



**6 weeks – 12 years**

8260 Elmwood Street  
Skokie, IL 60077  
(847) 675-6052 (Telephone)  
(847) 675-8339 (Facsimile)

**24 months – 12 years**

8064 Lincoln Avenue  
Skokie, IL 60077  
(847) 675-6040 (Telephone)  
(847) 329-9095 (Facsimile)

**6 weeks – 35 months**

8106 Lincoln Avenue  
Skokie, IL 60077  
(847) 675-6600 (Telephone)  
(847) 675-7995 (Facsimile)

## **PARENT HANDBOOK-(SUMMARY)**

Compiled to help parents understand the purpose, policies, and requirements of our infant, toddler, preschool, kindergarten, before and after school, and summer camp programs.

### **Mission Statement**

*To provide a family-centered atmosphere that fosters the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of children of varying abilities and diverse backgrounds. Our curriculum, lesson plans and learning atmosphere are designed to assist children in catapulting their creativity while at the same time encouraging them to experience the freedom that comes through exploration.*

*With this in mind, we provide a loving and nurturing early learning environment that promotes the growth and development of the whole child.*

**UPDATED 5.15.2012**

## **Swift Child Care Program Philosophy**

The curriculum is based on the philosophy that young children learn through active exploration in an environment which is rich in materials and opportunities to play, socialize, converse, work, and negotiate with others.

The classrooms are planned to encourage curiosity, exploration, and problem solving in an atmosphere of warmth, affection and respect for each child. Teachers plan experiences based on children's interests and appropriate educational concepts.

Children may work individually or collaboratively, and may choose whether or not to participate in a project. Children are actively involved in experiences which include foundations of math, science, social studies, creative art, language arts, music, movement, and dramatic play.

All interrelated aspects of the child's growth and development are considered – intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and creative.

Activities, experiences, and teacher-child interactions are constantly measured and evaluated in terms of the following program goals.

To provide an atmosphere which encourages within each child:

1. Development of a positive self-concept
2. Cognitive growth and development
3. Small and large muscle development
4. Growth of independence and self-sufficiency
5. Acceptance and expression of both positive and negative feelings
6. Emergent literacy development
7. Growth of creative thinking and problem solving
8. Respect for the individuality and rights of others
9. Positive ways of interacting with peers and adults

### **General Program Information**

#### ***Eligibility:***

The Center accepts children from six weeks through twelve years of age. Enrolled children may complete the semester during which they turn thirteen.

#### ***Teaching Staff:***

Teachers work under the understanding that each classroom staff member is part of the classroom team. Teachers are therefore considered co-teachers and work together to provide for the daily needs of the children in their classroom. Our Center employs the method of Primary Care giving. More information regarding this method can be found in the Policies and Procedures section of the Parent Handbook.

### ***Children with Special Needs:***

Children with special needs are accepted on an individual basis when reasonable accommodations can be made to meet the needs of the child while maintaining the highest level of care and education for all children at Swift Child Care Early Childhood Center. Collaboration and consultation among the staff, parents, specialists, and special education district are expected in order to fully meet the needs of children.

### ***Records:***

Prior to the first day of attendance and care in our Center, each child is required to have on file: 1) completed application form; 2) official birth certificate from city/county agency; 3) completed physical form and immunization records; 4) evidence of TB skin test (with a negative result); 5) lead test result or lead questionnaire; 6) official letters from any physicians or therapists detailing any diagnosed conditions or special needs and treatment plans; 7) State of Illinois Eye Examination Report (for any children 5 yrs of age or turning 5 during the school year); 8) Head Start/Early Head Start Qualifying Information Form; 9) CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) Enrollment and Eligibility forms; 10) signed acknowledgement of receipt and understanding of Parent Handbook and agreement to abide by all written and oral policies of the Center (in their entirety); 11) Enrollment and Financial Contract; 12) Any other forms which may be required by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Village of Skokie, Head Start, and/or Illinois State Board of Education. Therefore, families of all enrolled children must provide timely records of all updates or additional immunizations their children receive (based on the recommended immunization schedule of the Center for Disease Control and any requirements of Illinois DCFS), as well as updated physical records and a TB skin test every two years after their initial enrollment. Failure to provide such records according to such schedules and within 5 business days of your child's immunization(s) and/or physical or TB skin test may result in suspension of your child's enrollment until all required records have been presented to and reviewed by the Center. Any family who incurs a temporary suspension as a result of failure to provide such records will be responsible for tuition payments in their entirety during the suspension period.

### ***Hours of Operation:***

The Center's normal hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. All children must be in their classrooms by 9:30 a.m. daily. Any child who arrives after 9:30 a.m. may be denied entry to the school. Please consult our Holiday Observance Schedule for the dates the school will be closed during the school year.

### ***Both Parents' Right to Pick up the Child:***

Under the laws of the state of Illinois, both parents may have the right to pick up their child unless a court document restricts that right. The enrolling parent(s)/party(ies), who chooses not to include the other parent's name on the authorized list for pick-up must file an official court document such as: \* Current restraining order \* Sole custody decree \* Divorce decree stating sole custody \* Judgment of adoption \* Foster parent documentation Absent this documentation, the program may release the child to either

parent, provided that parent documents biological, foster, or adoptive parenthood of that child.

***Child's safety preeminent:***

If we have a concern about a child's safety at pick up time, we will contact another person on the authorized list to pick up the child. If a crisis arises at the end of the day, we will take the following steps to ensure everyone's safety and well being. We will utilize the following procedure: \* Not immediately release the child. While discussing our concerns with the person picking up the child, we will engage the child with another staff member; \* Contact the other parent or persons on the authorized list to enlist them in ensuring that the child leaves our care safely; \* Offer alternatives. Brainstorm with the family member alternative ways to ensure the child goes home safely; \* Release the child with reservation, notifying the appropriate authorities of our concern; \* Call in the police and/or other authorities if anyone's well being and/or safety is threatened.

***No Babysitting & Conflict of Interest Policies:***

Employees of Swift Child Care are not permitted to work (in any capacity) for current, past, or future families in our program. Staff members at Swift Child Care are also not permitted to babysit for families in our program. Violation of this policy may result in termination of a child's/family's enrollment at Swift Child Care and/or termination of the employee in violation of our policy.

***Discharge/Withdrawal:***

Any withdrawals should be discussed with the Director a minimum of two weeks prior to the expected date the child is to leave the school permanently. Prior notice is necessary to aid clients waiting for admission. A two week written notice is required in order to use your deposit towards your child's last week of attendance. No discounts are applied to a child's last week of tuition. Swift Child Care reserves the right to require cash payment for a child's final week(s) of tuition.

Your child may be discharged at any time by the Director (without prior notice) for the reasons listed below. **In the event of a discharge due to reasons listed under numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 any deposit made to Swift Child Care will be forfeited.**

1. Health, emotional and physical limitations of a child.
2. Child's absence from school & no communication from parents for two weeks.
3. Failure to cooperate with teachers in their efforts to help the child.
4. Bullying
5. Parental misconduct at school (or at any school event) or via verbal or written communications and any similar misconduct of other family members/friends. This misconduct includes but is not limited to: use of profane language, threatened or actual aggression towards any staff, child, or other person associated with Swift Child Care, or any form of bullying.
6. Failure to adhere to any stated policies of Swift Child Care including but not limited to: pick-up, drop-off, hours of operation, provision of items necessary for a child's care (diapers, formula, milk, food, extra clothing, medications) and tuition and fee payments.

## Tuition Rates and Policies

### ***Tuition:***

Tuition and co-payments are determined by the age of your child. Each time your child reaches the next age bracket and “graduates” to an older classroom (based on the developmental abilities of the child combined with availability in another classroom) your tuition, co-payment, and fees will be adjusted in accordance with the fee schedule and policies outlined below. Please note that if the staff of Swift Child Care determines that your child is unable to “graduate” because either he/she is not developmentally ready for the next classroom or there is not a coinciding space available in that class, your child’s tuition will continue to be assessed at the current rate (based on their age and enrollment in their current classroom).

Tuition is payable in the office on Monday of each week. Payments received after Monday at 6:00 p.m. will incur a late charge, as defined in the Late Payments section below. If your tuition is not paid in full by drop-off time on Tuesday of the current week, your children may not attend school until all tuition and late fees are paid in full.

***Tuition rates are reviewed and set prior to the beginning of the regular school year. Any increase or change to tuition and fees will apply to all students and will take effect at the beginning of each school year.***

**Current rates are effective for the 2011-2012 school year, detailed below:**

<u>Infants (6 weeks to 18 months):</u>		\$330.00 weekly*
<u>Toddlers (18 months to 24 months):</u>	<i>Full-Time:</i>	\$265.00 weekly
	<i>Three Days:</i>	\$200.00 weekly**
<u>Two Years to Three Years:</u>	<i>Full-Time:</i>	\$220.00 weekly
	<i>Three Days:</i>	\$150.00 weekly**
<u>Three Years to Five Years:</u>	<i>Full-Time:</i>	\$200.00 weekly***
	<i>Three Days:</i>	\$140.00 weekly**
<u>Before and After School:</u> (children 5 yrs to 12 yrs)		\$95.00 weekly
<u>Summer Camp:</u> (children 3yrs to 12 yrs)		\$200.00 weekly

**Full-Time: 4 or more days per week    Three Days: 3 designated days in the same week (based upon Center availability)**

\*Due to the availability of cribs, infants are generally accepted on a full-time basis only.

\*\* There are a limited number of “three day” slots available in the Center. Therefore, “three day” students are only accepted based on calculated availability, with a minimum of three paid days.

\*\*\*Children must be fully toilet trained to be eligible for the “three years to five years” rate. Children who have reached the age of three but are not fully toilet trained will be assessed the “two years to three years” tuition rate and will be enrolled in a “twos/threes” preschool classroom.

We regret that we are unable to offer any credits, refunds, or discounts for partial week attendance or absences.

***Co-Payments:***

Families receiving tuition subsidies through the Illinois Department of Human Services -- Action for Children will be required to pay their co-payments and a weekly tuition difference. The amount of each family's **monthly** co-payment is determined by the Action for Children program based on family income, family size, number of children in care, and number of hours/days in care. For your convenience, co-payments may be divided over four weeks and are payable at the beginning of each week.

The Action for Children subsidy amount most often does not cover the full tuition charges for each child. Therefore, families may be required to pay the difference between our stated weekly (or daily) tuition and the Action for Children daily reimbursement rate. The tuition difference is payable weekly and is due in advance, each Monday, along with the co-pay. The amount of the tuition difference will be determined after the Center receives the family's Action for Children approval notice, and may be recalculated with each re-determination period.

***Late Payments:***

Tuition, co-payments, and any other recurring fees are payable weekly and are due in advance, each Monday. Payments received after 6:00 p.m. Monday will accrue the following late charges:

\$15.00 for the first day the payment is past due

\$15.00 for each additional week the payment remains past due

In the event a family has a past due or outstanding balance, Swift Child Care reserves the right to deny entry to our Center, to suspend the enrollment of said family, and/or to discharge the family. In the event of any discharge, all deposits will be forfeited. Swift Child Care also reserves the right to initiate collection attempts on any late or outstanding balance. In the event of such action, the debtor will be responsible to reimburse Swift Child Care for all past due tuition, co-payments, late fees, collection fees, legal fees, and court costs.

***Deposit:***

At the time of enrollment to secure a space for each child, we require an advanced **non-refundable** deposit equal to one full-time week's tuition per child (based on the age of each child). This deposit will retain your child's space in our program for up to one month from the enrollment date. If your child does not begin attending within 30 days, the deposit will be forfeited and your child's space will be released from reservation and offered to the next family on our waiting list. Reservations can be guaranteed up to a maximum of four additional weeks (for a total of eight weeks reservation) with an additional deposit per child, equal to the amount of the original deposit, due immediately following the fourth week of the original reservation. The only exception to this rule is for parents of unborn children or newborns (up to 3 months old). Parents of unborn/newborn children that enroll an unborn/newborn child will be required to provide a "start date" for the child and will be given a maximum grace period of 30 days (15 days

prior to and 15 days following the projected “start date”) for which their deposit will hold the child’s space. If your child does not begin attending within 30 days, the deposit will be forfeited and your child’s space will be offered to the next family on the waiting list. Families who are applying for any form of financial assistance are required to abide by the same deposit requirements (and extensions, if necessary) as all other families. (ANY DEPOSIT THAT IS FORFEITED AS A RESULT OF A CHILD’S NON-ATTENDANCE IS NON-REFUNDABLE. ADDITIONALLY, IN THE EVENT THE FAMILY WISHES TO RE-ENROLL, A NEW DEPOSIT FOR THE CHILD’S SPACE WILL BE DUE). If you wish to withdraw your child(ren) from Swift Child Care, written notification must be given to the Director and/or Billing Department at least two weeks prior to your child(ren)’s departure date in order to apply your deposit to the child(ren)’s remaining days of attendance (Full-fee families only). Any remaining deposit balance will be forfeited. For those families utilizing Action for Children, Niles Township Scholarship, DCFS, and/or any other form of financial aid, the Billing Department will refund your deposit (based on the amount remaining) once all state, federal, and/or local agency payments are reconciled for the last month attended (minimum of two weeks’ notice still apply). Swift Child Care reserves the right to require cash payment for a child’s final week(s) of tuition.

***Fees:***

***Unless otherwise stated, all fees are non-refundable and are due in advance.***

Registration Fee - One time fee of \$50.00 (If a child withdraws from the Center or is discharged for any reason there will be a registration fee due upon any re-enrollment.)

Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten Materials Fee - \$15.00 (in lieu of the materials fee, parents may opt to purchase the supplies listed on their child’s classroom list.) Students will have additional fees for bus fares and admission to attractions and parks for field trips and/or other scheduled outings during the school year.

Fee for Late Pickup – **We are licensed by DCFS to provide care only until 6:00 p.m.** All children must **exit** the building by 6:00 p.m. If your child has not been picked up by the time the Center closes (6:00 p.m.), a late charge will accrue at the rate of \$2.00 per minute every minute until your child is picked up. **This fee is payable in cash when the late pickup occurs.** If the fee is not paid in the office in cash by the following business morning, your child(ren) may not return to school until the fee has been paid. Further, if a parent fails to arrive on time and does not pick up their child (or send a person listed on the authorized pickup/emergency contact list) within two hours after closing time, the staff of Swift Child Care will be required to call 911 to notify the local authorities of the situation.

Returned Check or Rejected Payment Fee - \$29.00 for any returned check, rejected payment from an ACH or Credit card transaction. This amount must be paid in full, along with the full amount of the tuition payment within one day of notice of any returned or rejected payment in order to avoid Late Payments associated with any account. In the event a family has a past due or outstanding balance, Swift Child Care reserves the right to deny entry to our Center, to suspend the enrollment of said family, and/or to discharge the family.

Summer Program – Pre-School, Pre-K, and School-Age students will have additional fees for bus fares and admission to attractions and parks.

Absentee Policy – If for any reason your child will be absent from school, please call the office the morning the absence will occur, prior to 9:00 a.m. If your child will be absent more than a few days, please call the office each Monday to check in during your child’s absence. If for any reason (personal, illness, vacation, holiday, school closing, etc.) a child is absent from school for an entire week (5 days within the same business week – i.e. Monday through Friday) at Swift Child Care, the tuition for that child will be reduced to 50% of their regular tuition for the first four weeks. For each remaining week until the child returns, there a weekly retainer fee will accrue. If a child is absent from school for two weeks and the office receives no communication from the parents during this time, the child will automatically be considered “discharged”. Any deposit on file will be forfeited. All Tuition, Deposits, and Fees are mandatory and are non-refundable.

Retainer Fee - Families that identify a need to withdraw their child on a temporary basis (more than 4 weeks but less than 12 weeks) shall be subject to the tuition requirements associated with the “Absences/Vacations” policy for the first 4 weeks and then subject to a weekly retainer fee to secure their child’s space in the classroom until their child(ren) returns. The weekly retainer fee is based on the age of the child at the time of withdrawal and is detailed below:

Infants (6 weeks – 18 months)	=	\$100.00/weekly
Toddlers/Twos (18 – 36 months)	=	\$80.00/weekly
Preschool and Older (36 months +)	=	\$65.00/weekly

Retainer fees are payable each Monday during the withdrawal period in order to hold and guarantee your child’s space in the program. In the event a weekly retainer fee is unpaid or is late, your child will be considered discharged from the program.

## **Safety Procedures**

### ***Secured Entryway:***

Swift Child Care has taken advanced safety precautions and measurements to meet the needs of your child. The Center has electronic door buzzers on the main doors to prevent unknown visitors from entering the facility without the consent of Swift Child Care employees. Invisible laser sensors have been installed in the main entry way to audibly notify staff of any person entering or leaving the building. Additionally, a second secured entry has been installed which allows only family members and staff with secure pin numbers to access the classrooms.

### ***Communications:***

The classrooms, kitchen, and office have been equipped with a telephone and intercom system to communicate internally and externally without leaving the classroom at any time.

### ***Monitoring:***

For added safety, audio/video security cameras have been installed in the Center and all activity is monitored from the office. Cameras are located in each classroom, hallway, and vestibule area.

Advanced Fire Alarm and smoke detection systems have been installed throughout the Center. All alarm systems are monitored by the local authorities (i.e. Fire, Police, etc.) as well as an independent monitoring company. In order to familiarize the children and staff with our evacuation procedure and alarm systems, fire drills will be practiced monthly.

***Emergency Situations:***

In emergencies of an immediate nature, such as a tornado, flash flooding, fire, etc., the appropriate emergency services agencies and DCFS will be immediately contacted. Parents will also be immediately informed of any such situation and will be expected to retrieve their children in the event the school has to temporarily close. In such an emergency event, the children and staff of Swift Child Care will temporarily stay inside St. Peter's Catholic Church, located at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Niles Center Road.

***Weather-Related or Emergency Closings:***

In the event the Center must close due to inclement weather, power failure, or any other unforeseen situation, families should follow the steps listed below to find out if the school has been closed for the day:

- 1) Go to the Emergency Closing Center website and search for our school by typing Swift Child Care in the name section and Skokie in the city section. The website address is as follows: <http://www.emergencyclosingcenter.com/complete.html>
- 2) Call 847-238-1234 from a touch-tone phone and enter the "main" phone number of the facility. **Note: The "main" phone number for purposes of this service is 847-675-6052**
- 3) Receive an e-mail notification of a change made to your facility by signing up on our website at **[www.emergencyclosings.com](http://www.emergencyclosings.com)**.
- 4) Listen to WGN Radio 720-AM, WBBM Radio 780-AM or watch CBS Ch. 2, NBC Ch. 5, ABC Ch. 7, FOX 32, WGN-TV or CLTV cable for emergency closing information.

### 2011-2012 School Closing Schedule

Monday, September 5 2011	Labor Day
Thursday and Friday, November 24th and November 25th	Thanksgiving Holiday
Monday, December 26th	Observance of Christmas
Tuesday, December 27 <sup>th</sup> - Friday, December 30 <sup>th</sup> <b><u>Holiday Hours of 8:00 am until 3:00 pm</u></b> (only breakfast and lunch will be served)	Winter Break Hours <b><u>Reservations Required</u></b>
Friday, April 6 <sup>th</sup> 2012	Good Friday
Monday, May 28th 2012	Memorial Day
Wednesday, July 4th 2012	Independence Day

Swift Child Care Early Childhood Centers reserves the right to make changes to this school closing schedule at any time. Throughout the year, we may have additional closings for staff development days and weather related closings. Notification of any changes will be provided to all families. Please consult the Parent Handbook for information regarding tuition and fee policies relating to school closings or family absences.

**School Closing Schedule revised 12.1.2011**