



Learning | Nurturing | Professionalism | Quality | Trust

# Family Handbook

Tiny Findings Child Development Center, Inc.

441 G Street, N.W.

Room 1184

Washington, D.C. 20548

(202) 512-3122

Hours: Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.\*\*

**This handbook contains standard operating policies for Tiny Findings.**

**For modifications related to the COVID-19 pandemic, please see the Re-Opening Plan provided separately. We have done our best to indicate sections of this document for which the Re-Opening Plan makes significant changes with an asterisk.**



Dear Family,

Welcome!

We are excited to welcome you to Tiny Findings. Our educational facility offers a unique opportunity for children of all backgrounds to learn, play and develop their individuality. Our center offers a warm atmosphere where social and intellectual stimulation are a primary focus. We will help children learn the skills they need to become successful individuals and members of a diverse community.

Tiny Findings uses the Creative Curriculum. This revolutionary teaching program provides children with skills, knowledge, and experience they can use as stepping stones to higher levels of learning. Our center also incorporates cultural diversity in the learning process. Our program celebrates the customs and backgrounds of all children and opens their eyes to the different cultures of their community and the world. All activities reinforce our belief that every child is special.

Our staff of highly qualified educators is ready to start working with you and your child as they begin their educational journey.

This handbook will help you answer some of the frequently asked questions about Tiny Findings policies and practices.

Tiny Findings' policies and procedures exist to ensure a safe, secure, and nurturing learning environment for your child. While every attempt has been made to ensure that this handbook is as comprehensive as possible, the Board of Directors reserves the right to change or revise policies as needed and to make exceptions to Center policies and practices due to unusual circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Please read through the information and return the last page to us, indicating that you have received, reviewed and agree to follow Tiny Findings policies.

If you have any questions about the policies contained in this handbook, feel free to ask!

Again welcome!

Sincerely,

Sonia Middleton, MHC  
Executive Director

Updated September 2021



## Family Handbook Agreement

Under the licensing requirements for the District of Columbia, it is required that all families sign a statement indicating that they have read the Family Handbook. Signing below reflects that you have read the Family Handbook and agree to comply with its policies and practices. If you have any questions or need clarification, please contact Center Management at 202-512-3122.

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Child's name

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Parent or guardian printed name

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Parent or guardian signature and date



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## **Mission and Vision**

### **Mission statement:**

Tiny Findings provides high-quality early care and education that fosters the social-emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development of each child while also meeting the needs of their families.

### **Vision statement:**

A model child development center that nurtures the excitement of lifelong learning.

### **Values:**

Learning

Nurturing

Professionalism

Quality

Trust

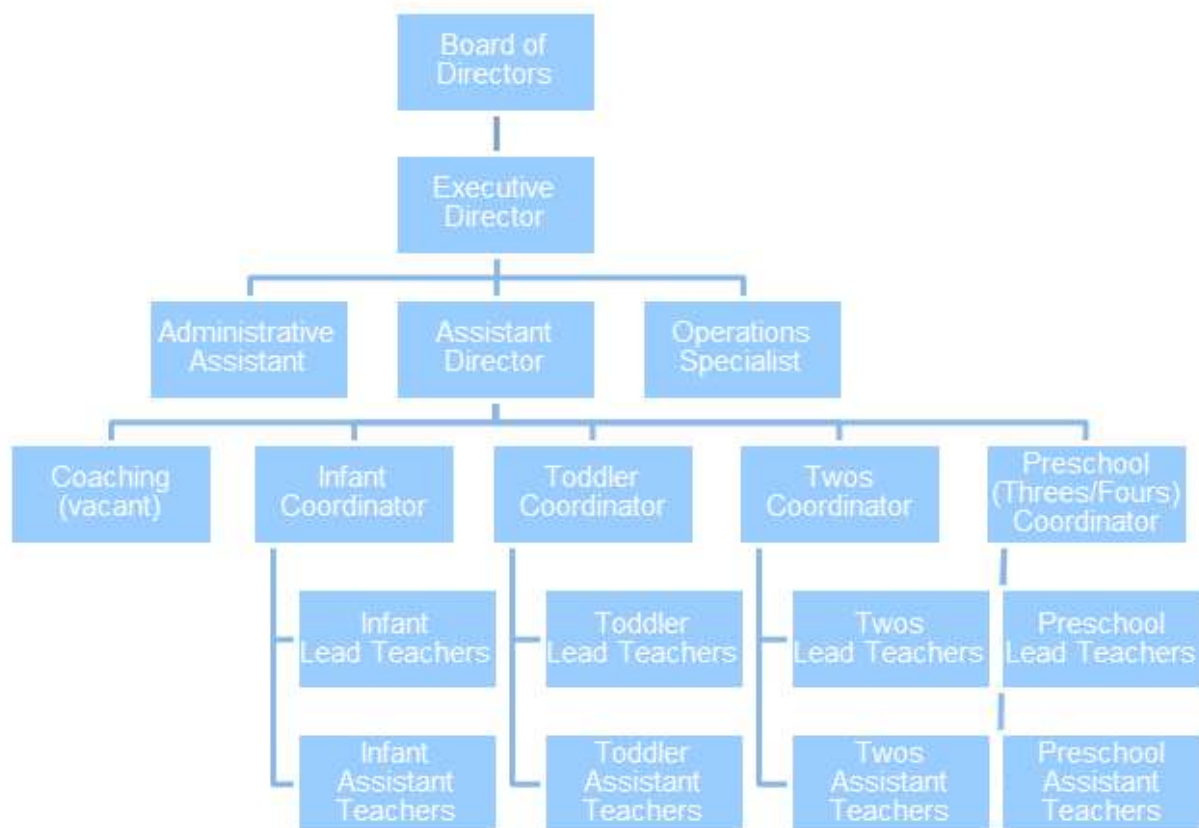
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## Organizational Structure

Tiny Findings Child Development Center, Inc. (“Tiny Findings,” or “the Center”), is a 501(c)(3), a private, not-for-profit corporation. Our Tax ID number is 52-1639499.

Tiny Findings was established in 1991 to provide on-site care and education for the children of Government Accountability Office (GAO) employees. Tiny Findings is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and is operated by full-time management staff. Tiny Findings receives donated space, equipment, and services from GAO; in return, employees at GAO HQ benefit from on-site programming for their children.





## **Code of Conduct: “Our Commitment to a Healthy Community”**

To provide the Tiny Findings community with high-quality care and education and help ensure that relationships fostered within this environment are respectful and supportive of our commitment to providing a healthy community for all children, families, and staff, we pledge to always:

1. Place the welfare, development, and safety of our children as our highest priority;
2. Be respectful of the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, parent, family member, and childcare professional) in our community;
3. Assume our respective roles of building and sustaining a nurturing environment for our children, families, and childcare professionals, as vested members of the Center’s community;
4. Strive to maintain positive interactions with everyone in our Center and to model positive behavior for the sake of our children;
5. Be responsible for maintaining positive adult-child interactions in our Center at all times;
6. Honor the natural rights and roles of parents/guardians to act in the best interest of their children;
7. Respectfully draw upon the education, training, experience, and expertise of the Center’s childcare professionals to speak and act as advocates for our children; and
8. Seek to achieve a shared understanding between parents/guardians and childcare professionals. When we disagree, we will work together in a respectful manner by clearly expressing our particular needs and perspectives in an effort to achieve positive results.

This pledge applies to all our interactions with members of the Tiny Findings community.



The Executive Director will assess any breaches of this Code of Conduct and will take measures deemed commensurate with the level of the breach(es).

In the event a parent exhibits behavior that is inconsistent with the Tiny Findings' Code of Conduct, the Executive Director (or, the Board of Directors, as appropriate) will generally impose the following measures, although the Executive Director (or the Board of Directors, as appropriate) reserves the right to take other actions depending on the severity of the breach(es):

**1st violation:** The Executive Director will issue a written warning to the parent/guardian which will be included in the family's file.

**2nd violation:** The child(ren) of the parent/guardian found to be in violation of the Code of Conduct will be suspended from Tiny Findings. The length of time will be determined by the Board of Directors depending on the nature of the current and any past violations. No reimbursement for the cost of childcare will be granted.

**3rd violation:** The child(ren) of the parent/guardian found to be in violation of the Code of Conduct will be expelled from Tiny Findings.

## **The Board of Directors**

Members of the Board of Directors serve a two-year term (about half of the directors are up for reelection each year) and are elected by the corporation members each year at the annual meeting. All parents or guardians of children enrolled in the Center are members of the Tiny Findings Corporation. Membership confers the right to vote for the members of the Board of Directors. Membership is on a one-person, one-vote basis.

The Board of Directors currently consists of 11 voting individuals, six of whom are parents/guardians with children enrolled in the Center. The Board may also have non-voting members who serve in an advisory capacity, to potentially include the Tiny Findings Executive Director (or his/her delegate), a GAO Management Representative to the Board, the immediate past Board Chair, and a representative from any Federal tenant organization. See Tiny Findings [bylaws](#) for more information.

The Board manages, controls, and directs the financial affairs and property of Tiny Findings. These duties include: formulating the annual budget; approving tuition, fees, and employee salaries; formulating in consultation with center management financial and admissions policies; and hiring, evaluating, and retaining the Executive Director. The Board retains ultimate oversight of the Center, however, the Board delegates the daily operations of the Center to the Executive Director, including responsibility for recruiting and supervising Center staff, as well as handling routine personnel matters, including disciplinary action. While the Executive Director has discretion regarding



such matters, the Executive Director is responsible for keeping the Board of Directors (generally, through the Chair) apprised of personnel matters. Before taking disciplinary action against an employee, the Executive Director consults with the Chair (or other officer, if the Chair is unavailable) regarding such action, except where immediate dismissal is warranted, such as when child safety is affected. In cases where immediate dismissal is necessary, the Executive Director notifies the Chair of the Board as soon as possible of the circumstances resulting in the dismissal.

Board meetings are closed to non-board members. Minutes are not public because the board discusses personnel or other issues that are not for public consumption (generally because of privacy laws). The board will host periodic meetings with members of the corporation to provide updates on Center affairs and will communicate via email as needed.

### ***Board Officers***

1. Chair: Serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation. This person is the principal liaison with the GAO management representative. The Chair is an ex-officio member of all standing committees of the corporation and presides at all meetings of the board at which she or he is present. The Chair performs other duties as may be required of her or him by the Board.
2. Vice Chair: Serves in the place of the chair when the chair is absent or unable to fulfill her or his duties. In addition, the Vice Chair presides at all meetings of the board at which the chair is not present and performs such other functions as the Board shall from time to time determine.
3. Secretary: Keeps an accurate record of the proceedings of all meetings of the Board and performs all duties customary to the office of Secretary.
4. Treasurer: Serves as the Chief Financial Officer of the corporation and performs all duties customary to that office. Specific responsibilities include but are not limited to implementing the Center's budget formulation process; overseeing financial transactions within the Center; maintaining the Center's financial accounts to include it checking accounts, strategic reserves, and credit cards; and evaluating the sufficiency of the Center's liability insurance policies.

The Board of Directors may establish additional officer positions, as appropriate.



### **Board Committees**

1. Executive Committee: Consists of the officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, as well as any other officer positions established by the Board) and is authorized to act for the Board when Board action is necessary before the next regular board meeting. Reports to the Board at the next regular Board meeting on any action taken by the Executive Committee.
2. Budget and Audit Committee: Provides support to the Treasurer in the execution of that position's responsibilities. Is directly responsible for making investment decisions for the Center's strategic reserves and providing the board with regular updates on the status of those accounts and any changes in investment strategy that may be required.
3. Governance Committee: The Governance Committee shall have responsibility to focus on, and make recommendations to improve, the functions of the Board, including but not limited to the following: (1) providing orientation and mentoring for new Board members; (2) assessing Board Member participation, commitment, and contribution to governance duties; (3) developing and leading periodic Board self-assessments; and (4) evaluating and recommending necessary changes to the Board structure, processes, and guiding documents (such as the by-laws, Board handbook, and policies).
4. Other Committees: The Board has the authority to form other standing committees or ad hoc committees, as it sees fit.

### **Philosophy**

We believe that each child can learn and grow to their maximum capacity. We provide high quality care in a group setting taking children's individual needs into account. Our practices are responsive to children's culture. We follow developmentally appropriate practices in the Early Childhood Education field.

Tiny Findings seeks to meet the social-emotional, physical, cognitive, and language needs of young children from 3 months of age until kindergarten eligibility. Our location on-site at GAO headquarters in central Washington, DC helps families to balance their work and childcare responsibilities. The Center generally maintains an open door policy to keep families connected to their children during the workday.





## ***Curriculum***

Tiny Findings uses the Creative Curriculum—a play-based curriculum—which is designed to help children develop across developmental domains. The Creative Curriculum is a research-based program that helps teachers meet individual student needs within a group setting, and scaffolds children’s learning as they reach individual developmental goals at their own pace. The Creative Curriculum prepares children to be successful in school and beyond because the routines, relationships, and experiences of the early childhood years build the foundation for later success.

## ***Technology Policy***

Tiny Findings supports supplementing curriculum with technology as it is developmentally appropriate, per respective age group. Technology can optimize learning experiences and allow students to engage in learning in an interactive way. When used appropriately, technology and media can enhance children's cognitive and social abilities. Should teachers wish to supplement the curriculum with technology or media they must follow the following steps:

1. Email the video clip, song, image, etc. to the Executive Director and Assistant Director explaining the benefit of the technology and how it will align with the month’s curriculum.
2. Include the supplemental technology in the weekly lesson plan and enumerate the objectives that support the use of the technology and outline what growth is being fostered.

Classrooms with children under 24 months of age are prohibited from using videos and other supplemental technologies in the classroom. Videos should last no longer than 5 minutes

Developmentally appropriate practices must guide decisions about technology in classrooms. Responsive interactions between students and teachers must be the cornerstone of technology use; teaching practices must guide the selection of technology, and provide engaging and empowering tasks that support overall learning. At no time should the use of videos or technology be used to pacify students.

## ***Outdoor Play***

Tiny Findings’ outdoor space supports physical games and sports as well as learning on a year round basis. The playground is essentially an outdoor classroom. Outdoor materials and activities are designed to meet developmental needs, and encourage





problem-solving and independent exploration. There are opportunities for dramatic play, art, sensory play, and construction and enhancement of physical activities.

The daily schedule includes at least two outdoor periods, except during inclement weather and in very cold or very hot temperatures, as discussed below. (State licensing requires that we include outdoor time each day when weather permits.) Children who are well enough to attend our center must be well enough to participate in all activities, including outdoor play. GAO provides a security officer whenever children are on the playground.

Tiny Findings follows the Child Care Weather Watch provided by the National Weather Center:

- *For Cold Weather:* Children will not go outside if the temperature is below 32 degrees Fahrenheit. During cold weather days, we ask that children are sent prepared to enjoy a cold day. Please send gloves, hats, warm coats, and boots for your child/children to participate in outdoor play.
- *For Hot Weather:* Children will not go outside if the temperature is higher than 92 degrees Fahrenheit, and this also includes the humidity factor. Please dress children in light-weight clothing during warmer months. Be sure to apply sunscreen as you wish prior to or during drop-off for protection during morning outdoor activities. Also please provide sunscreen for application by teachers before afternoon outdoor play during the warmer months.

### ***Community Visits and Field Trips\*\****

Tiny Findings' proximity to cultural and community institutions allows us to make visits to nearby places to support our educational programming. Our "walking trips" to nearby places will be shared on calendars, classroom whiteboards, and the destination sheet at the front desk, and will typically occur between 10 a.m. and noon. Walking trips will be within one mile of the Center.

Even if child-to-staff ratios would not require it, it is essential to have at least two adults present at all times including when the children are away from the building (large groups will maintain staff-child ratios).

For further visits, using Metro or other modes of transportation, a signed permission slip for each field trip is required. All trips will be approved in advance by the Executive Director. Staff may not drive children in their private cars. Staff will take emergency



medical release forms with them on all field trips, as well as a cell phone and/or walkie talkies to contact or be contacted by the Center in case of emergency.

### ***Culturally Responsive Care***

Tiny Findings strives to provide culturally responsive care that is based on the real life experiences and the customs, languages, values, food, and lifestyles that are shared among the families in the Center. Reflection of diversity becomes an integral part of the curriculum, celebrating the uniqueness of each child and family.

Our system of primary care-giving allows each teacher to take the time to engage in ongoing conversations with parents/guardians about child rearing and family practices. Learning about each family's practices is an important part of enrollment and orientation procedures. Teachers talk to parents/guardians about home practices, particular cultural values, issues surrounding authority figures, and other expectations regarding behavior.

### ***Progressive Guidance Policy***

Tiny Findings believes in positive guidance, as opposed to punitive discipline. Positive guidance techniques help us avoid most challenging behaviors by keeping the children engaged in developmentally appropriate activities.

Our philosophy involves creating a supportive, cooperative atmosphere that encourages self-control, and positive self-esteem. Positive guidance is based on our belief in each child's ability to grow and learn.

As caregivers, we need to ensure that each child feels loved and secure, while helping build their social skills and desire to get along well with others. We are the supporters, the encouragers and the teachers of children. It is our job as professionals to help children learn appropriate behaviors by assisting and guiding in their implementation.

- We use positive reinforcement to encourage positive behaviors.
- We use redirection, discussion and communication to provide options for our children.
- We do not embarrass our children.
- We do not label children or express judgment.



- We will work hard to build a trusting, caring relationship with our children that will increase their desire to meet our expectations.

Parents/Guardians are also required to observe these guidelines for positive guidance and the prohibitions for punishment while on Center premises or when accompanying any Center-organized outing.

The end goal of positive guidance and discipline is to help children become responsible for their own behavior. At no time is physical punishment or punishment related to food, bathrooms, or naps tolerated. Screaming, yelling, or any use of corporal punishment are not permitted.

Sometimes a child's behavior is such that more formal intervention is required. If a child engages in persistent or repetitive inappropriate behavior or behavior destructive to the health and safety of himself or others, we will use the following Progressive Guidance procedures:

We will observe and record the child's behavior patterns and our responses.

Parents/Guardian will be asked to participate in a parent/guardian teacher conference to develop a specific action to address the behavior. The plan will outline all steps the staff and parent/guardian will take to help the child develop new behavior patterns.

The Executive Director may request and work with outside resources to incorporate recommendations of outside consultants into the plan with the agreement of parents/guardians. If special resources are used, the parent/guardian may request a conference. Resources include, but are not limited to, child psychologists, play therapists, and occupational therapists.

If a child's behavior is such that she/he consistently displays hostile or aggressive behavior that injures other children, the Center Director will meet with the parents/guardian to discuss the situation. In all cases, the Center reserves the right to ask the parents/guardian to remove the child from the Center.

## **Licensing**

Tiny Findings is licensed by the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and meets the requirements set forth in the District of Columbia



Municipal Regulations (DCMR 29). We are accredited by National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

We believe that licensing and rigid enforcement of standards is in the best interest of all children and, as such, our center will comply with all applicable licensing regulations. These standards apply to our facility, staff, health and safety procedures, nutrition, teacher/child ratios, and record keeping. Tiny Findings is subject to inspection by state and city health, fire and licensing officials. These entities review our program in terms of children's health records, facility's health and safety guidelines and practices.

The Center's license is displayed in the lobby, and a copy of the licensing regulations is on file in the Center's office.

### ***Health Examination and Immunization Requirements***

Each child must have a current DC Health Certificate on file. Copies are available on the Department of Health website or from the Tiny Findings Operations Specialist. This form must be updated annually (at a minimum), and each time a child receives a mandated immunization or test.

To meet licensing requirements for operating a center in the District, Tiny Findings must report health examination and immunization information to the Department of Health. By attending school in DC, you are agreeing to follow the health exam, test, and immunization schedule of the District. Please note that your personal physician may follow a different schedule; therefore, it is your responsibility to provide documentation of your expected immunization schedule to Tiny Findings, which may or may not be accepted by the Department of Health.

While the Operations Specialist makes every attempt to remind families of their requirements, it is each family's responsibility to meet the schedule and documentation requirements. Our records are audited annually, at a minimum, by the Department of Health, and failure to abide by regulations jeopardizes our license to operate. Children who do not meet the exam, testing and immunization requirements of DC will not be allowed to attend Tiny Findings until all requirements are met.

### ***Guidelines / Reminders for Health Certificates:***

At each "well child" visit, the "date of health exam" in the top left area of the health form needs to be updated, and the date at the bottom of the form needs to be updated.

Families must provide updated information on immunizations received each time their child is immunized, as the Center must keep records up to date for licensing and accreditation.



Each child needs a TB and lead test between 9 and 12 months.

According to DC law, between the ages of 6 months and 14 months of age, and again between the ages of 22 and 26 months of age, each child must get lead screening done.

By the third birthday, and annually thereafter, each child must visit a dentist. The dentist should document this visit through the DC government dental form available on the Department of Health website or from the Operations Specialist. Families must provide a copy of the dental form to Tiny Findings, as the Center must keep records up to date for licensing and accreditation.

### ***Center Staffing \*\****

Tiny Findings follows DC licensing requirements set forth by the District of Columbia and OSSE. In line with our accreditation, TF strives to meet the more stringent recommendations set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). At a minimum the Center maintains the D.C. regulations noted below:

	Infants	Toddlers	Twos	Threes	Fours
D.C. Regulations	1:4	1:4	1:4 (younger) 1:8 (older)	1:8	1:10
NAEYC guidelines	1:3 (group of 9) 1:4 (group of 12)	1:4	1:5 (group of 10) 1:6 (group of 12)	1:6 (group of 12) 1:7 (group of 14) 1:8 (group of 16)	1:8 (group of 16) 1:10 (group of 20)
Tiny Findings Staffing**	1:3	1:3	1:4 (younger) 1:6 (older)*	1:6	1:8

\*Tiny Findings maintains a ratio of 1:4 in the Twos room until all children in the Twos room reach 30 months of age, at which point Tiny Findings ratios may be reduced to 1:6, consistent with NAEYC guidelines.

\*\* Tiny Findings strives to maintain these ratios on a daily basis. At times, however, it may be necessary for the Center to alter ratios in certain classrooms, consistent with D.C. regulatory requirements, to accommodate staffing needs. At all times, classroom ratios will at least meet the minimum ratios set forth in D.C. regulations; frequently, the ratios in certain classrooms exceed Tiny Findings' minimum staffing ratios.



### ***Professional Development***

Tiny Findings is committed to hiring qualified educators. With all Lead Teachers having an Associate's Degree or Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, Tiny Findings has exceeded NAEYC criteria that at least 75% do so. In addition, 4 of the Tiny Findings Coordinators hold Bachelor's Degrees and an additional Coordinator is working toward that goal. Tiny Findings strives to sustain a high level of energy and commitment among its faculty through ongoing development training. Such in-service professional development bridges early childhood theory and practice and encourages self-motivation and ownership for professional growth. Each staff member participates in an orientation that covers areas including health and safety, child abuse identification, evacuation procedures, nutrition, family relations, program approaches, and child guidance. Teachers also observe and mentor under a more experienced teacher. Professional development plans are coordinated with the Director to meet the needs of individual programs and faculty members.

In order to provide professional development to the teachers, the Center will close two days during the academic year and for one week between academic years (in-service week). The dates of the closures will be provided to families at the beginning of each academic year.

### ***Insurance***

The Center maintains a number of insurance policies to address accidents and medical incidents at the Center. Please contact the Executive Director for more information or to file a claim form.

## **Admissions and Enrollment**

The admissions process has been established to accommodate the demand for early care and education at Tiny Findings. Because the demand for enrollment may exceed current availability, not all applicants may be able to enroll. To ensure transparency and equity in the admissions process, Tiny Findings established this weighted drawing policy for determining selection of new enrollees, class placement, and transitions between classrooms.

### ***Program Eligibility***

To be eligible for attendance, children must be at least 3 months of age and not yet required to attend Kindergarten in their home jurisdiction.





### ***Application***

Applications are available in the Center or on the web at [www.tinyfindings.org](http://www.tinyfindings.org). Completed applications must be returned with the necessary application fee, payable to Tiny Findings. The application fee is nonrefundable. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

### ***Acceptance and Enrollment***

Tiny Findings admits children without regard to race, sex, color, creed, religion, or national origin. The Center will seek to accommodate children with special needs when reasonable accommodation can be made. Tiny Findings' policies and procedures exist to ensure a safe, secure, and nurturing learning environment for your child.

Children may be accepted for admission prior to meeting the age requirement for attendance (3 months) or before the family is ready for the child to start their admission. If a family wants to hold the slot until the child is age-eligible or ready to start, the family must pay the appropriate tuition fees from the date of acceptance. Date of acceptance, in this case, is the date that the child would have been enrolled if eligible or ready to start.

Upon acceptance into the program, a non-refundable enrollment fee for each new child will be due to secure the spot. Upon re-enrollment, a non-refundable re-enrollment fee for each currently enrolled child will be due to retain a spot. The amounts of these fees are determined annually.

The tuition for the first two weeks is due before the child begins. Checks should be made payable to Tiny Findings. All non-GAO HQ parents/guardians will be subject to a security check to allow access to the building.

### ***Process***

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis for the annual weighted drawing process (the drawing). Once a year in April (twice a year for infants, April and October), Tiny Findings conducts the drawing for the spots that will become available at the beginning of the following academic year. (Please see Program Calendar for the start of the academic year). Tiny Findings enrolls through an annual weighted drawing process. Families must have (or be expecting the birth or adoption of) a child in order to apply for admission.

**Any child born between October 1st and January 31st is eligible for the Fall Lottery/Spring Enrollment.**



- Enrollment for those offered a spot through the Fall Lottery begins the first week in January, provided the child is at least 3 months of age. Families with children who are at least 3 months of age have the option of enrolling their child at any time before the end of February.
- If the child is not enrolled by the end of February, families will begin to pay tuition to hold the spot, even if the child is not yet 3 months of age.
  - Any child born in this time frame can defer to the Spring lottery for Fall admission because they would not be eligible to transition until the following fall. This is at the discretion of the Executive Director.

**Any child born between February 1st and September 30th is eligible for the Spring Lottery/Fall Enrollment.**

- Enrollment for those offered a spot through the Spring Lottery begins the first day of the academic year, provided the child is at least 3 months of age. Families with children who are at least 3 months of age have the option of enrolling their child at any time before the second week of October, the specific date will be listed on the calendar.
- If the child is not enrolled by the second week of October, families will begin to pay tuition to hold the spot, even if the child is not yet 3 months of age.
- This drawings is administered according to the following process:
  1. Currently enrolled families will be requested to re-enroll their child(ren), typically in April, for the following academic year, so that Tiny Findings management can predict the following academic year's enrollment.
  2. Tiny Findings management will then publicize to the GAO and tenant communities the number of predicted open spots that will be available for the following academic year. Tiny Findings will publicize the application deadline (typically in April), and families who are interested in enrolling their children will be given an opportunity to submit an application and corresponding application fee.
  3. Tiny Findings management will divide all submitted applications into groups by the age the child will be on September 30 of the coming academic year (Infants, 3-12 mos.; Toddlers, 12-24 mos.; Twos, 24-36 mos.; Threes, 36-48 mos.; or Fours [PreK], 48-60 mos). This process occurs to make sure that classes are comprised of children who are close in age who can then transition predictably between classrooms in cohorts. The Executive Director has the discretion to place a child who is up to two months younger than the applicable age requirement for a classroom (i.e., the child has a birthday between October 1<sup>st</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup>) in the next oldest classroom,





unless such placement would necessitate hiring additional teaching staff. Such placement is allowed only in the Twos, Threes, and Fours classroom, and only applies if (1) the agreement of the child's parents/guardians is obtained and (2) the opportunity for an older class placement is first made to any older child who is also within two months of the applicable age requirement for the next oldest classroom and who the Executive Director determines is developmentally ready to be placed in an older classroom. For example, if Child A turns 3 years old on November 1 and is age-eligible for enrollment in the Twos class because he was 2 years old as of the September 30<sup>th</sup> cutoff, the Executive Director may, in consultation with the family, assign Child A to the Threes class. If Child B was born on October 15<sup>th</sup>, however, the Executive Director must first give Child B's guardians the option to move Child B to the Threes classroom, assuming the Executive Director determines Child B is developmentally ready for such a move, before giving this option to Child A.

4. Families with children who have "cutoff" September birthdays or other developmental concerns about their child's class placement in September are encouraged to consult with management in mid- to late-March to ensure that each child is placed appropriately within the structure of the program (generally to help ensure that all children have the opportunity to participate in the Fours [PreK] class prior to attending Kindergarten).
5. Tiny Findings management will then sort all submitted applications for enrollment into their respective priority status categories (see below).
6. Tiny Findings management, observed by representatives from the Board of Directors, will draw and number all applications by priority status and age group and will notify families in order of their rank until available spots are filled. The remaining families will be moved to a waiting list in the order of their ranking for any future openings until the next school year begins. Families offered a spot must accept within one week of it being offered, or the next applicant will be offered the spot.

### ***Priority for Enrollment Categories<sup>1</sup>***

In recognition of the significant material contribution that GAO provides to Tiny Findings, employees of GAO and GAO headquarters tenants with a clause regarding Tiny Findings enrollment in their leases are given priority enrollment.<sup>2</sup> Priority

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<sup>1</sup>Please note that the Tiny Findings Board of Directors also maintains the right to hold up to three slots for children of Tiny Findings employees as a tool for recruitment or retention.

<sup>2</sup>If, at any time, the number of children of employees of GAO headquarter building tenants exceeds 20 percent of the total capacity of the Center, then such children shall be eligible for enrollment on a priority basis immediately behind the children of GAO employees.



categories are as listed below and are based upon the employer of the child's parent or legal guardian:

1. Sibling of any student already enrolled in the Center. If space in the center cannot accommodate all siblings, the following order of priority shall be given: GAO employees, contractors and other tenants (as noted earlier), Legislative Branch employees, other federal employees, other families with a child already enrolled in the Center
2. Children of GAO, contractors and other building tenants (as noted earlier), and Tiny Findings employees
3. Children of employees of the Legislative Branch
4. Children of other federal employees
5. Children of the general public

*Note: If a family's priority status changes between the time of the drawing and the start of the academic year, the previously offered spot in Tiny Findings will no longer be valid and will be withdrawn.*

### ***Explanation of Sibling Priority Status***

The sibling priority status helps provide continuity of care for families and is applied when two or more siblings are eligible to simultaneously receive care at Tiny Findings for a minimum of 3 months. Accordingly, if a family has sibling priority at the time of the selection, but withdraws the already-enrolled sibling out of Tiny Findings before the younger sibling has been enrolled for 3 months, the previously offered spot in Tiny Findings is no longer valid and will be withdrawn. If the younger sibling has been enrolled for less than 3 months, the younger sibling's application is moved to the appropriate priority level (see above), and a new drawing will be held for the younger sibling's old spot. While there is a possibility that the younger sibling's application will be drawn again, the Center cannot guarantee that this will happen. If the younger sibling's application is not redrawn, the family will receive 30 day notice that they have lost their spot.

### ***Allocation of Infant Spots***

Each academic year, Tiny Findings will generally have 12 infant spots available for Fall enrollment and 6 infant spots available for Spring enrollment. There will be 24 total infant spots, but only 18 of those infants will be old enough to transition to the Toddlers each Fall.



- Infants eligible for Fall enrollment will be 3-12 months at the time of entry, and at least 12 months old the following September 30.
- Infants eligible for the Spring enrollment will be at least 3 months at the time of entry, and no more than 12 months old the following September 30. The Spring cohort of infants will remain in the infant class for the entire following academic year. Families work with Center management to determine a mutually-beneficial start date for their infants.

### ***Enrollment Procedures***

- Families are e-mailed offer letters.
- Families accept or decline offers within 1 week.
- Families who accept should plan to attend a new family orientation meeting.
- Infant families are encouraged to spend an entire day in the classroom or to visit as often as they'd like prior to their official start date to become comfortable with the teachers and environment.

### ***Mid-Year Openings***

While mid-year openings do not occur regularly, at times, families will leave the Center due to a range of circumstances. If spots become open in this fashion, Tiny Findings management will offer the spot to the next family on the wait-list from the previous lottery. When openings occur and there are no remaining applications for these openings, Tiny Findings reserves the right to offer the space on a first-come, first-served basis, regardless of priority status. However, Tiny Findings will first advertise the available space to employees at GAO headquarters. As previously noted, Tiny Findings also maintains the right to hold up to three slots for children of Tiny Findings employees as a tool for recruitment or retention.

### ***Other Family Situations***

While the admissions policy contemplates many family situations, it cannot anticipate all potential scenarios, such as the birth of multiples or the uncertainties associated with adoptions. Should a family feel as though their particular situation is not accommodated by the weighted drawing process, they should contact Center management prior to the drawing.

### ***Enrollment of Children with Special Needs***

Tiny Findings' goal is to meet the individual needs of the child within the structure of our program, while maintaining a healthy and safe environment for all our children and staff. Tiny Findings seeks to accommodate children with special needs, where reasonable accommodation can be made. The Executive Director, in consultation with the Board, will make an individualized assessment as to whether the facility can meet



the particular needs of a child without fundamentally altering the care the Center provides to other children. In some cases, acceptance of a child with special needs will require families to pay a fee higher than the standard fees. The higher fee will be used to cover additional expenses incurred to provide adequate care.

Prior to enrollment of a child with special needs, our staff will gather information from the child's parents/guardians regarding the child's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive abilities in order to assess our ability to meet the child's needs. With the parents'/guardians' permission, we will collaborate with available community resources to ensure we are meeting the child's needs in every possible way.

Goals for individual children are best developed in collaboration with family members. General goals may include:

- Promoting the child's engagement in all aspects of the program.
- Supporting families in defining and achieving their goals.
- Encouraging the child's development and mastery in all domains (physical, social, emotional and cognitive).
- Building and supporting the child's social competence.
- Preventing the emergence of secondary behavioral problems related to communication difficulties.

### ***Policy for Holding Slots for New and Currently Enrolled Children***

Families who wish to remove currently enrolled children from Tiny Findings for an extended leave of absence of up to four months and hold the child's spot at the Center shall submit a request in writing or via e-mail to the Executive Director containing the reason and time period for the absence. Families shall make every effort to submit requests as far in advance as possible. The Executive Director and the Board's Executive Committee will consider each request on a case-by-case basis taking into account the needs of the Center. Special consideration will be given to those requests that would be eligible for coverage under Title I of the Family and Medical Leave Act e.g., the birth of a child, the placement with the parent/guardian(s) of a child for adoption or foster care, to care for a spouse or immediate family member (child or parent/guardian) with a serious health condition, or because of the parent/guardian's own serious health condition that makes them unable to continue to work. Approval of requests may be predicated upon, among other factors, continued payment of tuition at either the full or a reduced rate at the discretion of the Executive Director and the Board of Directors.



### ***Withdrawal***

Tiny Findings requires families to provide 30 days written notice of withdrawal to the Executive Director. If a family withdraws with less than 30 day notice, their official withdrawal date will be effective 30 days after submitting the withdrawal notice. Families must pay tuition for the full 30 days after the withdrawal notice, regardless of whether their child is enrolled in the Center.

### ***Drop-In Policy\*\****

From time to time, Tiny Findings may have space available in our preschool classrooms for drop-ins. The drop-in program is administered based on staff absentee rates at the Center on any given day. Only children who previously attended Tiny Findings and are between the ages of 3-5 are eligible for the drop-in program. There is no drop-in program for infants and toddlers. All enrollment forms must be completed. A current medical history form must be on file in the Center (including an updated health certificate).

Families must ask the Executive Director as early as possible to request drop-in services. Notification of available space may occur as late as 9:15 a.m. of the drop in day. The Executive Director has the right to refuse drop-in requests in order to maintain the quality of the program.

### ***Summer Enrollment Policy\*\****

The summer program is administered based on current enrollment availability in the Threes and Fours classrooms. Children who are ages 4 – 5 (as of September 30 of current year) are eligible. Families may apply between February 1<sup>st</sup> and February 15<sup>e</sup> for the upcoming summer. Applications received during this time period will be considered in the following order of priority:

1. Tiny Findings alumni who will enroll for the entire summer.
2. Tiny Findings alumni who will enroll for a minimum of 6 weeks.
3. Non-alumni who will enroll for a minimum of 6 weeks.
4. Tiny Findings alumni who will enroll for fewer than 6 weeks.
5. Non-alumni who will enroll for 4-6 weeks.

If any openings remain after placement of children for whom applications were submitted before February 15<sup>th</sup>, applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis with the same priorities identified above. All children who enroll in the summer program after April 30<sup>th</sup> will pay an additional \$50 each tuition cycle.

Families of children who enroll in the summer program for fewer than 6 weeks will not be given a badge for access to the GAO building and Center. Families are not able to





have garage access and parking will be outside of the GAO building. They will have to go through security on a daily basis to have access to the center.

To enroll, the following forms must be completed:

1. Tiny Finding summer enrollment form.
2. Current medical history form (including an updated health certificate).
3. Signed Family Handbook Agreement (if one is not currently on file).

Summer enrollment tuition is based on the child's classroom placement. Children can enroll for the duration of the summer term (June 15 – August 21, 2020) or on a biweekly basis. Children who enroll for a period of less than 10 consecutive school days will be charged the drop-in rate (as noted above, non-alumni children must enroll for at least 4 weeks). In addition, families are required to pay a summer enrollment fee of \$50, which will be due on the date indicated on the family's Offer of Summer Admission letter.

Tuition for summer enrollment must be paid by check according to the payment schedule set forth in the summer enrollment offer letter. Tiny Findings' Overdue Tuition policy applies to late payments.

The summer term generally aligns with local school calendars and generally ends with the 1-week in-service closure. (As noted above, the dates of the closures will be provided to families at the beginning of each academic year.). Tiny Findings may be able to accommodate summer enrollment or drop-ins during the two weeks following the in-service closure and will consider applications for enrollment during these weeks on a case-by-case basis.

### ***Tuition and Fees***

Tuition is due bi-weekly. Tuition will be paid on a year-round basis, regardless of vacations, holidays, and closings, for as long as a child is enrolled in the Center. Tuition fees are based on the child's classroom placement. Children who attend during any part of a tuition cycle will be charged for a full tuition payment.

### ***Bi-Weekly Tuition 2021-2022 (Families not employed @ 441 G St add \$50 per payment)***

Infants: \$950.00  
Toddlers: \$950.00  
Twos: \$850.00  
Threes: \$755.00  
Fours (PreK): \$755.00

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The Center policy is that all families must pay tuition through an ACH debit from their savings or checking account. These withdrawals take place every two weeks in line with the federal pay schedule. If you need assistance with this process, please contact the Executive Director.

Tuition can be prorated by week when children begin and leave.

The Board of Directors determines the annual tuition rates each spring, and new rates go into effect at the beginning of each academic year. To obtain a copy of the current tuition and fee structure for the Center please contact the Operations Specialist. Additionally, questions about tuition should be directed to the Executive Director.

### ***Tuition Assistance***

Tiny Findings sponsors a tuition assistance program for eligible children. The Center allocates assistance payments on a sliding scale, depending on the applicant's gross income. The number of scholarships depends on the availability of funds. In the event of financial need, a family may apply for tuition assistance by completing the appropriate forms, which can be obtained from the Executive Director.

### ***Summary of Fees\*\****

Fee	Amount	Frequency
Application Fee	\$125	One time
Re-Application Fee	\$25	One time
Enrollment Fee	\$250*	One-time
Re-enrollment Fee	\$250	Annually
Late Payment Fee	\$20	Weekly
Volunteer hour fee	\$25	Annually
Insufficient Funds/Bounced Payment fee	\$20	Per instance
Late pick up Fee**	\$25	Per 15 minutes after operating hours, per child

Updated September 2021



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Drop-In Fee**	\$100	One time
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*\*Note: There is no enrollment fee for new children enrolling after January 1, 2020.*

### ***Late Pick-up Charges\*\****

Parents/guardians who do not pick up their child and depart from the Center by 6 p.m. closing time will incur late pick-up charges at the rate of \$25.00 for every fifteen minutes or portion thereof, based on the clock in the Center reception area with the \$25 cost being incurred at the first minute of each 15 minute period (e.g., if you pick up your child 16 minutes late you owe \$50 dollars). It is helpful to arrive at the Center at least 10 minutes before 6 p.m. to allow enough time to leave the Center by closing. Late pick-up charges are due by the next school day with payment made by a check to Tiny Findings. Families who fail to pay late fees on a timely basis will be subject to Tiny Findings' overdue tuition charges. Consistent lateness may be grounds for removal of a child from the program.

### ***Overdue Tuition & Insufficient Funds/Bounced Payment***

Families are expected to ensure that there are adequate funds available to cover the cost of tuition in their designated checking or savings account from which Tiny Findings is authorized to draw tuition. Tuition will be considered overdue after a grace period extending until the close of business the Tuesday following the standard Friday tuition withdrawal date. After that time, families are required to pay outstanding balances within 48 hours of being notified by the Center that a payment has not been received. After the 48 hour grace period the family will incur a late charge of \$20 per child for each week that the account balance remains unpaid. If tuition and all late charges are not paid in full by the next tuition date—within 2 weeks—the child will not be allowed to attend the Center until such payment is made. In cases where the Executive Director feels that circumstances warrant, the Executive Director may determine that the child will not be allowed to attend the Center after only one week past the tuition date.

The child's space at the Center will be held for 4 weeks from the date of the original missed tuition payment; tuition will continue to accrue during this period. If tuition and late charges are not paid in full within these 4 weeks, the Executive Director will fill the space according to Center procedures. The family would be allowed to re-enroll the child after the 4-week deadline, assuming all past-due tuition payments and late charges were paid. However, the family must follow the normal admission application procedures, and the child's acceptance back into the Center would be dependent upon the status of the Center's space availability, and may be subject to specific payment arrangements. In





the case of overdue tuition, these procedures supersede Tiny Findings' normal enrollment policies.

In special circumstances the Executive Director can initiate a process to negotiate a repayment plan for families with overdue tuition. Should the Executive Director determine that special arrangements are warranted, the Executive Director must brief the Board of Directors on the specifics of the family's situation and present the board with a plan to collect overdue tuition payments. The Board must then vote to approve or reject the repayment plan. If the plan is approved, the family must sign a contract with the Center agreeing to the details of the repayment plan.

### ***Volunteer Commitment***

Like most non-profit organizations, Tiny Findings could not operate without volunteers. Your volunteer hours also contribute to our efforts to watch the bottom line. For example, volunteering for nap watch helps the Center avoid the overtime costs that it would incur if staff meetings were held after the Center closed. Similarly, the money the Center raises through the volunteer-run fundraisers contributes directly to the Center's revenues. Families are required to volunteer a minimum of 18 hours per academic year. The requirement is for each family, regardless of the number of children enrolled in Tiny Findings. At the discretion of the Board and Center management, the number of hours required may be modified in rare exceptions, for example, potentially during periods during which families cannot enter the Center. Families are responsible for keeping track of their volunteer hours and submitting them to the Executive Director by recording them in the volunteer hour binder before the end of each academic year. Examples of volunteering include (but are not limited to):

- "Nap-watching" (providing supervision during nap times to cover staff meetings)
- fundraising,
- volunteering in the classroom,
- assisting the Board or Leadership with special projects,
- chaperoning a field trip,
- donating requested materials and supplies,
- serving as a classroom parent or as a Tiny Findings Parents Association officer, or
- serving on the Board of Directors.

Opportunities will be announced throughout the year in the Center and Tiny Findings Parents Association newsletters or through center management's Wednesday notices. Please refer to the Tiny Findings Parents Associate volunteer tracking spreadsheet for additional details regarding activities that count toward Tiny Findings' volunteer requirement.



In general, one hour of donated time=one volunteer hour. For donations of materials and supplies, each \$25 of materials=one volunteer hour.

Families that do not fulfill their volunteer hour obligation will be assessed a fee for each hour or portion thereof not worked at a rate of \$25 per hour. Such payments will be withdrawn via ACH debit following notification to the family. Applicable late fees and insufficient fund fees apply.

## **Operating Policies and Procedures**

### ***Center Availability\*\****

Tiny Findings typically operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Families may enter the Center to drop-off at 7 a.m., and should arrive for pick-up no later than 5:45 p.m. Families who leave the Center after 6 p.m. will incur late pick-up charges. The Center follows the federal calendar and has additional closings for in-service and holidays each year. Our operating calendar is approved by the Board of Directors each summer and shared with families at the beginning of the academic year.

If the federal government is CLOSED, Tiny Findings will be CLOSED.

If the federal government is OPEN operating on UNSCHEDULED LEAVE, DELAYED OPENING, or similar status, Tiny Findings may operate on a limited schedule (late opening / early closing). If GAO activates a work-from-home requirement, the Center may not be able to open as usual and services may be modified for online content only. Such changes to Center availability and services will be communicated by Center management in concert with the Board.

Tiny Findings will also close if, at any time, the Center is unable to comply with D.C. licensing requirements (for example, if the number of staff able to commute during inclement weather does not permit us to provide adequate care for the children).

Daily changes to our operating status will be posted on the [Tiny Findings website](#) and announced via the HiMama online application through which families will receive Tiny Findings operating status alerts, including the Center's status during emergency situations and reminders about early closures for in-service and holidays, and via their preferred communication method -- voice, email, and/or text message. Please make sure to maintain updated contact information in HiMama.



### **Security Process**

To receive a badge for access to the GAO building and Tiny Findings, parents/guardians must undergo a background check performed by GAO's Office of Security. The first step is to submit GAO form 618A to Tiny Findings. Then an appointment will need to be made with the Office Security to be fingerprinted onsite. Once the parent/guardian has been cleared, they will be eligible to receive a photo badge.

### ***Personal Articles***

Families are responsible for supplying all diapers, wipes, and diaper creams. Families with children in diapers are required to keep at least three changes of clothing at the Center. Older children should have at least one. Infants need two porta-crib sized sheets. Toddlers and older children should have a small blanket and two standard-sized crib sheets for use at naptime. Please refer to the list on pages 33-35 of this handbook for other recommended items to bring from home. All blankets, extra clothing, and outerwear should be plainly marked with your child's name. Children may not bring toys, money, food, candy, or gum from home, except for a special toy or blanket needed by the child to feel secure.

### ***Clothing***

Children should come dressed for action! We recommend washable, comfortable play clothes that are easy for the child to manage. Tennis shoes or other soft-soled shoes are the safest, whereas sandals or hard-heeled boots can lead to injured toes. Open toe shoes are not allowed. In "boot weather," we encourage families to provide a pair of tennis or other soft-soled shoes for inside play.

### ***Food and Food Service\*\****

Tiny Findings is a "nut free" center. We serve nutritious morning and afternoon snack in addition to catered lunch. Families may choose from regular or vegetarian meal options. Outside food is not allowed for safety reasons as we are providing group care, unless a child has dietary restrictions requiring alternate foods. Families should not bring meals or snacks that contain nuts or nut products. This includes items for birthday parties, field trips, and lunches brought from home.

Tiny Findings is committed to providing students with healthy and nutritious food and consequently at no time, other than during a child's birthday celebration or special classroom celebrations or cooking activities, will center staff serve students food as part of their meals or snacks. Lunch and snack times will be used as educational opportunities and social occasions. Learning about different foods and enjoying the company of peers will be daily goals. Children will be served a morning snack, a balanced lunch, and an afternoon snack each day. Organic milk is served in each



classroom. Menus are posted on the Center bulletin board. For children unable to eat the regular food served due to health reasons, a note from a doctor or a dietician stating “child is on a special diet due to health reasons” required. In that case, families are expected to supply food and beverages. Please do not leave any food items in your child’s cubby; please label any item and leave it in the kitchen or on the designated refrigerator shelf.

**If your child has any food allergies, intolerances, or dietary restrictions you must inform the Executive Director in writing. For the health and safety of your child, this information will be posted in the Center’s kitchen and the classrooms for everyone’s awareness.**

Parents/guardians may choose to pick up their child for lunch or to join their child for lunch in the classroom. Please coordinate these visits with your child’s teacher.

### ***Celebrations/Birthday Parties***

Birthdays and seasonal or cultural holidays are recognized at the Center. Please consult with the teachers about your contribution for the celebration. A special treat such as a cake, fresh fruit, muffins, cupcakes, or cookies is permissible. Snacks should be nut free and all food brought to the Center by families must be store bought and secured in its original packaging.

If there are two or more birthdays in a month in the same classroom, Tiny Findings encourages families to coordinate a single birthday celebration. Please discuss celebration plans with the classroom teacher before your child’s birthday. Balloons are not permitted in the Center.

### ***Student Attendance***

#### **Sign-In/Out Procedures\*\***

Parents/Guardians are required to sign their child in and out using the book located at the front desk. If you take your child out of the Center during the day and return him/her to the Center, you must sign your child out and in on the Lunch in/out form in the same folder. We keep daily attendance records and it is important that we know which children are in the Center at all times. In the event of an emergency evacuation, this documentation is critical to ensure that all children are accounted for.

#### **Drop Off\*\***

Families are expected to drop off their children in a condition that will enable them to immediately join the classroom. Parents/guardians should ensure that children still



wearing diapers are wearing a fresh diaper and that potty trained children go to the bathroom before or during drop-off.

These provide smooth transitions and allow you a brief exchange with the teacher to convey information and learn about the day's plans.

### Pick-up\*\*

Children must be picked up by an adult who has been previously authorized by the family to take their child(ren) from the Center (under no circumstances will the Center deliver a child to an adult at the Security desk). **The Center will under no circumstances allow a child to leave with any other individual in the absence of an email or signed, written note from the parents/guardians having been provided to the Center prior to the child's departure.** Anyone newly authorized by the family to pick up the child will be subject to a photo ID check. Please be advised that the Center cannot refuse to release a child to the child's parent or legal guardian who has or shares legal custody of the child, who presents apparently reliable evidence of such right, and who presents photographic identification.

### ***Illnesses\*\****

Tiny Findings follows the DC Office of State Superintendent of Education regulations and the guidelines for communicable illness in group settings issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics. These guidelines are available in the office and on the family communication boards in the Center. Children who exhibit signs of illness and are unable to participate in the program will be excluded from attendance in order for Tiny Findings to continue to provide high-quality services to other the children, families, and staff. Common symptoms requiring exclusion include but are not limited to:

- FEVER: According to the CDC guideline, a fever is considered if the body temp is 100.4 degree. If your child has a temperature of 100.4, they will be excluded from the program.
- COVID-19:
  - Have been in close contact in the last 10 days, with an individual confirmed to have COVID-19
  - Are confirmed to have COVID-19
  - Are awaiting COVID-19 test results, or
  - have a close contact who is awaiting COVID-19 test results.
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Fatigue, headache, muscle or body aches
  - Poor feeding or poor appetite
  - Loss of taste or smell





- SINUS INFECTION: Greenish discharge from the nose (WITH FEVER) might be a sign of an infection (i.e. RSV)
- SEVERE COUGH: If the cough is chronic, deep, or hacking there may be a present infection.
- FLU: There are many discomforts associated with the flu, flu like symptoms typically are accompanied by a fever
- EAR INFECTION: Complaints of ear pain, loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, ear drainage, trouble hearing, and pulling or tugging of ear.
- DIARRHEA: If the child is exhibiting signs of stomach cramping or loose stool. Child must have 2 loose stools to be excluded from the program.
- MILD VOMITING: Child must vomit 2 times to be excluded from the program.
- SEVERE STOMACH ACHE: Severe vomiting (1 or more times), while also experiencing heavy cramping.
- CONJUNCTIVITIS: Suspected redness or discharge from one or both eyes. Conjunctivitis, commonly known as “pink eye,” is HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS.
- SEVERE SORE THROAT: Child may appear to have one of the following:
  - Swollen glands or tonsils
  - White spots in throat
  - Pain when swallowing
- RASH: Any child with an IDENTIFIABLE NON-CONTAGIOUS rash (i.e. diaper rash) may attend school.
- HEAD LICE: If any staff member detects head lice or nits, you are immediately required to pick up your child. The child may return after he/she has been treated with a medicated shampoo and ALL NITS and LICE are REMOVED."

Upon notification, an authorized individual **must pick up the child within one hour**, and the child must stay excluded for at least the next following school day. The excluded child may return when the signs and symptoms requiring exclusion have been resolved according to established medical guidelines. In many cases, an illness report that is filled out by your child's teacher contains the information and the steps to follow. In some cases, Tiny Findings may require a doctor's note for re-admission to the Center.

**Parents/guardians must notify Center Management when a child is diagnosed as having a communicable disease or infection,** such as strep throat, conjunctivitis, or COVID-19. Families will be notified if their child may have been exposed to a communicable illness or disease. Please keep in mind that illnesses—such as runny noses, sore throats, and ear infections—are common among children. In many cases, children with these illnesses have already exposed others before showing symptoms. Children exhibiting mild symptoms of such illnesses may be allowed to stay at the Center as long as in the judgment of their teacher and the Executive Director they are able to participate in regular activities and the ability of the staff to care for the other



children is not affected. Illness policies—including any supplemental guidance provided to families in line with emerging public health crises--will be firmly enforced.

If families determine that their child is not able to attend either because of illness or because of a planned absence from the Center, please notify the Center.

Tuition will be charged for days missed due to illness or short-term classroom closures due to communicable disease exposure/contact.

### ***Medication and Injuries***

Tiny Findings' staff can give a child medicine only in the following instances:

1. Parents/guardians provide staff with prescription medication in the original prescription bottle with pharmacist's label and provide the Center with a form authorizing the staff members to give the medication.
2. Parents/guardians provide staff with written authorization from a physician giving permission to administer non-prescription medication (e.g., cough and cold medicines). The authorization for administering medication will not exceed ten working days unless otherwise indicated by the physician. Non-prescription medication must be given to staff in the original bottle.
3. Aspirin will not be given at any time because of the dangers of Reye's syndrome.
4. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) will only be given for symptoms resulting from inoculations, with a doctor's note and parent-signed form. At no time will these medications be given for symptoms of a cold or other illness.
5. The administration of medication will always be witnessed by another staff member and recorded by our staff on the medication log. We cannot administer any medication that has expired. We will refrigerate, in a locked container, those medications that require it.
6. We recommend that you ask your child's physician to prescribe a 12-hour dose of medications when appropriate. This allows you to control the administration of medication at all times. The classroom teacher or the director will administer medication.

**Please do NOT leave any medication in the classroom.** All medicines should be handed to the teachers. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to provide the necessary applicators (e.g., medicine spoons, droppers, etc.) for all medicines.



### ***Medication for Allergies or Chronic Illness***

If your child requires medication for life-threatening conditions such as allergies, bee stings, etc., the prescriptions can be kept at the Center and administered when necessary for as long as the child is enrolled. The child's parent/guardian and physician must sign an authorization form. Expired medication will be returned to parents/guardians.

### ***Allergies***

Parents/Guardians must keep the Center informed of all current allergies (food, medicines, environmental) and any changes over the course of time enrolled at the Center.

### ***Injury Procedures***

If in the opinion of the staff on site at the time, a child's injury may warrant emergency treatment, staff will dial 9-1-1 and request emergency medical assistance. Families will then be notified.

For less serious injuries, families will be notified by phone call or by note at the end of the day depending upon the degree of injury. Although every effort will be made to keep the children safe, children are most likely to accumulate some bumps, bruises and scratches during the early years.

There are at least two staff members on-site at all times who are CPR and First Aid certified.

### ***Toileting and Diapering***

Toileting and diapering are handled on an individualized basis. Caregivers are perceptive of each child's body language and verbal cues that signal interest in having a diaper changed. Young toddlers are encouraged to participate and communicate their preferences during diapering as they are guided toward toileting independence. While the teacher's role with the preschool children is more indirect, they continue to help children recognize their own needs to use the toilet and to remember the proper elements of hygiene.

Toilet learning is a very individual process based on a child's physical and psychological readiness. Teachers and parents/guardians will share information about an individual child's readiness for toilet learning and establish a plan that will support consistency, patience and partnership for the child and the adults sharing his or her care.





Parents/Guardians are responsible for supplying disposable diapers and wipes for children who are not yet toilet trained. Reusable or cloth diapers are not allowed.

## **Communications with Families**

The Leadership Team maintains a list of parent/guardian email addresses. This list is only shared with those communicating on behalf of Tiny Findings (Management or the Board of Directors) and the Tiny Findings Parents Association.

All families receive a weekly email newsletter containing relevant information from the Executive Director and periodic email communications and notifications via HiMama, as warranted. Additionally, teachers communicate with families daily through the online application HiMama and through email.

Pertinent information may also be distributed through children's "mailboxes" (a folder with their name on it) in the lobby, placed in children's classroom cubbies, posted in the Center in prominent locations, or sent by email to those parents/guardians who have provided email addresses.

Other information may also be available on Tiny Findings' website at <http://www.tinyfindings.org/index.html>.

## ***Grievance Procedure***

Please address any concerns with our program by using the following steps:

- 1.) If appropriate, please address your concern with your child's teachers first. Families are encouraged to also make the Executive and Assistant Director aware of their concerns. This ensures that all concerns are handled immediately.
- 2.) If the issue cannot be resolved by your child's teacher, or is of a more serious nature, the family can make a formal grievance.
- 3.) The Executive Director will address the grievance immediately. This can be done in a formal meeting, by email, or telephone.
- 4.) If the matter remains unresolved, the grievance can be considered by the Board of Directors. The request for Board of Directors consideration can come from the Executive Director or the family.
- 5.) The parent/guardian should place their concerns in writing, addressing it to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors asking for the grievance to be resolved immediately. The parent/guardian may also request a meeting with the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.



- 6.) At the discretion of the Chairperson, the matter will be forwarded to the Board of Directors' Executive Committee. The Chairperson and the Committee will treat the matter with discretion. A written response to address the matter will be sent to the parent/guardian initiating the grievance.
- 7.) In all instances of parent grievances, the Executive Director and Board of Directors will address the grievance in a constructive manner and in a reasonable time frame.

### ***Family-Teacher Conferences and Child Assessments***

Providing routine feedback for each parent/guardian on the progress of his/her child is an integral part of our program. Parent/Guardian conferences are held on an individual basis, and at any time parents/guardians can request an individual meeting to discuss the program, progress and any concerns.

We view children as members of a group as well as unique individuals. Our educational approach offers insights into all aspects of development, including cognitive development such as cause and effect or classification concepts, cooperative behavior; it also factors in each child's dispositions about learning and thinking. Children's thinking and learning are documented in a variety of ways, including written observations, photographs or collections of children's work. This information is frequently displayed as examples of classroom activities. Children are assessed in the context of meaningful activities and daily routines with familiar materials and playmates. Teachers also develop a Portfolio Assessment that measures ongoing growth and change, rather than comparing children to a pre-set norm. They also collect samples of the individual child's work to help families appreciate their child's unique style of development and expression. In addition, Ages and Stages Questionnaire is used to screen children's development in various areas including social-emotional growth and well-being.

### ***Annual Corporate Meeting***

An annual meeting of the Tiny Findings Corporation is held each fall, which is open to all Tiny Findings members. In addition, the Board may hold town hall style meetings on a periodic basis.

### ***How Families Can Communicate with the Center***

Families should feel free to contact the Center at any time by telephone call to the Tiny Findings main line (202-512-3122) or the applicable classroom telephone, or via email to the applicable leadership team member or classroom email address.

Parents/guardians wishing to speak with a teacher about their child should request to schedule a mutually convenient time that will ensure the teacher is able to speak



confidentially with the parent/guardian and also to ensure such conversations do not detract from the teaching staff's ability to adequately supervise and pay attention to other children in the classroom. Families should be aware that staff are not permitted to communicate with families using their personal cell phones, including through texting, during ordinary business hours, or at any time about matters related to Tiny Findings or the provision of care to a family's child at Tiny Findings. The only exception to this is where such communication is necessary in an emergency. Families are expected to abide by this policy.

Families are also welcome to raise concerns or provide suggestions directly to Center leadership. While communication between parents/guardians, teachers, and leadership is strongly encouraged, it is important that families understand that confidentiality may limit the information that teachers and leadership can share regarding other children enrolled in the Center, employee particulars, and certain personnel actions.

Families can also contact the Board of Directors to discuss concerns about management of the Center, center policies, and the Center's financial health, or to address topics that they feel are inappropriate for Center leadership, keeping in mind the responsibilities that the Board has delegated to Center leadership, as described under "Board of Directors." Again, confidentiality may limit the information that the Board can share with families.

#### Classroom Extensions:

- Caterpillars: 202-512-3877
- Butterflies: 202-512-9395
- Lady Bugs: 202-512-8445
- Busy Bees: 202-512-3370
- Crickets/Grasshoppers: 202-512-7683
- Fireflies: 202-512-2762
- Hornets: 202-512-5885

Information on Board members and how to contact them can be found in the Center and on our website.



### ***Changing Needs of Families***

We work with families as partners. In times of hardship, you are encouraged to communicate with us. We will work with you and your child by incorporating activities in cases such as sibling arrival, sleep routine, stress, death in the family etc. We will refer you to experts in needed areas in order to support you at difficult times.

### ***Family Involvement\*\****

Central to the Center's philosophy is the concept that families and staff work together as a team to provide an optimal setting for the growth and development of our children. Tiny Findings maintains an open door policy and welcomes parent/guardian visits. Parents/guardians may wish to join their child for lunch or take their child out. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to sign their children in and out every day including times when the child accompanies a parent/guardian out to lunch or to another outing during the day. In addition, Center Management and the Board encourage all families to share any concerns you may have about the Center with us.

While the Center does benefit from the participation of families, the open door policy is not intended to allow situations where a parent/guardian's actions are disruptive to Center operations. At all times, it is critical that families respect the professional judgment of Center Management, which the Board of Directors has tasked with ensuring the provision of high-quality care and education to children enrolled in the Center, as well as ensuring adherence to Tiny Findings policies. Should counseling by the Executive Director and/or meetings with the Board of Directors fail to resolve disagreements, the Board of Directors reserves the right to direct families to make other child care arrangements.



### ***Transitions from Home to Center***

During the first few weeks, parents/guardians are asked to allow extra time for the transition between home and center during drop-off and pick-up times. If their schedule permits, parent(s)/guardian(s) may schedule partial-day visits. During the day, teachers will incorporate routines familiar to the child and keep parents/guardians apprised of the child's adjustment. Children are often reassured by bringing "transitional" objects such as a cuddly toy from home for naptime.

### **Daily Schedules and Suggested Items to Bring From Home\*\***

#### ***Infant Schedule and Supplies\*\****

The infant schedule is determined by the needs of the individual child within the group setting. A feeding and sleeping schedule will be designed for each child in consultation with the family, and will change throughout the course of the year as the child grows and their needs change. The daily implementation may vary depending upon any special needs of the child or group on any particular day. The typical 3:1 adult-child ratio will allow plenty of time for individual cuddling. Activities to stimulate the five senses will be alternated with quiet times throughout the day.



### Items to Bring for Infants:

- Several photos of your child and family
- Large Bibs (4)
- Prepared bottles/nipples and baby food labeled with full name and date of prep) (please note: the Center does not allow the use of glass bottles)
- Formula (with instructions on how to prepare it, as required under DC licensing regulations)
- Pacifiers, if desired (labeled with name)
- Plush toy, if desired (not for use in cribs)
- Seasonal change of clothing (3)
- Disposable diapers, wipes, and ointments
- Sheets, porta-crib size (2)
- Small blankets (2) when child transitions to cot
- Sunscreen (labeled with name), water shoes, sun hat, and bathing suit (seasonally appropriate)

### ***Toddlers & Twos Schedule and Supplies\*\****

These programs will be flexible enough to bridge the gap between the toddler years and the preschool years. Our primary care-giving system for toddlers takes into account individual routines such as diapering, feeding and sleeping and incorporates the Creative Curriculum for Toddlers. There is also uninterrupted time for discovery and exploration with materials, language and social interaction that helps children to:

- Build a sense of self as competent, cooperative and creative in a place where he or she feels secure and emotionally attached
- Experience increasingly complex ways of communicating with others, develop friendships and problem-solve together
- Learn to use words to express feelings and act appropriately in social situations

### Approximate Schedule\*\*

7-8 or 8:30: Drop-off in the Little Room, (individual choices)  
8 or 8:30-9:00: Transition to classrooms, small groups & centers  
9:00: Morning snack, bathroom and diapering  
9:30-10: Circle Time and large group activities  
10-12: Centers, small group activities, playground / gross motor or walk / community visit  
12: Lunch, bathroom and diapering  
1-3: Nap  
3-4: Bathroom and diapering, small or large groups





4: Afternoon snack, then playground and pick up

5:30-6: Individual Classroom/ Playground Little Room / pick up (individual choices)

**Items to Bring for Toddlers and Twos\*\***

- Several photos of your child and family
- Disposable diapers/pull-ups, wipes, and ointments
- Seasonal change of clothing (3)
- Child's toy for nap (optional)
- Standard sized crib sheets (2)
- Small blanket (and small pillow, if desired)
- Sunscreen (labeled with name), sun hat, water shoes, and bathing suit (seasonally appropriate)

**Threes & Fours (PreK) Schedule and Supplies\*\***

Preschool programs incorporate the Creative Curriculum for Preschool. We know that real learning requires active thinking, explaining and experimentation. We provide an academically rich early childhood program to reassure readiness and future success in school. Lesson plans focus on the following, consistent with state early learning standards for school readiness:

- Motor Skills: Movement and Coordination
- Social Skills: Autonomy and Social Skills
- Approaches to Learning: Work Habits
- Language Skills:
  - Oral Language
  - Nursery Rhymes, Poems, Finger-plays and Songs
  - Storybook Reading and Storytelling
  - Emerging Literacy Skills in Reading and Writing Cognitive Development
- Mathematical Reasoning and Number Sense
- Orientation in Time and Space
- Scientific Reasoning and the Physical World
- Music
- Visual Arts

**Approximate Schedule\*\***

7-8 or 8:30: Drop-off in the Big Room,

8 or 8:30-9:00: Transition to classrooms, small groups & centers

9:00: Morning snack, bathroom and diapering

9:30-10: Circle Time and large group activities

10-11: Centers, small group activities, playground / gross motor, or walk / community visit



11-12: Centers, small group activities, playground / gross motor, or walk / community visit  
12: Lunch, bathroom and diapering  
1-3: Nap  
3-4: Bathroom and diapering, small or large groups  
4: Afternoon snack, then playground and pick up  
5:30-6: Big Room /Playground/Individual Classrooms/pick up

*Items to Bring for Threes and PreK\*\**

- Several photos of your child and family
- Child's toy or a favorite book for nap (optional)
- Standard sized crib sheets (2)
- Small blanket (and small pillow, if desired)
- Change of clothing (1)
- Sunscreen (labeled with name), sun hat, water shoes, and bathing suit (seasonally appropriate)

## **Emergency Procedures**

### ***Fires/Evacuations***

As required by the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Tiny Findings practices monthly fire drills that are coordinated and monitored by GAO Security and Safety staff. For these drills, staff and children exit the building using the rear entrance to the Center and gather at the emergency assembly area—in the National Building Museum across from GAO. When GAO is conducting a building-wide drill, parents/guardians may join their children at the assembly area, but should allow them to return to the Center with their class at the end of the drill.<sup>3</sup>

In the event of an actual fire or another emergency requiring an evacuation, the staff and children will evacuate the Center as described above and parents/guardians may join their children in the assembly area. Depending on the circumstances, such as the location of the fire or inclement weather, the Executive Director may choose to move the children to the Center's evacuation site, National Building Museum. Should this happen, a staff or Board member will stay at the assembly area to direct families to the evacuation site. In addition, Tiny Findings staff members will attempt to use the emergency information on file to contact families who do not work at GAO and those who have not reached the assembly area/evacuation site to notify them of the situation.

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<sup>3</sup> Please note, GAO no longer allows parents to return to the building through a Tiny Findings entrance at the end of a fire drill. Parents must re-enter the building through either the G or H Street main entrances.



**Important:** The Sign In/Sign Out procedures discussed earlier in the handbook are still in effect during fire drills and actual emergencies. It is particularly important for the Center to be able to account for all the children during these unpredictable events.

### ***Shelter-in-Place Events***

Periodically, GAO will conduct shelter-in-place drills. Tiny Findings children and staff will gather in the first infant classroom (Caterpillars) and/or staff lounge. Please note that once the building goes into lock-down, no one will be allowed in or out of GAO. GAO periodically updates its GAO Headquarters Occupant Emergency Plan, which may affect the information provided here. GAO employees may access the most current version [here](#). Other Tiny Findings families may request a copy from Tiny Findings.

### ***Government Shutdown***

Tiny Findings cannot operate while GAO is closed. During a government shutdown, GAO restricts access to the GAO headquarters to essential staff only. As such, Tiny Findings families and staff are unable to access the Center.

- On the day of a government shutdown, while GAO and tenant organizations are performing orderly shutdown procedures, Tiny Findings management will make a concerted effort to ensure that Tiny Findings remains open to provide childcare while GAO and tenant parents/guardians complete their orderly shutdown procedures. (note: during the Oct. 2013 shutdown, Tiny Findings was able to open from 7 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.)
- Tiny Findings will, to the extent possible, try to resume normal operations when GAO reopens following a government shutdown.
- Families that use Tiny Findings refrigerators or freezers to store perishable items or medicine for their children should remove these items (in case of power outages, etc.) and take with them any items from their child's personal effects from their cubby or classroom. Any items left in the center may be disposed of at center management's discretion.
- Tiny Findings will communicate its operating status, as it does during inclement weather, via its voicemail system. Tiny Findings management will update the voicemail—as soon as practical after GAO updates its operating status—to reflect the center's operating status for the next day and, if known, the anticipated date for reopening the Center. Tiny Findings main number is 202-512-3122.

In the event of a government shutdown, Tiny Findings will collect tuition for the first two weeks of a government shutdown regardless of whether Tiny Findings families receive retroactive pay.



- In the event Tiny Findings families receive retroactive pay, they will pay retroactive tuition for the duration of the shutdown.
- In the event that Tiny Findings families do not receive retroactive pay, the Board will convene, review the financial status of the center and then make a determination as to what families owe/do not owe in tuition during the furlough period.
- Tiny Findings' Board of Directors believes continuing to pay employees, despite a shutdown, is essential to the extent it is fiscally possible. Tiny Findings is committed to retaining qualified and talented staff. Without pay, Tiny Findings is at risk of losing employees to other job opportunities, which could result in Tiny Findings lacking the necessary employees needed to reopen the Center.
- Tiny Findings Executive Director and the Treasurer of the Board of Directors will work with scholarship families on a case-by-case basis to determine these families' tuition responsibilities.

### ***Other Emergencies***

Procedures for other types of emergencies vary, depending on the circumstances of the event. In most instances, the procedures either call for an evacuation of the Center or for the staff and children to shelter-in-place. For further details on the procedures for other types of emergencies, please refer to the Tiny Findings Emergency Response Plan.

Please note: because of our licensing requirements, certain events (e.g. loss of electricity or running water) would require Tiny Findings to close even if GAO remains open.

### ***Child Abuse and Maltreatment Procedures:***

At Tiny Findings all staff must participate in Mandated Child Abuse Reporter training provided through OSSE or by the DC Child and Family Services agency. This training must be completed before any employee begins to work with children in the classroom. This training must be renewed annually by the employee.

If any staff members suspects child abuse and maltreatment is suspected they are mandated to place a call to DC Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline. This call is to be completed under the advisement of the Executive Director, but staff does not need supervisory approval to place a call to the Child Abuse Hotline. As mandated reporters, staff are trained and are responsible for making the decision to place a call or not. Supervisors/managers will support staff when needed. If the situation is an emergency, staff must immediately call 9-1-1. All child abuse/neglect reports and any related



information must be handled in strictly confidential manner in compliance with Tiny Findings Confidentiality Policy.