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.**

Updated July 2026

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,

Dr. Sonia Middleton, EdD
Executive Director

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.

_____

Child's name

_____

Parent or guardian printed name

_____

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

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.

Program Leadership

At Tiny Findings, our leadership team works collaboratively to ensure the health, safety, and educational success of every child. The organizational structure below outlines the roles and responsibilities of our team members and the support available within each program.

Executive Board (Governance)
Provides oversight and strategic guidance for the Center.

Executive Director
Responsible for the overall management, operations, compliance, and quality of the program.

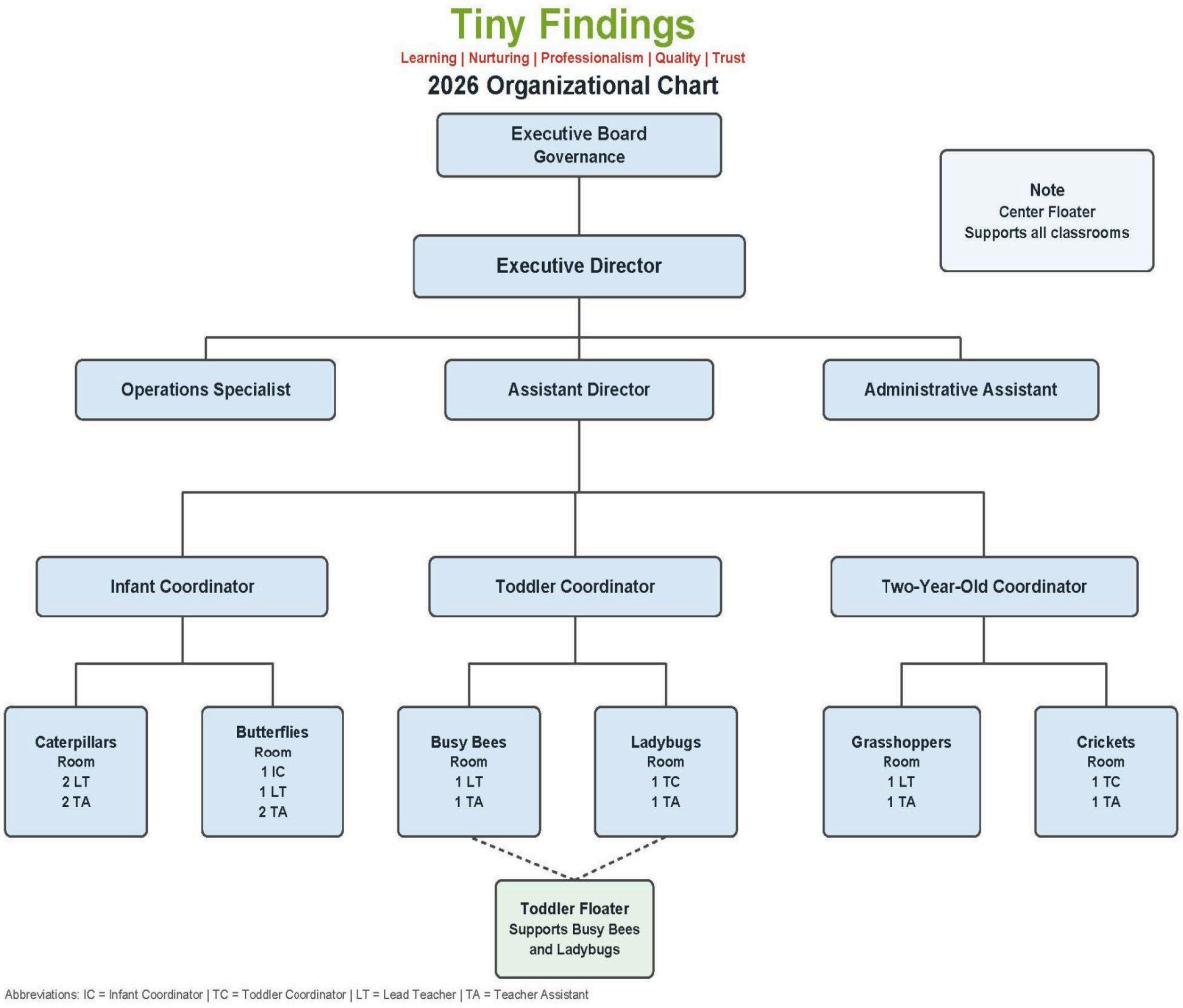
Assistant Director
Supports daily operations, staff supervision, family engagement, and program implementation.

Operations Specialist
Coordinates enrollment, tours, admissions, family communication, and operational support.

Administrative Assistant
Provides administrative and clerical support for Center operations.

Program Coordinators
Each age group is supported by a dedicated Program Coordinator who oversees curriculum implementation, staff development, family communication, and classroom quality.

Please see the Organizational Chart below for a visual representation of the Center's leadership and classroom structure.



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 its 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 be 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).

A signed District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) travel form is required prior to a field trip. Once completed, the form covers field trips for a five-year period. 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 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. It is recommended that each child receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

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
D.C. Regulations	1:4	1:4	1:4 (younger) 1:8 (older)
NAEYC guidelines	1:3 (group of 9) 1:4 (group of 12)	1:4	1:5 (group of 10) 1.6 (group of 12)
Tiny Findings Staffing**	1:3	1:4	1:4 (younger) 1:6 (older)*

*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 Bachelor's Degree, Tiny Findings has exceeded NAEYC criteria that at least 75% do so. In addition, all of the Tiny Findings Coordinators hold Bachelor's Degrees and/or Master's Degrees. In addition to all of our Assistant Teachers having their CDA in Infants and Toddlers. 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 three 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

Tiny Findings Child Development Center is committed to providing a fair, transparent, and equitable admissions process. Because demand for enrollment often exceeds available spaces, admission is not guaranteed. The policies outlined below govern enrollment, classroom placement, and transitions between programs.

Program Eligibility

Children are eligible to enroll at Tiny Findings beginning at three (3) months of age through the Two-Year-Old Program.

For the Two-Year-Old Program, children who turn three (3) years old before October 1 of the current program year are ineligible for enrollment.

Application Process

Applications are available at the Center and online at www.tinyfindings.org.

To be considered for enrollment, families must submit:

- A completed application
- The required non-refundable application fee
- Any additional requested documentation

Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Enrollment and Acceptance

Tiny Findings admits children without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or creed. The Center strives to accommodate children with special needs whenever reasonable accommodations can be made while maintaining a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for all children.

Children may be accepted before they are age-eligible to attend or before a family is ready to begin care. Families wishing to reserve a space until their child is eligible or ready to start must pay any applicable tuition and fees required to hold the space.

Upon acceptance:

- New families must pay a non-refundable enrollment fee to secure their child's space.
- Returning families must pay a non-refundable re-enrollment fee to reserve their child's placement for the upcoming program year.

Enrollment and re-enrollment fees are established annually.

Priority Enrollment

In recognition of the support provided by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), enrollment priority is granted to certain groups of families.

Priority is assigned in the following order:

1. Siblings of currently enrolled children
2. Children of GAO employees, approved contractors, designated building tenants, and Tiny Findings employees
3. Children of Legislative Branch employees
4. Children of other federal employees
5. Children from the general public

Sibling Priority

Sibling priority helps families maintain continuity of care by allowing multiple children from the same family to attend Tiny Findings simultaneously.

To maintain sibling priority:

- The currently enrolled sibling must remain enrolled for at least three (3) months after the younger sibling begins attendance.
- If the enrolled sibling withdraws before this period ends, the younger child's application will be reassigned to the appropriate priority category and may be subject to a new lottery selection process.
- If the younger child is not selected through the new process, the family will receive a minimum of thirty (30) days' notice before the child's enrollment ends.

Changes in Priority Status

If a family's priority status changes between the lottery selection date and the child's start date, any previously offered enrollment space may be withdrawn.

Infant Enrollment and Transitions

The number of infant spaces available each year is determined by current enrollment and classroom capacity. The Center will announce the number of available infant openings when lottery information is released.

Generally:

- Infants who will be at least twelve (12) months old by September 30 may transition to the Toddler Program for the following program year.
- Infants younger than twelve (12) months on September 30 will typically remain in the Infant Program and may transition later based on age, developmental readiness, and available space.

Enrollment Procedures

Once selected for enrollment:

1. Families will receive an enrollment offer by email.
2. Families must accept or decline the offer within one week.
3. Families accepting enrollment will be invited to attend a New Family Orientation.

For infants, families are encouraged to spend time in the classroom prior to their child's start date to become familiar with the teachers, routines, and environment.

Special Family Circumstances

The admissions process cannot anticipate every family situation, including adoptions, foster placements, multiple births, or other unique circumstances.

Families who believe their situation requires special consideration should contact Center management before a lottery is conducted so their circumstances may be reviewed.

Enrollment of Children with Special Needs

Tiny Findings is committed to creating an inclusive environment and seeks to accommodate children with special needs whenever reasonable accommodations can be made.

Enrollment decisions are made through an individualized review process conducted by the Executive Director, in consultation with the Board of Directors when appropriate.

The review considers whether the Center can meet the child's needs while continuing to provide quality care and services to all enrolled children.

Prior to enrollment, families may be asked to provide information regarding their child's:

- Physical development
- Cognitive development
- Social and emotional development
- Communication skills
- Medical or therapeutic needs

With family consent, Tiny Findings may collaborate with outside specialists and community resources to better support the child's success.

In some situations, additional staffing, equipment, or support services may be required. When these additional supports result in increased operating costs, families may be responsible for fees beyond standard tuition.

Goals of Inclusion

Tiny Findings works collaboratively with families to:

- Promote full participation in all aspects of the program
- Support family goals and priorities
- Foster growth across all developmental domains
- Build social competence and positive relationships
- Prevent secondary behavioral challenges related to communication or developmental delays

Holding a Child's Enrollment Space

Families who wish to temporarily withdraw a currently enrolled child and retain their space for up to four (4) months must submit a written request to the Executive Director.

Requests should include:

- The reason for the leave
- The anticipated dates of absence
- Any supporting documentation, if applicable

Requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Director and the Board Executive Committee, with consideration given to both family needs and Center operations.

Special consideration may be given to circumstances similar to those covered under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), including:

- Birth of a child
- Adoption or foster placement
- Serious illness of a parent, child, or spouse
- A parent or guardian's own serious health condition

Approval of a leave request may require continued payment of tuition at either the full or reduced rate, as determined by the Executive Director and Board of Directors.

Tiny Findings Lottery Process

Tiny Findings Child Development Center uses a lottery system when the number of applications exceeds the number of available enrollment spaces. The lottery process is designed to ensure a fair, transparent, and equitable method for filling available openings while honoring the Center's established enrollment priority categories.

Because infant enrollment is based on projected birth dates and age eligibility, infant families may participate in a different lottery cycle than families applying for toddler or two-year-old enrollment.

Lottery Schedule

Tiny Findings conducts lotteries throughout the year based on anticipated enrollment openings and program capacity.

Summer Lottery (Fall Enrollment)

Lottery Held: May
Eligible Children: All age groups (Infants, Toddlers, and Twos). Eligible infants must be born between the months of February and September.
Enrollment Begins: Start of the new academic year in August

The Summer Lottery is the primary enrollment lottery for Tiny Findings. Families wishing to enroll their child for the upcoming academic year should participate in this lottery.

Fall Lottery (Winter Enrollment)

Lottery Held: October
Eligible Children: Infants only- Eligible infants must be born between the months of October and January.
Enrollment Begins: January

The Fall Lottery is intended for families expecting a child or families with infants who will become age-eligible for enrollment between January and February.

Infants offered a space through the Fall Lottery may begin attendance once they reach three (3) months of age and all enrollment requirements have been completed.

Lottery dates, application deadlines, and the number of available openings will be communicated in advance through Center communications.

Application Process

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year.

To be included in a lottery, families must submit:

- A completed application
- The required application fee
- Any additional requested documentation

Families may apply if:

- They have a child currently eligible for enrollment; or
- They are expecting the birth or adoption of a child.

Only completed applications received by the published deadline will be included in the lottery.

Enrollment Priority Categories

Applications are grouped according to the Center's enrollment priorities before the lottery drawing takes place.

Priority is assigned in the following order:

1. Siblings of currently enrolled children
2. Children of GAO employees, approved contractors, designated building tenants, and Tiny Findings employees

3. Children of Legislative Branch employees
4. Children of other federal employees
5. Children from the general public

How the Lottery Works

After the application deadline:

1. Currently enrolled families complete re-enrollment for the upcoming program year.
2. The Center determines the number of available openings by age group.
3. Applications are grouped according to the child's age as of September 30 of the upcoming academic year.
4. Applications are sorted into the appropriate priority category.
5. A random drawing is conducted within each priority category.
6. Applications are ranked in the order drawn.
7. Enrollment offers are made until all available spaces have been filled.

Representatives of the Board of Directors observe the lottery process to ensure fairness and transparency.

Age Group Classifications and Classroom Placement

For lottery and classroom placement purposes, children are generally grouped according to their age as of September 30 of the upcoming academic year:

- **Infants:** 3–12 months
- **Toddlers:** 12–24 months
- **Twos:** 24–36 months

These age ranges are intended as general guidelines. Due to staffing patterns, licensing regulations, classroom capacity, group size requirements, and individual developmental readiness, some age ranges may overlap between classrooms.

The Center reserves the right to assign children to classrooms that best support their developmental needs while maintaining compliance with licensing requirements and program operations.

Children are placed in classrooms based on a combination of factors, including:

- Age eligibility
- Developmental readiness
- Available classroom space

- Group size requirements
- Staffing and licensing ratios

The Executive Director may approve limited exceptions for children whose birthdays fall shortly after the September 30 cutoff date when developmental readiness, classroom capacity, and staffing allow.

Families with questions regarding classroom placement are encouraged to contact Center leadership prior to the lottery process.

Enrollment Offers

Families selected through the lottery will receive an enrollment offer by email.

Families must:

- Accept or decline the offer within one week of receiving the offer letter.
- Complete all required enrollment forms and documentation.
- Submit the required enrollment fee.

Failure to respond within the designated timeframe may result in forfeiture of the offered space, and the Center may offer the opening to the next eligible applicant.

Waitlist Procedures

Applicants who are not immediately offered a space will be placed on a waitlist according to:

- Enrollment priority category
- Lottery ranking within that category

When a space becomes available, the Center will contact the next eligible family on the waitlist.

Families are responsible for maintaining current contact information with the Center. If a family cannot be reached or does not respond within the required timeframe, the Center may offer the space to the next family on the waitlist.

The waitlist remains active until the next lottery cycle or academic year unless otherwise communicated by the Center.

Holding an Offered Space

Families may choose to accept an enrollment offer before their child is ready to begin attendance.

If a family elects to delay their child's start date:

- The space will be reserved for the child.
- Tuition payments may be required to maintain the reserved space.
- Tuition requirements will be communicated in writing at the time of the enrollment offer.

Failure to maintain required tuition payments may result in forfeiture of the reserved enrollment space.

Infant Enrollment and Tuition Requirements

Infants offered enrollment through either lottery are not required to begin attendance until they reach three (3) months of age.

Once an infant reaches three (3) months of age and becomes eligible to attend the program, tuition payments will begin regardless of whether the family chooses to start attendance immediately. Tuition is required to maintain the child's reserved enrollment space.

Families will receive written notification of their enrollment date, tuition start date, and enrollment expectations in their acceptance letter.

Failure to begin tuition payments as outlined in the acceptance letter may result in forfeiture of the child's enrollment space.

Year-Round Enrollment Opportunities

Tiny Findings accepts applications throughout the year. While enrollment for many spaces is determined through the lottery process, openings may become available due to withdrawals, classroom transitions, changes in enrollment, or additional program capacity.

When openings exist, the Center will first review any applicable waitlists and enrollment priorities for that age group. If no waitlist exists or no eligible applicants remain, Tiny Findings may offer enrollment on a rolling basis throughout the year.

The Center reserves the right to fill available openings outside of the formal lottery process when doing so supports program operations, maintains classroom enrollment, and complies with established enrollment priorities.

Families are encouraged to submit applications at any time, regardless of the lottery schedule, to ensure consideration for future openings.

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 days 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.

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.

Tiny Findings Child Development Center

Program Year 2026–2027 Fee Schedule

Fee Type	2026–2027
Application Fee	**$150**
Re-Enrollment Fee (Returning Children)	**$350**
Enrollment Fee (New Children)	**$350**
Late Pick-Up Fee	**$25 per 10-minute increment**
Non-Tenant Tuition Surcharge	**+$50 per pay period**

Infant Tuition	**$1,215 per pay period**
Toddler Tuition	**$1,215 per pay period**
Twos Tuition	**$1,115 per pay period**

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 Operations Specialist.

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

The Board of Directors determines the annual tuition cost 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.

Summary of Fees**

Fee	Amount	Frequency
Lottery Re-Application Fee	$25	One time
Late Payment Fee	$20	Weekly
Volunteer hour fee	$25	Annually
Insufficient Funds/Bounced Payment fee	$20	Per instance

**Note: There is no enrollment fee for new children enrolling after January 1, 2026.*

Sibling Discount Policy

Upon request, Tiny Findings provides a sibling discount of 5 percent off the tuition of the oldest child(ren) at the Center for families with siblings enrolled at Tiny Findings.

This discount will apply to each of the older children at the Center; thus, families with more than 2 children may have multiple children receiving sibling discounts.

To request the sibling discount, families should send an email to the Executive Director and Operations Specialist. Families should copy the Board Treasurer on the request.

Upon approval, the discount(s) will be applied at the next tuition pull.

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.

*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 ten 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 10 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

As a nonprofit organization, Tiny Findings relies on family involvement and volunteer support to enhance programming, strengthen our community, and help offset operational costs. Family volunteers contribute valuable time, talents, and expertise that directly benefit our children, classrooms, and Center events.

Annual Volunteer Requirement

Each family is required to complete 10 volunteer hours per academic year, regardless of the number of children enrolled at the Center.

Volunteer hours must be completed between the start of the academic year and August 1 of the program year.

Volunteer hours are prorated from when you enroll in the center. The operations specialist will make you aware of our volunteer hours at time of enrollment.

Tracking Volunteer Hours

A Volunteer Hour Binder will be maintained in each classroom.

Families are responsible for recording their volunteer hours in the binder immediately following completion of the volunteer activity.

The Assistant Director will collect and review volunteer hours monthly and maintain the Center's official volunteer records.

Families are encouraged to periodically review their volunteer hours to ensure they remain on track to meet the annual requirement.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer opportunities may include, but are not limited to:

Classroom Support

- Nap watching
- Reading stories to children
- Assisting with classroom projects
- Preparing classroom materials
- Supporting special classroom activities

Center Events

- Moving-Up Ceremony
- Fall Festival
- Family events
- Bake sales
- Fundraisers
- Family engagement activities
- Special celebrations and community events

Professional Services

Families may volunteer professional skills and expertise, including:

- Annual report development
- Photography services
- Technology support

- Graphic design
- Marketing and communications
- Printing services
- Event planning
- Administrative support
- Other approved professional services

Leadership and Governance

- Board of Directors service
- Board committee participation
- Parent Association leadership
- Special projects assigned by Center Leadership

Nap Watching

Nap watching remains one of the most valuable volunteer opportunities at Tiny Findings.

Families who complete five (5) nap-watching shifts during the academic year will automatically satisfy the annual volunteer requirement.

Each nap-watching shift is valued at two (2) volunteer hours, for a total of 10 volunteer hours.

Nap watching allows teachers to participate in professional development, staff meetings, and program planning activities during operating hours.

Volunteer Buy-Out Option

Families who are unable to complete the volunteer requirement may elect to utilize the Volunteer Buy-Out Option.

The buy-out amount is $250 per family per academic year.

Families who choose the buy-out option should notify Center Leadership in writing prior to August 1.

Unfulfilled Volunteer Hours

Volunteer hours must be completed by August 1 of each academic year.

Families who have not completed the required volunteer hours by August 1 will be assessed a fee of $25 per unfulfilled volunteer hour.

Any outstanding volunteer fees will be automatically charged through the family's next scheduled tuition withdrawal.

Volunteer Recognition

Tiny Findings values the contributions of our families and recognizes that many families exceed the annual volunteer requirement.

Families who complete 15 or more volunteer hours during the academic year will be recognized for their outstanding service and commitment to the Tiny Findings community.

Recognition may occur through Center communications, family events, annual meetings, or other forms of appreciation determined by Center Leadership and the Board of Directors.

Volunteer Requirement Modifications

In rare circumstances, Center Leadership and the Board of Directors may modify volunteer requirements due to public health concerns, facility restrictions, or other operational needs.

Any changes to volunteer expectations will be communicated to families in writing.

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 5:50 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. 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 Lillio 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 Lillio.

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.

Families are required to abide by GAO security procedures. Failure to comply with GAO security procedures could result in family members being denied access to the building.

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 in the "Daily Schedules and Suggested Items to Bring From Home" section toward the end 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.

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 snacks in addition to catered lunch. Families may choose from regular or vegetarian meal options. Outside food is not allowed in place of Center-provided meals and snacks 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. 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.

Special Diets, Food Allergies, and Dietary Restrictions

Tiny Findings Child Development Center strives to provide nutritious meals and snacks that meet the needs of all children. If your child is unable to eat the meals or snacks served by the Center due to a medical condition, food allergy, intolerance, or other health-related dietary restriction, written documentation from a licensed physician or registered dietitian is required. The documentation must state that the child requires a special diet for health reasons and specify any necessary dietary modifications.

When a special diet is required, families may be responsible for providing food and beverages that meet their child's dietary needs. All food and beverage items brought from home must be clearly labeled with the child's name and date. To ensure food safety, these items should be given directly to classroom staff and stored in the designated kitchen area or on the designated refrigerator shelf. Food items should not be left in children's cubbies at any time.

Parents and guardians are required to notify the Executive Director and Operations Specialist in writing of any food allergies, food intolerances, dietary restrictions, or special dietary needs prior to enrollment or immediately upon diagnosis. Updated medical documentation must be provided whenever there are changes to a child's dietary needs or allergy status.

For the health and safety of your child, allergy and dietary restriction information will be shared with appropriate staff members and posted in designated areas, including classrooms, food preparation areas, and the Center kitchen. This information is used solely to help staff prevent exposure to allergens and ensure that each child's dietary needs are safely accommodated.

While Tiny Findings takes reasonable precautions to reduce the risk of exposure to allergens, the Center cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment. Families are encouraged to work closely with Center leadership to develop a plan that supports their child's health and safety.

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 tablet 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 tablet. 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 Procedures

Families are expected to bring their children to the Center ready to participate in the day's activities. Children who wear diapers should arrive in a clean, fresh diaper, and children who are toilet trained should be encouraged to use the restroom before or during drop-off.

Parents and guardians are required to accompany their child into the classroom and ensure that the child is greeted by a staff member before departing. Drop-off time

provides an opportunity for families to share important information with teachers regarding their child's health, mood, schedule changes, or other relevant concerns. It also allows teachers to communicate classroom plans and activities for the day.

Establishing a consistent drop-off routine helps support smooth transitions and sets children up for a successful day at the Center.

Pick-Up Procedures

Children may only be released to a parent, legal guardian, or an individual who has been authorized in writing by the child's parent or legal guardian. **Under no circumstances will Center staff escort or release a child to an individual waiting at the building security desk or outside of the Center.**

If someone other than a parent, legal guardian, or previously authorized individual will be picking up a child, the Center must receive written notification from the parent or legal guardian prior to the child's departure. Written authorization may be provided via email or signed note and must include the full name of the individual who is authorized to pick up the child.

All newly authorized individuals will be required to present a valid government-issued photo identification before a child is released to them. The Center reserves the right to verify the identity of any individual picking up a child.

Please note that the Center cannot refuse to release a child to a parent or legal guardian who has legal custody rights, presents reliable evidence of such rights, and provides valid photographic identification. Any court orders or custody agreements that restrict access to a child must be provided to the Executive Director and kept on file with the Center.

For the safety and security of all children, staff may request identification from any individual picking up a child if there is uncertainty regarding authorization or identity.

Illness and Exclusion Policy

Tiny Findings Child Development Center follows the regulations established by the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and the communicable disease guidelines issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). These guidelines are available in the Center office and on family communication boards.

To protect the health and safety of all children, families, and staff, children who exhibit signs or symptoms of illness that prevent them from comfortably participating in daily activities or require more care than staff can reasonably provide will be excluded from attendance.

Children may be excluded from the Center for any of the following symptoms or conditions:

Fever: A fever is defined as a temperature of **100.4°F (38°C) or higher**.

COVID-19: Children will be excluded if they have tested positive for COVID-19 or are awaiting COVID-19 test results following symptoms or a healthcare provider's recommendation.

Respiratory Illnesses: Green or yellow nasal discharge accompanied by a fever, severe or persistent cough, flu-like symptoms, RSV symptoms, or other contagious respiratory illnesses.

Ear Infections: Symptoms may include ear pain, ear drainage, difficulty hearing, loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, or pulling at the ears.

Diarrhea: Two or more episodes of loose or watery stool that cannot be contained in a diaper or are accompanied by other illness symptoms.

Vomiting: Two or more episodes of vomiting within a 24-hour period.

Severe Stomach Pain: Severe abdominal pain, cramping, or vomiting that interferes with a child's ability to participate in daily activities.

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye): Redness, swelling, or discharge from one or both eyes.

Sore Throat: Accompanied by swollen glands, white spots in the throat, difficulty swallowing, fever, or other signs of illness.

Rash: Any unidentified rash or a rash accompanied by fever, behavioral changes, or other symptoms of illness. Non-contagious rashes, such as diaper rash, do not require exclusion.

Head Lice: Children found to have live lice or nits will be excluded until treatment has been completed and all lice and nits have been removed.

Pick-Up and Return to Care

If a child becomes ill while at the Center, a parent, guardian, or authorized emergency contact will be notified. An authorized individual must pick up the child within **one hour** of notification.

Children who are excluded due to illness must remain home for the remainder of the day and the following calendar day unless otherwise directed by a healthcare provider or public health guidance.

The Center may require a healthcare provider's note before a child is readmitted. Children may return when symptoms have resolved, they can comfortably participate in daily activities, and any required exclusion period has ended.

Communicable Diseases

Parents and guardians must notify Center Management if their child is diagnosed with a communicable disease or infection, including but not limited to COVID-19, strep throat, conjunctivitis (pink eye), RSV, influenza (flu), or Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease.

When appropriate, families will be notified of potential exposure to communicable illnesses while maintaining the confidentiality of the affected child and family.

Mild Illnesses

Young children commonly experience minor illnesses such as runny noses, mild coughs, sore throats, and ear infections. Children with mild symptoms may remain at the Center if they are able to participate in regular activities, do not have a fever or other exclusionary symptoms, and do not require care that would compromise staff's ability to supervise other children. The Executive Director and classroom staff will make the final determination regarding a child's ability to remain at the Center.

Reporting Absences and Tuition

Parents and guardians should notify the Center as soon as possible when their child will be absent due to illness, vacation, appointments, or other planned reasons.

Tuition is not adjusted or refunded for absences due to illness, vacation, medical appointments, quarantine requirements, or short-term classroom closures related to communicable disease exposure. Regular tuition payments remain due in accordance with the Center's tuition agreement.

Medication and Injuries

Parents and guardians may administer medication to their children in the Center. 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.

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

1. Parents/guardians provide staff with prescription and non-prescription medication in the original bottle with a pharmacy 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 prescription and 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.

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. The classroom teacher or the director will administer medication.

6. We cannot administer any medication that has expired. We will refrigerate, in a locked container, those medications that require it.

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 and Chronic Medical Conditions

If your child requires medication for a life-threatening allergy or chronic medical condition, such as severe food allergies, asthma, seizures, diabetes, or insect sting allergies, the medication may be stored at the Center and administered as needed while your child is enrolled.

Prior to your child's first day of attendance, families must provide all required medications, supplies, and completed authorization forms. Medication authorization forms must be signed by both the child's parent/guardian and healthcare provider. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that all medications remain current and unexpired. Expired medications will be returned to the family and must be replaced immediately.

No medication will be administered without the required documentation and authorization on file.

Allergies

Parents and guardians are responsible for informing the Center of all known allergies, including food, medication, insect, and environmental allergies, and for notifying the Center promptly of any changes to their child's allergy status.

For children with severe food allergies or dietary restrictions that cannot be safely accommodated by the Center's meal program, families may be required to provide meals and snacks that meet their child's specific dietary needs.

Before a child with allergies begins attendance, the family must work with Center leadership and classroom staff to develop an Individual Allergy Action Plan. The plan must include:

- The child's known allergens.
- Signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction.
- Emergency medications and administration instructions.
- Emergency contact information.
- Procedures for obtaining emergency medical care.

The Allergy Action Plan must be reviewed and updated annually, whenever a child transitions to a new classroom, or whenever there is a change in the child's allergy status or treatment plan.

Injury Procedures

The safety and well-being of every child is a top priority at Tiny Findings Child Development Center. In the event of an injury, staff will assess the situation and respond appropriately based on the severity of the injury.

If staff determine that a child may require emergency medical treatment, 9-1-1 will be contacted immediately. Parents/guardians and emergency contacts will be notified as soon as possible.

For minor injuries, appropriate first aid will be provided and families will be informed either by telephone, written incident report, or at pick-up, depending on the nature and severity of the injury.

While the Center takes every precaution to provide a safe environment, families should understand that young children naturally engage in active play and exploration. Minor bumps, bruises, and scratches may occur as part of normal childhood activities.

At least two staff members who are certified in Pediatric CPR and First Aid are on-site at all times during operating hours.

Potty Training Guidance for Families

At Tiny Findings, we partner closely with families to support each child's potty-training journey. Because every child develops at their own pace, our goal is to create a consistent, positive experience between home and school. The following guidance

outlines our approach and offers helpful tips for families beginning this important developmental milestone.

Signs of Readiness

Children may be ready to begin potty training when they demonstrate several of the following signs:

- Staying dry for longer periods of time.
- Showing interest in the bathroom or observing others using the toilet.
- Expressing discomfort with wet or soiled diapers.
- Following simple directions.
- Communicating the need to use the bathroom.
- Pulling pants up and down with minimal assistance.

If your child is demonstrating several of these signs, it may be an appropriate time to begin the potty-training process.

Introducing the Potty

Create a Routine: Offer regular opportunities to use the toilet throughout the day, such as after meals, before naps and bedtime, and every few hours. Consistency helps children develop successful habits.

Use Clear Language: Rather than asking, "Do you want to use the potty?" try using a confident statement such as, "It's potty time. Let's go together." This helps establish expectations and routines.

Ensure Comfort: Provide a potty chair or toilet adapter that feels safe, secure, and comfortable for your child.

Setting Children Up for Success

Dress for Independence: Clothing with elastic waistbands and simple fasteners allows children to use the toilet more independently and reduces frustration.

Model the Process: When appropriate, children may benefit from observing trusted adults or siblings. Use simple, matter-of-fact language such as, "Pee goes in the potty," or "Your body is telling you it's time to use the bathroom."

Use Positive Reinforcement: Celebrate effort and progress with praise, encouragement, high-fives, or other simple rewards. Focus on successes rather than perfection.

Respond Calmly to Accidents: Accidents are a normal part of learning. A helpful response is, "Oops, pee goes in the potty. Let's clean up together." We encourage families to avoid punishment, shame, or negative reactions.

Attendance and Clothing Expectations

To maintain a safe, sanitary, and developmentally appropriate learning environment, children who are actively potty training must wear either a pull-up or underwear while attending the Center.

Children may not attend school or remain at school without appropriate undergarments during the potty-training process. Families should send children in comfortable clothing that supports independence, including pants and undergarments that can be easily pulled up and down.

Families are encouraged to provide multiple changes of clothing, including underwear, socks, pants, and shoes, to support accidents that may occur throughout the day.

Home and School Partnership

Successful potty training requires consistency between home and school. Families are encouraged to communicate regularly with classroom staff regarding their child's progress, routines, and any challenges they may be experiencing. Teachers will provide updates and work collaboratively with families to support each child's development.

A Note on Pace

Every child develops at their own rhythm. Some children learn quickly, while others require additional time and practice. Temporary setbacks or regressions may occur during periods of change, such as transitioning to a new classroom, welcoming a new sibling, traveling, or experiencing other significant life events.

Our shared goal is to help children develop confidence, independence, and positive toileting habits. We encourage families to remain patient, supportive, and responsive to their child's individual needs throughout the process.

For additional guidance or questions regarding potty training, please speak with your child's Lead Teacher or Program Coordinator.

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 monthly email newsletter containing relevant information from the Executive Director and periodic email communications and notifications via Lillio, as warranted. Additionally, teachers communicate with families daily through the online application Lillio and through email.

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 families with ongoing information about their child's growth, development, and learning is an important part of the Tiny Findings program. Family-teacher conferences are offered on an individual basis throughout the year to discuss each child's progress, strengths, accomplishments, and developmental goals. Families may also request a conference at any time to discuss concerns, ask questions, or receive additional information about their child's experiences at the Center.

At Tiny Findings, we view children as both unique individuals and valued members of a learning community. Our educational approach supports all areas of development, including cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and language development. We also recognize the importance of each child's interests, learning styles, and dispositions toward learning.

Teachers document children's growth and learning in a variety of ways, including:

- Written observations
- Photographs
- Anecdotal records
- Work samples
- Classroom projects and activities

Documentation is collected during meaningful activities, daily routines, and play experiences with familiar materials and peers. Examples of children's learning may also be displayed within the classroom to help families better understand the curriculum and developmental progress occurring throughout the day.

Each child has an individual portfolio that reflects their growth, development, and accomplishments over time. Portfolio assessments focus on a child's progress and emerging skills rather than comparing children to predetermined standards or other children. Teachers collect work samples, observations, and developmental information throughout the year to provide a comprehensive picture of each child's learning journey.

In addition to ongoing observations and portfolio assessments, Tiny Findings utilizes the **Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ®)** and **Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional (ASQ®)** as developmental screening tools. These research-based screening instruments help identify children's strengths and support the early detection of potential developmental concerns in areas such as communication, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, problem-solving, personal-social development, and social-emotional well-being. Screening results are shared with

families and may be used to guide classroom planning, individualized support strategies, and referrals for additional evaluation when appropriate.

Formal portfolio assessments are completed three times each program year:

- **September** – Baseline Assessment
- **January** – Mid-Year Assessment
- **May** – End-of-Year Assessment

Assessment information is shared with families during conferences and through ongoing communication. These assessments help families gain a deeper understanding of their child's unique developmental strengths, interests, and areas of growth while supporting collaborative goal-setting between home and school.

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.

Contact Information For Center

Contact Information

Main Center Number: 202-512-3122

Classroom Phones

- Caterpillars: 202-512-2871
- Butterflies: 202-512-3877
- Busy Bees: 202-512-5885
- Ladybugs: 202-512-8445
- Grasshoppers: 202-512-7683
- Hornets: 202-512-9266

Center Leadership & Administration

Staff Member	Position	Phone Number
Dr. Sonia Middleton	Executive Director	202-512-4994
Mrs. Ionie Scott	Program Director	202-512-6948

Mr. David Zangueneh	Operations Manager	202-512-6333
Ms. Brittany Lyles	Administrative Assistant	202-512-3122

Please Note: Classroom phones are intended for center business and urgent communication. For general questions, attendance updates, billing inquiries, enrollment information, and administrative matters, families are encouraged to contact the main office at **202-512-3122**. For concerns regarding your child's program, families may also contact the appropriate member of the leadership team listed above.

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 childcare arrangements.

Transitions from Home to Center

Starting at a new childcare program is an important milestone for both children and families. At Tiny Findings, we recognize that every child adjusts at their own pace. Our teachers work closely with families to learn each child's routines, preferences, and comfort strategies to support a successful transition.

Families can help by establishing consistent drop-off routines, providing a brief and positive goodbye, and communicating any concerns with classroom staff. While some children may experience separation anxiety, most adjust quickly with consistency, patience, and support.

We view the transition process as a partnership between families and educators and are committed to helping every child feel safe, secure, and confident in their new environment.

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)
- Pacifiers, if desired (labeled with name)
- 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 two's 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 and Two's. 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 Big 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 Big 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)
- 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)

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.[1]

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.

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

During a government shutdown, GAO restricts access to the GAO headquarters to essential staff only. As such, Tiny Findings families and staff

- 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.
- Tiny Findings will, to the extent possible, try to resume normal operations when GAO reopens following a government shutdown.

[1] 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.

- 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 Lillio and 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.

Tiny Findings' Board of Directors believes continuing to pay employees, despite a shutdown, is essential to retaining qualified and talented staff. Without paying staff during a shutdown, 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. Therefore, in the event of a government shutdown that affects GAO, Tiny Findings will collect tuition for the duration of the shutdown.

- In the case of a government shutdown that lasts more than two weeks, families may approach the Board to discuss options for paying tuition retroactively once the shutdown ends and retroactive pay is received.
- Tiny Findings' Executive Director and the Board of Directors will work with families facing financial hardships and/or unique circumstances (e.g., families in which all caregivers are required to work during the period of the shutdown and alternative childcare must be arranged) on a case-by-case basis to determine these families' tuition responsibilities.
- In the event of a prolonged government shutdown, the Board will provide updates to families as appropriate.

Please reach out to the Board at tfboard@tinyfindingscdc.org with any questions.

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.