



Empowering You to Be



CHILDCARE AND PRESCHOOL

# Parent Handbook

2024-2025

EmBe reserves the right to make changes to this handbook at any time and for any reason. In the event of a change, every effort will be made to promptly provide updated information to families.

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## WELCOME

Thank you for choosing EmBe for your childcare needs. EmBe has a rich history in the care of children. EmBe began providing preschool and childcare in 1961 – one of the first in the state outside of homes. Since that time, EmBe’s award winning childcare programs have become some of the most respected in the region, with programs provided in several locations throughout the area.

This handbook is intended for all Parents/Legal Guardians to understand EmBe’s policies. EmBe adheres to all policies set forth by the South Dakota Department of Social Services according to the law; their guide can be found on their website. EmBe expects all Parents/Legal Guardians to read and acknowledge receipt of handbook annually.

## MISSION

We uplift the potential in children, women, and families through opportunities that empower all.

## VISION

A community where children thrive, women excel, and families succeed.

## VALUES

- Curiosity
- Authenticity
- Leadership
- Connection

## EmBe Education

EmBe Education honors children, families, and their teachers by fostering wholistic development focused on character, inherent intelligence, and physical well-being.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### LOCATIONS AND PROVIDER NUMBERS

All EmBe locations can be found by visiting [embe.org](https://embe.org). Please reach out to your childcare manager for the Provider Number if needed.

### LEADERSHIP CONTACT INFORMATION

Please visit [EmBe.org](https://EmBe.org) for all team contact information.

### HOURS OF OPERATION

Please visit [EmBe.org](https://EmBe.org) for hours of operation as our options vary by location.

### HOLIDAYS

EmBe is closed to observe the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day (close at 4:00 pm on December 24 when it falls on a weekday)

If the holiday falls on a weekend, EmBe's administration will determine the weekday which will be used to observe the holiday. Generally, if the holiday falls on a Saturday, it will be observed on Friday; if it falls on a Sunday it will be observed the following Monday. Tuition is based on equal weekly payments throughout the year, and there is no adjustment on weeks that include a holiday when EmBe is closed.

EmBe will be closed for in-service training the Friday of Labor Day Weekend.

## PROGRAMS FOR CHILDCARE

EmBe is committed to caring for children at each stage of their development, and to providing the appropriate environment for those stages. The following is a summary of stages identified by EmBe. Program options vary by location; please consult directly with your childcare manager to confirm options.

### TRADITIONAL PROGRAMMING

**BABES** (approx. 4 weeks – 6 months): We have created a safe and bright environment for children to grow and develop. Each child is unique and has already established their personality and patterns. Our qualified childcare team will work with parents/legal guardians and children to maintain these patterns and ease the transition from home to our center. Infants begin to develop movements that will have them crawling in no time! As children begin to explore their world, we provide activities to help them thrive. From swings and bouncers to tummy time and educational toys — our rooms offer a safe, soft place to roll over, sit up and begin to crawl. Baby's language and communication are just as important as physical development. Our childcare team interacts with each child, offering opportunities to form relationships, build communication, and share songs, stories, hugs, and smiles. All infants are on their own schedule - childcare team members change diapers at least every two hours and as needed, hold babies to feed them, and follow their lead to meet their needs. Even as infants, we recognize and respect the dignity of each child, so call them by name and introduce them to new people in the room.

**SPROUTS** (approx. 6 months – 12 months): This room, full of bright colors and smiling faces, is the next step in a child's development journey. With all of the amenities from our Babes room, including activities to promote gross motor development and age-appropriate toys, Sprouts builds on those experiences to get those creepers and crawlers ready to walk tall! Infants will use all of their senses to practice fine motor skills, hand/eye coordination, and total body movement until they master those firsts. Soft tunnels, push toys, and pull-up bars all help strengthen little muscles. While individual schedules are maintained, group experiences such as the introduction of table food and buggy rides outside of the center help the children experience the world around them. Personalities begin to appear at this age. Arrivals and departures are usually punctuated with little hands waving and blowing kisses! As children continue their cognitive development, and with parent/legal guardian input, our childcare team can implement the basics of sign language to help children communicate.

**BLOSSOMS** (12 months - 18 months): Our Blossoms room accommodates all the fun, new stages as babies develop into toddlers. A wide-open space waits – filled with soft climbers, age-appropriate toys, and caring childcare team members ready to show them the world. Children in this room get to explore our gymnasium and outside playground area. Social skills such as sharing and taking turns begin to take on importance. Children will experience various new activities, including art projects, building blocks, action songs, fingerplays, and interactive toys. Other transitions include gradually shifting from bottles to sippy cups, from two naps a day in a crib to one nap on a cot, and from a very individualized schedule to group activities. Children will also begin to eat their meals in their dining area. These meals include breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack.

**EXPLORERS** (18 months - 24 months): Children in the Explorer room begin making friends and building relationships while growing their self-esteem and confidence. Children at this age are ready to play together rather than parallel, and our activities support this interaction. Activities are designed to develop fine motor skills. Art and craft time allows children to use big crayons, markers, and paint daubers to begin pre-writing skills. Sensory tables encourage each child to use

all five senses to experience the world around them. Cognitive development is also a top priority, with activities designed to stimulate brain development. Children practice matching and sorting, naming familiar objects, identifying body parts, and matching animals to sounds.

**CREATORS** (approx. Age 2): Terrific two-year-olds are making considerable strides in their ability to move through the world in the Creator's room. They are exploring their environment, learning to communicate their ideas, exercising independence, and understanding group play. Along with activities that promote gross and fine motor development, children this age begin using EmBe's curriculum to help them become more comfortable with a preschool-like setting. The curriculum provides age-appropriate opportunities for creative art, music, language, math, science, and dramatic play. Teachers are ready to accommodate when it comes to the area of potty training! Each room has bathroom facilities nearby, so whether it is diapers, pull-ups, or underwear, we support children in cooperation with parents/legal guardians on their potty-training journeys.

## **PRESCHOOL OPTIONS**

### **Track 1 - Traditional Preschool**

**THINKERS** (approx. Age 3): At age 3, children are already beginning their formal education in Thinkers! At EmBe, that means play-based learning guided by teacher inquiry and EmBe's curriculum. Our curriculum aligns with the Head Start Child Development, and South Dakota Early Learner Guidelines. Using hands-on exploration and discovery as a way of learning, children develop confidence, curiosity, and lifelong critical thinking skills. Thinkers lays the foundation for all children to have successful experiences when they start their PreSchool options the following year! Thinkers is a great option for children who would like a little more time potty training and/or children who will be spending an additional year in preschool before Kindergarten.

**INVENTORS** (approx. age 4) and **SCHOLARS** (approx. Age 5): Children in Inventors and Scholars continue to be guided by EmBe's curriculum. This option is driven by play and teacher inquiry that builds on skills developed over days and weeks. Children will develop essential social emotional skills along with everything they need to be ready for kindergarten, all driven by projects, games, and imaginative play. In these rooms, children drive their learning, accompanied by amazing teachers who meet them where they are and challenge them to grow every day. This option is for children who crave learning through exploration, creativity, and the freedom to take risks and make mistakes. There is no assessment required for this track, all children should be fully potty trained.

### **Track 2 - Specialty Preschool**

**JUNIOR KINDERCOLLEGE** (approx. Ages 3-4): In Fall of 2024, EmBe combined Amigos and Junior Kindercollege to form one specialty track that is available at both locations. This classroom is for three and four year olds and who are preparing to attend kindergarten in two years and who successfully achieve 80% or higher on their Junior KinderCollege Readiness assessment. Children in Junior KinderCollege are engaged in a valuable play-based learning environment guided by highly qualified teachers. Instruction is inquiry-based, meaning children are finding answers to questions driven by the teacher. Teachers incorporate Spanish language throughout the day, and have a higher emphasis on Hispanic culture. We understand that each child who begins Junior KinderCollege will come in with different abilities. They will work one-on-one with their teacher at the level best suited for them. This class is specifically designed to help children build the stamina they will need to meet the demands of KinderCollege. All children should be fully potty trained.

**KINDERCOLLEGE** (approx. Ages 4-5): This classroom is for children who are one year away from kindergarten. It is not a prerequisite to have attended Junior KinderCollege before entering

KinderCollege, however, all children seeking entry will need to achieve a benchmark of 80% or higher on our KinderCollege Readiness assessment due to the large class size and rigorous schedule. In Fall of 2024, EmBe combined Amigos and the Kindercollege programs to form one specialty track that is available at both locations. This curriculum is driven by a more in-depth focus on literacy, and incorporates Spanish language and Hispanic culture throughout the curriculum. Guided by stories, children will have the opportunity to use their multiple intelligences to navigate their way through activities exposing them to math, science, language, and fine/gross motor skills. All children should be fully potty trained.

## CLASSROOM TRANSITIONS

Our goal at EmBe is to ensure that children are receiving appropriate educational guidance as they grow in our care. There are several things we take into consideration when transitioning children from one class to another. The primary factor in determining the timing of transitions is child readiness. We combine CDC Developmental Milestones with internal assessments, SD Early Learner Guidelines, and Teacher expertise to inform readiness. We would like to see a benchmark of 80% achievement on these assessments before recommending a classroom transition. Other factors may play a role in a child's readiness to transition, including available space, age, and special needs/accommodations at the request of parents/legal guardians.

At each transition, parents/legal guardians will be invited for a brief conference with the classroom teachers, curriculum coordinator, or another member of our team. This conference is designed to review the child's progress, as well as give parents/legal guardians an opportunity to learn about their upcoming classroom. We at EmBe honor parents/legal guardians as first educators, and therefore all decisions to transition will be made in collaboration with parents/legal guardians. Should a teacher or parent/legal guardian be concerned about the rate of transition, please refer to our additional resources for outside collaboration.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

As EmBe cares for your child, either you as a parent/legal guardian, or we as caregivers and educators may become concerned about your child's behavior or development. In these cases, EmBe partners with Little Navigators (The Compass Center), Birth to 3, and Sanford Children's CHILd services to provide additional support with parent/legal guardian consent. These resources are available to parents/legal guardians at no additional cost; if a parent /legal guardian wishes to pursue further options or recommendations, they may do so at their own expense. EmBe will collaborate with parents/legal guardians to provide as much information and support as possible. EmBe respects the decisions of parents/legal guardians as first educators and will work to accommodate parent/legal guardian needs as much as possible. All participation in additional services is confidential. In some cases it may be determined that EmBe is not the right fit for a child, even with additional resources and support. In this case, EmBe will work with Parents/Legal Guardians to determine the best next steps, and EmBe reserves the right to terminate care with or without notice when the safety of our children and teachers requires it.

## TUITION AND FEES

Families enrolled in EmBe have the option to enroll in specialized programming after their child turns three. Details of the programs are listed above, and the childcare managers at each location can provide additional information upon request. All details regarding weekly tuition, registration, and fees may be found online at [embe.org](http://embe.org) or by reaching out to our Customer Service and Billing Manager.

Tuition is collected each week for care provided that week. Parents/legal guardians must provide a payment method upon registration for a program. Payment methods include ACH transactions, debit or credit card. Credit cards include a surcharge of 2.5% of the transaction. A \$35.00 processing fee will be assessed on all payments declined (checking account and credit card declines). Enrollment may be suspended if charges accumulate after a second week. When the parent/legal guardian reaches an appropriate payment plan with the Customer Service and Billing Manager, childcare may be resumed providing there is space available. EmBe will make every effort to accommodate families with financial difficulties or unforeseen circumstances that may affect ability to pay; please see Scholarship Information below. Tuition rates will generally adjust at the beginning of the school year.

## SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

EmBe accepts state assistance for all who qualify. Scholarship guidelines can be viewed by visiting EmBe.org and selecting “resources.” If your income falls outside the guidelines, you are invited to continue with the application process to explain any additional circumstances. After the application is submitted, it will go to finance for review. An EmBe team member will contact you within five business days to update you on the status of your application. Please contact [childcare@embe.org](mailto:childcare@embe.org) with any questions or for assistance with an application.

## ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

EmBe's childcare centers are licensed by the South Dakota Department of Social Services for children ranging in age from four weeks through age 5. Children are accepted without regard to race, color, national and/or ethnic origin or religion.

Parents/legal guardians wishing to enroll a child in a program must complete the online registration and submit a payment method via tuition express *prior to the child being accepted into the program*. Any court related documents addressing parental rights, such as custody and visitation rights, in regard to a child enrolled in a program must be presented to the administrators. All such documents are confidential.

The following forms must be completed at the time of admission and kept current throughout enrollment:

- Consent for the Treatment of a Minor
- Pick-up Permission Authorization
- Permission for Field Trips & Photo Release or Exemption
- Emergency Contact List
- Current Immunization Record or Religious or Medical Exemption
- Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Application for Free & Reduced Meals
- A valid tuition express form
- A non-refundable registration fee is required at the time of registration; \$65 per child for ages seven (7) months to age 5; \$150 per child for infant care ages newborn to six (6) months
- The EmBe Promise and Parent Agreement Form

All parents/legal guardians are invited to tour EmBe buildings prior to enrollment, however if they are unable to tour in advance they may tour on the first day. If there is space available, EmBe will notify parents/legal guardians to confirm a start date. If there is no space available, a parent/legal guardian has the option to join the waitlist. EmBe reviews the waitlist monthly to ensure accurate records. On the first day of enrollment, parents/legal guardians are asked to arrive 30 minutes

early to enter fingerprints into ProCare, review a welcome packet, and settle their child into their class for the day. At this time emergency contacts and alternate pick ups will be verified.

## ATTENDANCE

Payment of an entire weekly fee whether or not the child attends is required. Families that remove their children from care for any length of time must pay the full-time rate to secure their child's spot. If the minimum weekly fee is not received, no guarantee of that spot can be given. Please contact the Childcare Manager for any special circumstances that may affect attendance or ability to pay.

## ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

We ask parents/legal guardians to drop off before 9:00 AM and no later than 9:30 AM to ensure proper supervision in our centers every day. We understand that appointments or family commitments may conflict with these hours, so in the event that you would like to drop off after 9:30 we are requesting 24 hour (or more) advance notice so we know you'll be coming later and can plan for your arrival. If you have a work schedule that requires daily arrival after 9:30, please reach out to your specific childcare manager to coordinate a schedule so we can best serve your needs. We are committed to delivering the safest and highest quality programming for our children, so we are hoping that this schedule will help us ensure proper supervision and minimize disruptions to routines, activities, and instruction throughout the day. If a child arrives after 9:30 AM we may not be able to accommodate them if we cannot meet the ratio in the building.

## AUTHORIZED PICK UPS

It is the responsibility of each parent/legal guardian to make sure a caregiver acknowledges their arrival and departure from a room. It is requested that older siblings be taken to their room prior to taking an infant or toddler to his/her room. Parents/legal guardians should never leave a child unattended in their room, on the playground, or in a vehicle. When arriving and departing, parents/legal guardians must sign their child in and out using the computer software provided in the childcare center. Sign-in and out records are used to validate billing, staffing, and meal planning. Accounts are audited quarterly billing accuracy and are audited on a quarterly basis.

Children are released only to parents/legal guardians, or other authorized adults listed on the Pick-up Authorization and/or Emergency forms. ID's will be verified in cases where EmBe staff does not recognize the adult. It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to keep these authorized pick-up forms complete and current. Children will not be released to any adult suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Children will not be released to anyone under the age of 16 without written parental/legal guardian consent.

Parent/legal guardians must be prompt in picking up children. Pick up time is no later than 6:00 pm. If a child is picked up after that time a late fee will be charged. If a child is not picked up by 6:00 pm *and the center has not been notified of any delay*, the following steps will be taken:

1. Every effort will be made to reach the parents/legal guardians at the numbers provided.
2. EmBe will send ProCare messages, text messages, and leave voicemails to parents/legal guardians to make contact with parents/legal guardians.
3. If parents/legal guardians cannot be reached, EmBe will begin contacting emergency contacts and authorized pick-ups listed on the enrollment form.
4. These efforts will continue until 6:30 pm.

In the event that no one can be reached, the Childcare Manager will call the police/Child Protective Services by 6:30 pm. Parents/legal guardians will be notified via ProCare of next steps according to police/Child Protective Services instructions.

## LATE PICK UP FEES

EmBe's childcare centers close at 6 pm. Parents/legal guardians must pick their child up by this time to avoid a late pick-up fee. A fee of \$10 will be charged for the first five (5) minutes late, and \$1.00 for each additional minute. This fee is per child and will be added to the next weekly billing. If the center has not been notified of any delay, and we cannot reach you or one of your emergency contacts by 6:30 pm, we will call the police/Child Protective Services for assistance.

## TERMINATION/WITHDRAWAL ONLINE CHANGE FORM

A two-week notice must be given *prior* to withdrawing from a program by visiting [https://embesf.formstack.com/forms/childcare\\_sac\\_forms](https://embesf.formstack.com/forms/childcare_sac_forms) to complete the online change form. Parents/legal guardians must complete this form when withdrawing from or changing to another program. This allows the child and the class time to prepare for a change and offers adequate time for the center to fill the opening. When notice is not given, the account will be charged for two weeks of service, even though the child may not be attending.

Program participants may be asked by EmBe to withdraw for the following reasons:

- Non-payment of fees
- A child's pattern of behavior that is dangerous (or malicious) to others or puts the safety of others at risk
- A child's pattern of behavior that requires special attention that the staff is unable to provide (or accommodate), such as 1:1 care
- Continual lack of parental/legal guardian compliance to program policies
- Lack of communication and/or partnership from Parents/Legal guardians
- Failure to provide immunization record updates and other necessary forms for enrollment as required by law
- Recognition that EmBe's programming does not meet the child(ren)'s/parent/legal guardian's needs
- In instances where it becomes apparent that mutual trust does not exist
- At the discretion of the Childcare Manager

Parents/legal guardians are asked to remove all of their children's belongings on the last day of program attendance. In the event that care is discontinued unexpectedly, either by the parent/legal guardian or by EmBe, a parent/legal guardian can retrieve their child(ren)'s items from the front desk within 30 days. After 30 days, EmBe will no longer store unclaimed items.

## PROGRAM POLICIES

### PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN COMMUNICATION

Communication with parents/legal guardians is critical in providing exceptional care to children. The EmBe childcare program communicates in a variety of ways to keep parents/legal guardians, children and their teachers equally informed:

- ProCare
- Daily visits with the classroom teacher and/or the childcare manager
- Conferences
- Follow us on Social Media for general updates

EmBe's success in communicating with you is dependent upon having your most current contact information. Contact information will be verified at every room transition.

## SUPPLIES

All items brought to the center must be clearly labeled with the child's name. Additional items may be included in your child's welcome packet.

### Infant/Toddler:

- Food and formula (if child uses special formula, parents/legal guardians must provide; EmBe offers infants Parent's Choice formula, or a comparable substitute if unavailable, at no additional charge)
- Disposable diapers/wipes/ointment
- Changes of clothing in varying weights
- Clothing appropriate for outdoor weather
- Sunscreen

### Older Children:

- At least one set of extra clothing
- Blanket and pillow for nap time (no sleeping bags)
- Clothing appropriate for outdoor weather
- Sunscreen/bug spray

All supplies required for daily activities will be provided by EmBe at no additional cost.

## TOYS FROM HOME

We encourage toys to stay home unless needed for the following:

- Comfort item to assist children with transitions throughout the day
- Show and Tell in your child's classroom
- One soft sleeping toy (must be able to fit in child's cubby)
- Special days as assigned by classroom

## CLOTHING

Children should wear comfortable, washable play clothes, which are easy to manage to encourage independence and self-help. If the child is in the transitional period of toilet training, please provide wipes, extra clothing (socks, underwear, pants and shoes) and a plastic bag with ties. Flip-flops, leather-soled shoes, plastic shoes and sandals are unsafe for climbing and running on sandy or concrete surfaces. Rubber-soled shoes, such as tennis shoes, are preferred.

## MEALS AND SNACKS

Breakfast, lunch and snack are provided daily at no additional charge. Menus are posted and assure well-balanced meals with the variety and amounts of foods that children require to meet their nutrient and energy needs. Meals and snacks are served at designated times and only to children present.

EmBe participates in the Child and Adult Nutrition Services' Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP). EmBe follows CACFP meal pattern requirements for every meal service. Serving size is adjusted according to the age of the child. Breakfast consists of a serving of fluid milk, 100 percent fruit juice, and cereal or other grain. The lunch pattern includes servings of fluid milk, vegetable and fruit, bread, pasta or cereal grains, and meat, cheese or eggs. Snacks include two of the following: a serving of milk, a serving of vegetable or fruit, a serving of bread or grains, and a serving of meat, cheese, eggs or yogurt.

If a meal or snack is brought in, it must be clearly labeled with the child's name. EmBe does not

heat up food that is not provided through EmBe. State law does not require meal substitutions based on religious beliefs, however EmBe will provide substitutions whenever possible at parents/legal guardians request. EmBe encourages all snacks to be nut-free.

Babies are held while being fed their bottles. Infants sit in highchairs when being fed other foods. Other children sit at tables and are supervised during the meal.

The USDA provides partial reimbursement for the meals and snacks we serve to children. Federal regulations for this program require us to collect and update income information on an annual basis for all of our enrolled children. EmBe collects this information when school begins in the fall. By completing the income information, we will be able to determine if we can claim meals served to your child (ren) at the free or reduced priced rate. This reimbursement helps us keep our tuition as low as possible, which is why ALL FAMILIES need to complete this form, even if they choose to select N/A. All information is confidential and is used for reporting purposes only. We appreciate your help!

### **Non-Discrimination Statement**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

### **ALLERGEN POLICY**

For the safety of the child, parents/legal guardians are required to provide a signed copy of the "Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan" form, detailing any allergies, food or otherwise,

from which their child suffers, at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. This form must be completely filled out by the child's physician and parent/legal guardian, and must be updated every six months, or more frequently, as needed. In addition to this form, parents/legal guardians must provide a copy of any additional physician's orders and procedural guidelines relating to the prevention and treatment of the child's allergy condition. This form can be obtained by request from the childcare manager.

To promote a safe environment for all students, EmBe has implemented a "Nut Safe" policy because so many children have life threatening allergies. This is a strategy to educate parents/legal guardians and staff about reducing the risk of exposure to life threatening foods. It is important to note that the safety of children with severe reactions requires the cooperation of the entire community.

Please read carefully so that you fully understand the guidelines that will be in place:

1. All snacks provided by EmBe will be free of peanuts and tree nuts.
2. Children must refrain from bringing into school ANY products that contain peanuts and tree nuts. This includes all snacks as well as lunch items.
3. If a lunchbox is found to have peanuts and tree nut products, those items will be removed, and an alternative nut-free item provided.
4. We do not allow food sharing at school unless it is a special occasion (holiday parties, fruit and veggie sharing days, and other special events). We do check ingredient lists during these events to eliminate any possible reactions.
5. Any baked items brought in for celebrations should be peanut and tree nut free and store bought with the ingredient label intact.

For more information, look at <https://www.foodallergy.org/>

EmBe makes every effort to reduce the risk of exposure to allergens within our facilities, however, we are not a nut-free environment. Any child that may require medical care, including the use of an Epi-Pen, as a result of a nut or any other allergy must have the allergy documented by a physician and parents/legal guardians provide an allergy care plan. Please reach out to a manager for any allergy related questions or forms.

## FIELD TRIPS

EmBe is committed to providing enriching and nurturing experiences for the children in our care, this includes regular field trips. Children enjoy the opportunity to explore and learn from the resources throughout the community. Methods of transportation include the EmBe bus or vans, strollers, and walking. Specialty programs go on frequent field trips or have enrichment activities brought to the classroom. All children ages three and older will have the opportunity to participate in field trips. All children must have signed consent from parents/legal guardians to attend field trips. Some facilities may require additional parental waivers. If a parent chooses not to send their child on a field trip, appropriate accommodations will be made on site. Parents will receive notification of all field trips via ProCare. All field trips are approved by the Childcare Manager and are planned to ensure a positive experience for children.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTAL/LEGAL GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

Parents/legal guardians are encouraged to participate in their child's activities, especially during class events. Please see the classroom calendar and lead teacher for more information. All parents are considered visitors if staying for an extended period of time and should sign in and wear a

visitor pass.

EmBe will send Parent/Legal Guardian Satisfaction Surveys bi-annually to get feedback on all of our programs

## VISITOR POLICY

All visitors to our programs (including parents/legal guardians if staying for an extended period of time) will need to report to the front desk upon arrival in the building. A driver's license or passport will be verified and a visitor pass will be given out. The driver's license or passport will be kept until the visitor leaves the building. The visitor pass needs to be visible while in the building. All visits should be scheduled and approved in advance.

## CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

All records provided regarding your child and family finances are confidential. We also ask that you respect this confidentiality by not asking staff to discuss your child or other children outside of the center. Additionally, our success in communication depends on the accurate contact information of our families. Please update your contact information as appropriate.

All information about families and staff, including life circumstances are kept confidential. No personally identifying information will be released or discussed outside the program.

## PHOTOGRAPHS AND MEDIA

EmBe staff may document children's activities. These photos are primarily used to document your child's progress and may be hung up for view in EmBe locations. You will receive a release form during the registration process, granting or declining permission to EmBe and all staff to use still, motion, video or audio recording of your child's image for use in conjunction with the production of visual bulletin boards, social media or other educational purposes.

The use of recording devices without prior written consent is not allowed. EmBe prohibits recording (video and/or audio) of employees, managers, children, participants, parents/legal guardians, Board or other third parties on and off EmBe property.

## TRANSPORTATION

Parents/legal guardians are responsible for transporting children to and from EmBe. While at EmBe, children may be transported in agency vehicles for field trips. Parents/legal guardians will be given advance notice of such travels and children will be instructed on safety procedures. A child passenger restraint system is used when transporting children. Children less than 40 pounds are required to ride in a five-point harness car seat provided by their parents/legal guardians for van usage and provided by EmBe when riding the bus.

## INJURIES

Parents/legal guardians will be notified of injuries that happen during care at EmBe through ProCare. A parent/legal guardian will be contacted immediately if a serious injury occurs.

## BITING INCIDENTS

Children bite for various reasons: to satisfy a need for oral-motor stimulation, to get attention, to communicate their needs and desires such as hunger or frustration. When these incidents occur teachers will soothe the child that was injured and redirect the child that caused the injury. The

teacher will complete a Bite Report for the child who bit and a report for the child that was bitten. If a child gets into the habit of biting, it may require a parent/legal guardian conference, change of environment and/or removal from the program. Our goal is to take appropriate steps necessary to ensure everyone's safety. A parent/legal guardian with a biting concern should consult the Childcare Manager.

## RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS

Parents/legal guardians of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at EmBe Childcare & Preschool, as provided by law. However, if a parent/legal guardian appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, staff will encourage the parent/legal guardian to find alternate pick up and notify emergency contacts. If the parent/legal guardian insists on removing their child, childcare management will notify the authorities. EmBe will require alternative options to ensure the safety of all parties in cases where parents/legal guardians do not comply with the Parent/Legal Guardian Code of Conduct.

## CUSTODY

In most cases, when parents/legal guardians are divorced or separated, both continue to have equal rights where their children are concerned. If you have a court order that limits the rights of one parent/legal guardian in matters such as custody or visitation, please bring a copy to the front desk at either EmBe location. Unless your court order is on file with us, we must provide equal rights to both parents/legal guardians (this includes equal access to pick up, right to authorize alternate people to pick up, emergency contacts, and to enroll/disenroll). Any conflict related to custody agreements should be directed to the Childcare Manager for further determination. All information regarding custody will be kept confidential.

## SOLICITATION

Parents/legal guardians who have interests in events and organizations outside EmBe may not solicit or distribute literature concerning these activities through EmBe. Employees, parents/legal guardians or any other people not employed by EmBe may not solicit or distribute literature or communication (birthday invites, outside events, etc) in the workplace to children, parents/legal guardians or program attendees at any time for any purpose without express approval by the manager of a site. All communication going to children, parents/legal guardians or attendees requires express approval by the site coordinator.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

When misunderstandings or disputes arise in our community, it is important that they be resolved before serious problems develop. Staff, childcare managers, EmBe leadership, and parents/legal guardians in our community should always try to resolve their difficulties among themselves first. Informal consultation with Childcare Managers or other leadership is encouraged if efforts among parties involved are not fruitful. To ensure accountability and clear communication, conflicts may be first directed to a lead teacher, then the Childcare Manager, then the Director of Curriculum and Licensing, Executive Director of Childcare, or the CEO. If preferred, communication can also be submitted to [myvoice@embe.org](mailto:myvoice@embe.org), which is reviewed by EmBe's executive leadership team. If these efforts are not sufficient to resolve an issue, they may choose to file an informal or formal complaint. A formal complaint is defined as any violation of a state law. All other complaints are considered informal. They may request an informal or formal complaint form from the Director of Curriculum and Licensing. The Director of Curriculum and Licensing will then investigate and take appropriate action. Out of respect for all parties involved and to protect the integrity of our policies, we ask that complaints remain confidential while

under investigation. All complaints will be addressed in a timely manner.

## BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of behavior management of children. When children receive positive, nonviolent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities and self-discipline. Children are taught how to control themselves, how their actions impact others, and how our actions impact our families and community. We teach children how to communicate with each other to solve problems as much as possible.

Staff shall ensure that each child is provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior. Children are encouraged to practice skills that will allow them to resolve conflicts and have their needs met without the use of aggressive or destructive behaviors. This is seen as a means of preventing behavioral difficulties between children and lessens the need for disciplinary action on the part of staff. When situations occur which require intervention, teachers should provide children with clear explanations as to why specific behavior is inappropriate and help them to find an alternative behavior that fits within classroom guidelines. These guidelines revolve around concerns for the safety of all children and for the materials within the center, and also to promote an environment where all children can flourish. Classroom rules shall be tailored to the developmental level of the children in attendance, be short and simple, be stated in a positive way and be used consistently. Older children should be encouraged to set rules as a community.

NOTE: If a child is consistently exhibiting unsafe, repeatedly defiant and/or hurtful behavior, parents/legal guardians will be consulted, and outside resources may be contacted to provide assistance. If the behavior does not improve and endangers the safety of other children and their teacher, the child may be removed from the program. In some circumstances, EmBe may not be the best fit for a child, and/or we may be unable to meet a child's needs according to ratio requirements. EmBe will follow all internal discipline policies and whether we can safely serve the child(ren) when evaluating continuation of care. Parents will be invited to participate in these decisions.

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Keeping with our mission and values at EmBe, we keep dignity and respect at the core of our relationships. EmBe is committed to a safe and civil environment for all children, employees, parents/legal guardians, clients, volunteers and community members free from harassment, intimidation or bullying. Harassment and other inappropriate conduct that relates to or is directed toward someone because of race, color, creed, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, disability, military status, age, or any other status protected by applicable law, where such conduct may have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment not conducive to our culture, is against EmBe policy and will not be tolerated.

According to [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov) (a federal government website managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), bullying is defined as aggressive behavior, including an imbalance of power and repetition. Power imbalances can evolve and may be real or imagined. Bullying can include physical or mental violence, social intimidation or exclusion, or making repeated threats. Bullying can happen in person or online.

In the event that a teacher or staff witnesses bullying or a report of bullying is made by a child or family, EmBe will investigate the allegations immediately. EmBe will speak with all involved

parties and determine if there is a power imbalance. If allegations are substantiated, EmBe will then work with all parties to determine appropriate steps following behavioral and disciplinary policies to ensure that all children are safe while in care. All disciplinary action taken as a result of a report made will be kept confidential out of respect for the privacy of all involved.

## CHILD ABUSE

EmBe employees are mandatory reporters. South Dakota Law 26-10-10 requires child care personnel having reasonable cause to suspect that a child under the age of 18 years has been starved, neglected (as defined in 26-8- 6), has had physical injury or injuries inflicted upon him by abuse or intentional neglect other than by accidental means, or has been subjected to circumstances or conditions which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, by any person including a parent/legal guardian or other person responsible for his care, shall report or cause reports to be made to the Department of Social Services, county sheriff, city police or state's attorney.

Anyone participating in good faith in making a report shall have immunity from any liability, civil or imposed, and shall have the same immunity with respect to participation in any judicial proceeding resulting from such a report.

If such a report of abuse/neglect involves an EmBe staff person, there will be a full investigation and evaluation by EmBe. EmBe's SD licensing agent will determine the next course of action. The staff will be removed from work with children and placed on administrative leave or reassignment while the incident is under investigation. Parents and/or guardians will only be notified if their child was involved in an incident.

The continued employment of the staff person will be evaluated by the Department of Social Services Licensing Specialist, the Childcare Manager, the Director of Curriculum and Licensing and/or the Executive Director of Childcare and School Age Care upon completion of the investigation.

## PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

EmBe requires the parents/legal guardians and authorized pick-ups of enrolled children at all times to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy and respect. One of the goals of EmBe is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of EmBe, but is the responsibility of each and every parent/legal guardian or adult who participates in EmBe programming.. Parents/legal guardians are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. EmBe will require alternative options to participate in programming to ensure the safety of all parties. If a parent/legal guardian has an urgent issue that needs to be addressed immediately, please see the Childcare Manager, please see page 4 for contact information.

- No parent/legal guardian or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language (including gestures) on EmBe property at any time, in texts, or on a phone call, whether in the presence of a child or not. At no time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff or children, or that person will be asked to leave the building immediately.
- Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. Parents/legal guardians must be responsible for, and in control of their behavior at all times. If a parent/legal guardian exhibits out of control behavior, the parent/legal guardian will be asked to leave the building immediately, an investigation will be conducted, and a temporary or permanent building ban may be implemented.

- All threats will be reported to law enforcement.
- Parents/Legal Guardians are expected to uphold all policies in this handbook, acknowledge and sign the EmBe and Parent/Legal Guardian Promise document prior to beginning of care.
- Parents/Legal Guardians are expected to adhere to and uphold all EmBe policies and procedures; concerns or questions can be directed to childcare managers or [myvoice@embe.org](mailto:myvoice@embe.org).

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT

### TOBACCO AND VAPE FREE POLICY

EmBe is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace and to promoting the health and well-being of employees, customers, and visitors. Tobacco and vaping products are prohibited throughout the EmBe facility and on EmBe property, and in the presence of and for the duration of any offsite EmBe programming (field trips).

### WEAPONS

To ensure that EmBe maintains a safe environment that is free of violence for all children, employees, families and other stakeholders, EmBe prohibits the possession or use of weapons. This includes all firearms, knives, pepper spray, and any toy that may resemble a weapon of any kind. EmBe will ask any person with weapons (listed above) on their person to return them to their vehicle or off EmBe property. The only exception to this policy is for uniformed law enforcement or law enforcement who have their badge clearly visible at all times while on EmBe property. Any person who does not comply with the weapons policy may be asked to wait off campus for their child. Repeated violations of the policy may result in a permanent ban from EmBe property and/or a police report.

### EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Fire drills, tornado drills, and lockdown drills are conducted on a regular basis according to licensing regulations with evacuation routes posted in each room. In the event of an actual fire, children are evacuated to neighboring sites. Each site is equipped with emergency plan procedures. In the case of a real emergency, parents/legal guardians will be contacted via ProCare as soon as possible.

The Department of Social Services requires (2) Fire drills, (2) Tornado drills, and (2) Lockdown drills each year. When conducting drills, EmBe will notify parents that there is a drill in progress. EmBe will teach about weather safety (fire and tornado) but will not share additional information about Lockdown Drills. We believe that it is the parent/legal guardian's place to choose when to educate on those types of drills, and will only use the language of "lockdown" in classrooms. Due to the sensitive nature of emergency plans, EmBe emergency plans are confidential.

When practicing drills, parents/legal guardians will receive a message "Fire Drill: ATTN EmBe Families, this is an announcement of an emergency drill: DRILL ONLY"

### INCLEMENT WEATHER

Weather conditions may force EmBe to close or alter service on occasion. Please keep the following Weather Emergency Policy in mind as you prepare for unusual situations which would warrant closing or limited service. The decision to close EmBe due to inclement weather will be made as early as possible and will be communicated through local closing announcements on media channels, EmBe's website and Facebook page and via ProCare. When the City of Sioux

Falls declares a state of emergency or on rare occasions when the organization deems it unsafe to travel because of inclement weather, EmBe may have a late start, early release, or close. In the event of a change in programming, parents/legal guardians will be notified via Procure. Parents/legal guardians are urged to make alternative childcare arrangements prior to the snow season for these unique circumstances. There is no change to tuition rates in the event of a closure due to inclement weather.

EmBe may also close due to other unforeseen circumstances (ex., loss of electricity). At that time parents/legal guardians will be contacted to pick up their child if necessary. If we are unable to get in contact with a parent/legal guardian, emergency contacts will be notified.

Heat: When temperatures exceed 95 degrees with the heat index, children will remain indoors more than outdoors. On these occasions, outdoor swimming is canceled and outdoor activities, such as recess time, is limited to 10 minutes. When temperatures reach 100 degrees or more with the heat index, children will remain indoors.

Severe Weather: Severe weather can happen anytime and anywhere. That's why EmBe Childcare plans, trains and conducts drills year-round on how we will respond to a variety of events that may affect keeping our children safe during emergencies. When the tornado sirens sound, EmBe teachers and staff shift into action, moving all children to the safest spots in our buildings.

EmBe reserves the right to adjust this plan as circumstances warrant for each site. All sites have geographic challenges, and what works for one may not work for the other.

## HEALTH/HEALTH OUTBREAKS

Health regulations are determined by the South Dakota Department of Social Services (DSS) and Department of Health (DOH). Current immunization records are required at the time of admission. EmBe is mandated by the State of South Dakota to report cases of contagious disease to the Health Department and to parents/legal guardians as soon as they are identified. EmBe's childcare centers will comply with directives of the DOH and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the case of a contagious health outbreak.

Illness prevents a child from comfortably participating in program activities, and it compromises the health and safety of staff and other children in the program. EmBe follows the guidance of the CDC to inform decisions on care. If a child has any of the following symptoms, they should be kept home in order to guard against the spreading of contagious illnesses:

- The child has a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher;
- The child has had diarrhea for the second time in one hour;
- The child has vomited;
- The child has a rash caused by a contagious illness or condition;
- The child has a bacterial infection or impetigo before 24 hours of treatment with antibiotics

This list is not all-inclusive. The Childcare Manager has the discretion to send a child home due to illness or other concern. Parents/legal guardians will be called to pick up their child if any of the above conditions occur while the child is at the center. An ill child will be separated from the other children and supervised until they are picked up from the center. Parents/legal guardians must respond in a timely manner, preferably within 30-minutes. Arrangements then need to be made on picking the ill child up, preferably within an hour of notice. The child should be symptom-free without the use of medication for at least 24 hours prior to returning. If a parent/legal guardian

believes a child is ready to return to care but still has symptoms, a doctor may provide a note that indicates wellness/no risk of contagion. Permission is granted at the discretion of the staff and Childcare Manager if all policies for return have been met.

Head lice is a common occurrence in childcare. In the case of head lice that is discovered while in care, EmBe will notify families and recommend immediate treatment.

EmBe Childcare reserves the right to close programs at any time with or without notice due to any circumstance that can jeopardize the health, safety, and welfare of children and/or staff. This could include but is not limited to specific classroom closures, site closures, or a change in hours of operation. EmBe Childcare is determined to be a safe and reliable option for all children. With that in mind, EmBe will make every effort to remain open without compromising the standard of care for our children and staff.

## MEDICATION

Parents/Legal guardians must provide written permission and instructions in accordance with state regulations. Prescription medication must also include instructions from the child's doctor. All medications must be kept in their original container, with an original label with all required information (child's name, amount and frequency of dosage, expiration date, physician/licensed practitioner name, and storage instructions). All medication will be returned to the parent when no longer needed or expired. Over-the-counter medications must have a renewed permission form every 30 days. EmBe does not store or discard medication or medication containers. EmBe will document all administration of medicine according to licensing guidelines.

Any allergies that require medicine and/or an Epi-Pen must be documented and have a plan of action and prevention on file. Forms are available upon enrollment and are required for all children with documented allergies.

Disposal of Bio-contaminates- Universal standard precautions are guidelines issued to prevent disease transmission. All EmBe staff members are required to follow the universal standards and precautions recommended by the Center for Disease and Control (CDC) in handling any fluid that might contain blood or any other bodily fluids. Barriers will be used between any potentially infectious substance and the worker's skin, eyes, nose and mouth.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## for Temporary Exclusion from a CHILD CARE SETTING

Children should be excluded from a child care setting for the following conditions:

- **Illness that prevents the child from participating** comfortably in program activities.
- **Illness that results in a greater need for care** than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- **Fever, lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing** and/or other manifestations of possible severe illness.
- **Persistent abdominal pain** (continuous for more than two hours) or intermittent abdominal pain associated with fever, dehydration, or other systemic signs or symptoms.
- **Chicken pox (Varicella):** exclude until all lesions have dried and crusted or, in immunized children without crusts, until no new lesions appear within a 24-hour period.
- **COVID-19:** exclude based on current CDC and SD Department of Health guidance, see website [doh.sd.gov](https://doh.sd.gov).
- **Diarrhea:** exclude if
  - \* stool not contained in diaper
  - \* fecal accidents occur in a child normally continent
  - \* stool frequency exceeds two or more stools above normal for that child
  - \* stool contains blood or mucus
- **E. coli, shiga toxin-producing (STEC):** exclude until diarrhea resolves and two stool cultures are negative.
- **Haemophilus influenzae type B, invasive (Hib):** exclude until after the child has been cleared by a physician.
- **Head lice (Pediculosis Capitis):** refer for treatment at end of program day and readmit once completion of treatment recommended by a physician.
- **Hepatitis A:** exclude until one week after onset of illness.
- **Impetigo (Streptococcal infection of the skin):** exclude until after 12 hours of antibiotic treatment.
- **Influenza and Influenza-like illness:** exclude until fever has been absent for 24 hours in an unmedicated state. Additional exclusions may be necessary for documented novel strain or pandemic influenza based on SD Department of Health and CDC guidance.
- **Measles:** exclude until 4 days after onset of rash.
- **Meningococcal disease (Neisseria meningitidis):** exclude until after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.
- **Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA):** generally no exclusion; considerations may exist if confirmed MRSA is present from a wound in which drainage is occurring and cannot be covered and contained.
- **Mouth sores:** exclude if associated with drooling, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- **Mumps:** exclude until 5 days after the onset of parotid gland swelling.
- **Pertussis (Whooping cough):** exclude until completion of 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment. If appropriate antibiotic treatment is not received, exclude until 21 days after onset of cough.
- **Rash (with fever or behavior change):** exclude until a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- **Rubella:** exclude until 7 days after onset of rash.
- **Scabies:** exclude until after treatment has started.
- **Shigella:** exclude until treatment is complete and one stool culture is negative.
- **Strep throat (Streptococcal pharyngitis):** exclude until after 12 hours of antibiotic treatment.
- **Tuberculosis:** exclude until a physician, concurring with the SD Department of Health, states the child is not infectious.
- **Vomiting:** exclude if vomiting occurs two or more times in 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.

*2018 Red Book, American Academy of Pediatrics, 31st Edition; 2020 Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, A Quick Reference Guide, American Academy of Pediatrics, 5th Edition; 2015 Control of Communicable Diseases Manual, American Public Health Association, 20th Edition.*



If you have questions about infectious diseases or immunizations,  
contact the Department of Health or your physician.

South Dakota Department of Health, Office of Disease Prevention Services: 605-773-3737 or 800-592-1861

Local Disease Intervention Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Local DSS Child Care Licensing Office: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

See also SD Department of Health disease fact sheet website: <https://doh.sd.gov/diseases/infectious/diseasefacts/>

August 2020



# EmBe

Empowering You to Be

