/guardian will be offered an opportunity to have a parent/guardian/child conference with the Director. Every center will hold 4 quarterly Special Events that all parent/guardians will be invited to attend. Satisfaction surveys are distributed, summarized and analyzed annually. Please take a minute to complete the survey when it is distributed. We value your input!

FAMILY SUPPORT

Each R'Club program has access to a comprehensive list of community resources available through the Center Director and Behavior Management Specialists. You may contact the Center Director or Behavior Management Specialists with any questions or concerns regarding the individual needs of your family.

FAMILY SUPPORT (cont.)

The Behavior Management Specialists may be reached at (727) 578-5437. Additionally, families may connect with a full range of community resources by contacting 211.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The safety of the children entrusted to the care of R'Club shall always be primary. Reasonable precautions shall be taken to ensure child safety at all times. R'Club reserves the right to make operating decisions regarding disasters on a case by case basis.

In cases of severe weather or other emergency conditions which results in the closing of the local public schools, R'Club centers will also be closed. Parents are asked to pick up within one hour of the announced closing. If you are unsure about a closing, please call our Administrative office at (727) 578-5437. Emergency center closings will be posted on local news stations whenever possible.

R'Club is committed to the timely improvement of any potential health and safety issues. Observation, identification and resolution of risk factors are the responsibility of all of us. Please report any potential danger or concerns immediately to your Center Director.

TERMINATION OF SERVICE

R'Club reserves the right to terminate service when it is deemed that the client is abusing the service or has proven to be a danger to themselves or others.

Services may be terminated for a number of appropriate reasons, which may include: failure to make payment, abuse of service, display of unacceptable behavior that is considered threatening or places the client or others at risk.

MISCELLANEOUS

Smoking is prohibited on the premises of all R'Club locations.

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