Diapers 2 Diplomas Daycare

Quality care for children aged Birth-2 years

Handbook of Policies

Version 2.0

Priscilla and David Morse

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**Welcome to Daycare!**

 We are so glad to have you here! My family and I are very excited to get to know you and your child and to work together to care for your child. We want to give him/her the best possible child care experience! Remember, when your child is here, he or she is one of the family, not one of a crowd!

**About Our Family**

Priscilla is the primary care provider. She is 27 years old and graduated from Northeastern Illinois University in 2005. Her degree is in International Relations and Economics. Her original plan was to attend Northwestern University’s School of Law, in fact she even completed all the necessary prerequisites for the Juris Doctorate program and scored a 170 on the LSAT before deciding that it was not the right time for that endeavor. She is currently working on her master’s degree in early childhood education through Ashford University. She loves children of all ages and is really a kid at heart. When not providing childcare, she reads, writes, plays computer and video games, plays board games, and cooks.

 David works as a Geek Squad Agent at Best Buy. He works early shifts so he is always home to help out with daycare in the afternoons! He is 44 years old and graduated from Columbia University in 1984 with a degree in Communications and spent time as a radio and television sportscaster in Chicago. He is currently enrolled in Grand Canyon University working on his MBA. He loves kids as much as I do and when he’s home he’s a full-time second caregiver—we often tag team, one of us taking some/all of the kids outside while the other stays inside to take care of babies or kids who didn’t want to go out, or to clean up the house, or just relax for a little while. When he has free time he also plays computer games, and video games.

 Our oldest son Dylan was born in March of 2003. He is your typical little boy, he loves to run around outside with his dogs and spend weekends with his grandpa learning how to drive the golf cart! Jack is our youngest, he just turned one and he’s your average toddler! He loves cars, blocks, and Weebles! Our kids are very sweet and generous, and also very active.

 Our dogs are Marley, and her daughters Lola and Claire, the puppies were born May 23rd of this year and they are little balls of energy! They are good natured and love kids, but we do keep them separated from the daycare room.

**Trial Period**

The first ten days of child care are considered a trial period. During this period of integration, the parent or provider may terminate care at any time without further notice. After completion of the trial period, parents must give four weeks written notice before termination.

**Non-Discrimination Statement**

I do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or anything else you can think of.

**Hours**

Daycare is open from 6am-6pm Monday through Friday, and you can contract up to 10 hours of that 12 hour range.

**Arrival**

 Arrival time can be tough on small children, especially at peak ages for separation anxiety. Your child may cry when you leave, and believe me, I know how tough it is to leave your child when he/she is upset! I promise that all the children usually settle down within one minute of the door closing. To help everyone’s day start off well, please be brief when dropping off your child.

1. Inform me of any important information (when they woke up, when they ate, when their diaper was changed last, changes to the pick-up time, etc.).
2. Remove coat, socks, and shoes if your child is unable to do so independently.
3. Give them their hugs and kisses
4. Assure them you (or whoever is picking them up) will see them after work.
5. Leave as quickly as possible.

Thank you for respecting these guidelines to ensure the best beginning of the day for your child!

Departure

When you do arrive to pick up your child, I will give you a quick rundown of your child’s day. I try to include what they ate, when, and how much; when and how they slept; anything unusual I might have noticed or funny that might have happened. I try to keep this brief, however, especially if there are still other children that I need to care for. Please be considerate of my time and help us make pick-up go smoothly!

If someone else is picking up your child, please notify me in advance and inform anyone who is picking up your child that I will ask for identification if I do not know them.

 If you are going to be late, please let me know as soon as possible so that I and your child will know when to expect you. I try to have your child’s belongings gathered and your child ready to go (clean face and hands, dry diaper, etc) so that departure is smooth. Knowing when parents are expected also helps me decide about giving naps to the littlest ones.

Communication

 I know things can be hectic at drop off or pick up time, so there will always be a planner on the banister by my front door. If you have plans to use vacation days, grandma and grandpa want to keep the kids for a couple days, you’re going to be dropping off late on a certain dates, whatever the case may be, I ask that you write this information down in the planner on the date it is to occur, in addition to verbally telling me of your plans. I will also use the planner to list dates that I will be closed, or days that the kids need to be picked up early, etc. This way we both have a sort of “paper trail” to refer back to if either one of us forgets dates and events that were mentioned.

**Open Door Policy**

 You are welcome to visit the daycare anytime your children are present. The front door will be locked during the day. This is done for the security of your children and our home. If you need to call during the day, please be aware that I may not be able to answer the phone at that time because I am with the children (we may be outside or I may be putting someone down for a nap or changing a diaper). Leave a message and I will return your call as soon as I can. I also check my email at various times during the day. My email address is priscilla.morse@gmail.com.

**Late Policy**

 I know that life happens, and things might come up that will cause you to be late picking up your child. Trust me; I understand. If it’s going to be significantly outside the usual “window” of pick-up, I appreciate a call or email to let me know as soon as possible. If lateness becomes a problem or is habitual, I may have to resort to using my late fee policy:

 A late fee of $5 for the first 10 minutes or portion there-of will be assessed if your child is picked up later than your contracted hours. After the first ten minutes, $1/minute is added to that fee. This is due upon pick-up.

**Daily schedule**

 For the most part, I keep a rather flexible schedule that allows plenty of wiggle room for different children’s needs, attendance schedules, and the whims of the day. In general, though, here’s what to expect:

Infant

 All day: eat, play, sleep, poop, grow, giggle, snuggle, cuddle

 Toddler

 Before 8 AM—Quiet play

 8 AM – 9 AM—breakfast as needed, play

 9 AM – 11 AM—morning naps

 11 AM – Noon—outside/large muscle play

 12 PM – 12:30 PM—free play while I make lunch

 12:30 PM – 1 PM—lunch!

 1 PM – 3 PM –afternoon naps/quiet time

 3 PM – 4 PM—snack/free play

 4 PM - 6 PM—outside or inside free play

**Nap/Quiet Time**

 I try to have everyone napping together. Very young infants are the exception, of course, as their sleep needs are very different from those of older children. I do not force children to sleep when they are not tired but I do try to guide everyone to a similar schedule: naps at 9 and 1 for those who nap twice a day and naps at 1 for those who nap only once a day.

 For those children who do not nap at all I do enforce quiet time from 1 PM until 3 PM. I do turn the TV on to Sesame Street or a similar show.

**Outside Time**

 We try to spend plenty of time outside every day, in most weathers and temperatures. We are not afraid of going puddle jumping in the rain or of building snowmen and making snow angels in the snow. With this in mind, please be sure to either send your child with appropriate outerwear for the day’s weather forecast or consider keeping the appropriate gear here for the season. I will send home newsletters each season with a reminder about what I need you to provide for your child to go outside for that season.

**Meals/Snacks**

 **Food Philosophy**

A child will never be forced to eat more than he/she wants. Children are not made to finish their food or ‘clean their plates.’ I do not force children to eat a food they do not like, although I may strongly encourage them to take at least one bite. Food will never be withheld for any reason (i.e. not letting a child eat a snack because of poor behavior).

**Typical menu**

 Meals always include a vegetable (well, except breakfast), usually include a fruit, have protein, and a starch. I use fresh or frozen veggies, never canned, and usually fresh fruit. Some fruits are canned, including peaches, pears, and pineapple. I only serve canned fruit that’s packed in juice, not syrup.

 **Food from home policy**

Please do not bring your child with food from home unless you’ve cleared it with me first (special occasion, baby food for infant, etc). When a child comes with food from home, the other children usually want what that child has and it is unfair to the other kids who want the same “treat” that child has. I will never refuse food to a hungry child; if your child is hungry at drop-off, let me know and I will get him or her a snack to tide them over until the next snack or meal time.

 **Birthdays and special treats**

If you would like to send a special birthday treat or a treat for some other occasion, let me know a week in advance so I can make you aware of any food allergies and plan for the treat in our meal plan.

**Activities**

 We are constantly adding new toys, but here’s an idea of the different things we have:

 **Inside**

Play kitchen and accessories, dolls and doll accessories, stuffed animals, grocery cart and cash register, Little People, unit blocks, letter blocks, bristle blocks, Legos, puzzles, cars, books, wooden trains, plastic animals, play tent, ball pit, play tunnels, play house…

 **Outside**

 **S**lides, sandbox, ride on toys, Cozy Coupes, tricycles, balls, wading pool, sprinkler, sidewalk chalk…

 **Toy Rotation**

 To keep things fresh I do rotate toys on an as-needed basis as I notice that things aren’t being played with.

**Supplies**

 **What You Provide**

To Be Left Here:

 2 full changes of clothing—everyone—consider more if PT’ing

 1 package diapers (if your child is in disposables)—anyone not PT’d

 Diaper rash cream—anyone not PT’d

Formula/frozen breastmilk—infants only

1 full bottle preferred pain reliever/fever reducer--everyone

1 bottle teething tablets—if used

Lovey/blanket/sleep sack/small pillow/etc for nap time—if needed

2 extra pacifiers—if needed

 Seasonal (Summer):

 Swimsuit—everyone, I will wash as needed

 Swim towel—everyone, I will wash as needed

 Sunscreen—if you want your child to use it

 Seasonal (Winter):

 Extra hat/gloves/mittens—everyone

 Snowpants/boots—can be left or brought when there’s snow on the ground

Every other Monday, a pack of diapers and a can of formula need to be brought to daycare. Diaper cream is to be replaced monthly. If your child has allergies, or you just have preferences other than what is specified on the “What I Provide” section, then you will be responsible for providing those things for your child. For example: your toddler is lactose intolerant and only drinks rice milk, that will need to be provided by you, every Monday at drop off. Please remember to bring these items with you!

 **What I Provide**

 Wipes

 Bibs

 Food

 Bottles/Sippy Cups

**What to bring daily**

 Diapers and wet bag (for those in cloth diapers)

 Lovey/blanket if can’t be left

 Any current medication the child may need while at daycare

 Appropriate clothing for the day (rain jacket, snow gear, boots, etc)

**Behavior Expectations**

 I am well-versed in child development and so I never expect behavior that is inappropriate to a child’s age or stage of development. I let children be children, but at the same time, hold them to a high behavior standard as I believe that children are capable of more than many people give them credit for.

 Basically, we have three rules: 1) Be kind to yourself, 2) Be kind to others, 3) Be kind to the space around you. That last on refers to the house, yard, toys, etc.

 I do foster self-sufficiency and therefore encourage children to do things themselves as much as they are able—serve themselves at mealtimes, take off or put on jackets, socks, and shoes, go up or down stairs…these are just a few examples.

**House Rules**

 **These are the main rules the children are expected to follow while at my house:**

* Be kind to yourself
* Be kind to others
* Be kind to the space around you
* Food and drink stay in the kitchen
* When we clean up, you do one job per year old you are
* Stay quiet during quiet time
* Sit quietly and listen during circle time or group activities
* Do not open the back gate without a grown-up
* Have fun!!!

**Guidance and Discipline**

 When behavior issues arise, here is a sampling of the techniques I use:

 Redirection

 Removing child from situation

 Removing situation from child

 Natural/Logical consequences

 Counting to 10

 Time Out (last resort or for hurting others; 1 minute per year of age)

 No matter the technique, I always make sure to explain to the child exactly what about their behavior was undesireable and how they can make a better choice next time.

**Sharing Policy**

 What happens when Child A snatches a toy away from Child B?

 At our daycare, Child A gives the toy back to Child B and we have a talk about taking turns. Child A is prompted to tell Child B that he or she would like a turn with the toy after Child B is done. I then help Child A find something to do in the meantime while we wait for Child B to finish.

**Sign Language**

 I use ASL with all my infants and toddlers; I find that most of them pick up on the basic signs very quickly (eat, more, milk, sleep) and others come with time. I love using sign language with pre-verbal children, as it gives them the means to communicate before they can speak.

**Cleanliness**

 I am far from a perfect housekeeper—I do my best, but remember that I am a working parent just like you! I spend most of the day interacting with and playing with the kids, so at the end of the day, the house sometimes looks a bit like a hurricane came through. Except not as wet. Hopefully.

**House Cleaning**

Every day I do the dishes, wipe off the table, sweep the kitchen floor, put away all toys, vacuum, and wipe down the sink counter and toilet. Every week (Friday night), I do a more thorough cleaning that includes mopping the kitchen, cleaning the entire bathroom, changing sheets in the naproom, and more.

 **Hand washing**

 I wash my hands many times a day, including, but not limited to: before and after changing diapers, before and after preparing and serving food, after being outside, after wiping runny nose, before administering medication or first aid, after coming into contact with any bodily fluid, and after using the restroom. Children are instructed in proper hand washing techniques and they wash their hands before and after eating, after being outside, and after using the restroom.

**Toy washing**

 Toys are cleaned as need or after they’ve been in someone’s mouth. Every few weeks I gather up things such as play kitchen items, dolls and doll blankets, legos, etc, and wash them in whatever manner is appropriate to the toy in question.

 **Bedding**

Children’s sheets get changed and washed every week (Friday evening, if you’re curious) or if they’ve had a diaper issue or been ill. Sheets are also changed between children if the napping space is to be shared. Blankets and lovies that are left here get laundered about once a month as these items are typically confined to naptimes.

**Money Matters**

 **Rates**

 Full-time: $100/week

 Part-time: $25/day

 Drop In: $5/hour

**Payment Policy**

 Payment for the week *ahead* is due on Monday or your first contracted day of the week. I accept payment via cash or check.

 **NSF Policy**

Checks are an acceptable form of payment unless you present me with a bad check. In this event, you are responsible for all charges I may incur from my bank as a result of your bad check. This includes, but is not limited to: NSF fees, bounced check fees, and overdrafts as a result of not having that money in the account. I will notify you immediately in the event of a bounced check. Child care will be halted immediately and will not resume until you reimburse me for the full amount of the check, all related bank fees and expenses, and an additional $30 NSF fee. You will continue to be charged for all contracted days. Reimbursement and all future payments must be made in cash.

**Holidays**

 The following are **paid** holidays—if they fall on a contracted day for you. Family Child Care will be **closed**  on these days:

 New Year’s Day

 Memorial Day

 Independence Day

 Labor Day

 Thanksgiving

 Friday after Thanksgiving

 Christmas Day

**Vacations**

 **My vacation**

As part of our contract, I receive 14 days of vacation per calendar year. I try to notify parents at least one week, usually one month, in advance of any scheduled days off.

 **Your vacation**

Each daycare family gets one contracted week’s worth of vacation, if these days go unused they do NOT roll over into the new year. Vacation time resets January 1st. I will need at least one weeks notice when you plan to use your vacation time. Any time away from daycare after you have used your vacation days are to be paid.

 **Inclement Weather/Bizarre Situations**

 If daycare must be closed for reasons that are beyond reasonable human control, the day will count as unpaid and will not count towards vacation for either me or for you. This includes, but is not limited to:

Snow (If Jackson-Madison County Schools are closed, call me to see if we’re open)

 Power outage of 3 hrs or more (this creates unsafe conditions)

 Fire

 Sewage Backup

 Water outage

 Gas leak in area

 Tornado

 Wild Monkey Attack (okay, now I’m being silly…)

**Sick Child Policy**

We at Diapers 2 Diplomas Daycare understand that all children have minor illnesses from time to time that do not prevent them from participating in daycare; however, there are certain circumstances where children should not attend.

Symptoms for Exclusion
A child will not be able to attend daycare if he/she exhibits any of the symptoms for exclusion such as those listed below, without a physician’s note which clearly states that the child can participate in activities without transferring any sickness to another child. Those include but are not limited to:

* *Severe* sore throat/coughing/colds or strep throat.
* Fever of 101°F or above.
* Green or yellow discharge from nose or eyes.
* Ear discharge.
* Head lice, nits or scabies.
* Three or more watery stools within 24 hours.
* Two or more occasions of vomiting within 24 hours.
* Chicken pox.
* Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
* Mumps, measles, influenza, whooping cough, coupe, impetigo, tuberculosis, rubella, etc.
* Any type of body rash (if due to allergies then a doctor’s note will be needed).
* Intestinal worms, ringworms, pin worms etc.
* Anything contagious and transmittable.
* Too tired or fussy to participate in normal activities.

Your child may return to the daycare 24 hours after the symptoms of the illness have subsided without the aid of medication and is not contagious and/or if accompanied by a physician’s note.
In the situation when a child arrives ill it will be under the childcare provider’s discretion as to whether the child is fit to attend or not. If the childcare provider deems that the child is not well enough to attend the child is to be taken home.
If a child becomes ill while at the childcare home the childcare provider will contact the child’s parent’s and ask to pick the child up within the hour. During the time spent waiting to be picked up the ill child will be separated from the other children, comforted and given the opportunity to rest in a quiet area.

**Sick Provider Policy**

Priscilla and her family must also adhere to the above “Sick Child” policies. If Priscilla, David, Dylan or Jack are ill, then Priscilla will call all parents scheduled for that day by 7 AM to let them know. Priscilla and David will use common sense in determining whether or not to call off daycare, to have one of them be the sole provider for the day (i.e. David calls off work if Priscilla is sick), or to just tough it out. Priscilla and David do not want to see any of the children fall ill, and will decide accordingly whether they are too sick to have daycare children in the house, and will make the same call regarding Dylan and Jack.

**Safety**

 **Fire Drills and Storm Drills**

 Fire drills and tornado drills are held at least once a month. Our Tornado safe zone is the interior hall bathroom. In the event of a tornado warning, we will immediately move there, no matter what.

 **Toy Repair/Replacement**

I check over all toys as I am putting them away each day; any that are damaged, I set aside to be disposed of or repaired later. Toys that are deliberately damaged to the extent they cannot be repaired MAY be required to be replaced by the parents of the child who damaged it—example, if a three year old rips a book to pieces on purpose, Priscilla may ask the parents to purchase a new copy for the daycare. We do understand that our toys and books see hard use and will get damaged through normal wear and tear—replacement of these items is part of your tuition. Deliberate damage goes above “normal wear and tear” and we ask parents to trust our judgement in determining whether something was deliberate or just a part of the job.

**Medical Emergency Procedures**

In the event of an illness or injury that requires immediate medical intervention, Priscilla will first call 911, then call the parents of the child in question, then call for a back-up caregiver, and finally will call the parents of the rest of the children currently in care. If Priscilla must accompany a child in the ambulance, a back-up care provider will be in attendance until all other children have been picked up.

**Substitute Caregiver**

David Morse, Priscilla’s husband, is the primary back-up caregiver. If for some reason he is unavailable, then Priscilla’s other back-up provider is Eula Wilson, her mother.

**Miscellaneous**

 **Visitor Policy**

Under normal circumstances, the only visitors that will be present at our home during the daycare day will be Priscilla’s mother and father.

 **Transportation**

At this point in time, the vehicles owned by Priscilla and David can seat at most one other child. As such, they do not transport daycare children except in emergency circumstances.

 **Mandated Reporter**

As a professional daycare provider, Priscilla is required *by law* to report to the proper authorities any suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

 **Cleanliness**

 My job is to care for the children, and during the day this is my main focus. As such, the house is not always going to be in perfect condition when you pick your child up in the afternoon, or even when you drop your child off in the morning—though rare, there are evenings when I have something to do or am just simply too tired to face cleaning up after a long day. Rest assured that while my house may not be *neat*, it is *clean*.

**Termination Policy**

This agreement may be terminated by either party by giving four-week's written notice if the child or children are to be permanently withdrawn from daycare. Four-week's pay will be accepted in lieu of the four-week's written notice. The Provider will also give the Daycare Family four-week's written notice of intent to cancel this agreement except in cases of family emergency (Provider's) or gross misconduct on the part of the parent or child.