**Pet Policy**

**Revised 7/11/2018**

There are no pets other than fish that reside at The Children’s Playhouse. However, on occasions with Director’s approval, children’s pets are allowed but must adhere to policy.

While it is understood that pets play an integral role in the home base for many reasons, there are some guidelines that must be followed to insure that the children in our care as well as our staff are kept as healthy as possible when coming in contact with animals.

ACCEPTABLE PETS:

* Rabbits
* Hamsters
* Gerbils
* Fish
* Hermit Crabs

UNACCEPTABLE PETS

* Ferrets
* Turtles and other reptiles including lizards, Iguanas and snakes
* Frogs and other amphibians including wads, newts and salamanders
* Birds (of the Parrot family)
* Chicks or eggs to be hatched
* Domesticated rats and mice
* Wild or dangerous animals

These animals could be a source of illness and can pose a risk to children who often put unwashed hands in their mouths.

NOTE: Before getting a rabbit, hamster or gerbil as a pet, a check should be made to determine that no child that will be exposed to this pet is allergic to the pet hair or has asthma that could aggravated because of having the animal near.

Cats or dogs are allowed to visit the center as long as there are no children that have allergies to these animals.

CARE OF PETS:

Contact your local health department for any procedure they may have for pet care and follow as recommend. A pet care plan including how to handle, feed and clean animal shall be kept in the office as well as a copy to be kept with animal at all times. Additionally, the following conditions must be adhered to:

* All pets will have current immunizations as necessary signed by a veterinarian and kept on file.
* All pets can only stay for the period of time that the teacher allows, in concurrence with the director.
* Animal cages should be of an approved type, have a removable bottom tray for easy cleaning, and be clean and sanitary.
* Litter boxes should not be kept in areas accessible to children and litter should be removed immediately and discarded as required by the local health department.
* Animals food supplies should be kept out of reach of children.
* Live animals are prohibited from the food preparation, food storage and eating areas.
* Caregivers and children will wash their hands after handling animals, animal food, or waste.
* Notice should be given to pet food just as with human food; it too can become contaminated if left out too long or by being exposed to animals, insects or people.

CHILDREN’S INTERACTIONS WITH PETS

One of the joys of having pets in the home base is teaching children’s the proper way to handled and care for the animals. However, in doing so there are some guidelines to follow.

* Contact between animals and children should always be supervised by an adult. The adult should remain closed by to intervene if the animal shows any signs of distress (caused by the child) or if the child suddenly becomes upset or scared of the animal.
* Before choosing a pet for the home base.