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# APPLE BLOSSOM CHILDCARE

## **Philosophy:**

Apple Blossom Childcare (ABC) provides a caring, warm and nurturing environment where all children feel accepted, valued and safe. ABC strives to provide a home-like atmosphere through its multi-aged group of children and small staff to child ratio. ABC believes in the philosophy that young children learn best through play and exploration. The program offers a blend of child-centered and developmentally appropriate activities that help each child meet their developmental milestones while encouraging socialization and building early academic skills.

Through the exploration of their environment, infants and toddlers develop their visual and auditory senses as well as their gross motor skills, helping them reach critical developmental milestones. Older toddlers and preschool age children use play as a crucial tool to learn socialization, emotional regulation and the development of their fine motor skills, in addition to refining their visual and auditory senses.

Due to the small enrollment and multi-aged classroom, children grow, develop and learn at their own pace, thus establishing an early sense of self-confidence and self-esteem. ABC celebrates with its families as children achieve new milestones, and works with family members to help children overcome any developmental delays. Small staff to child ratio also allows ABC staff ample time to sit down on the floor to play and interact with children on their level. This small enrollment also enhances the bond between the child and the caregiver.

ABC is licensed by the state of Maine and adheres to all the required rules and regulations. ABC is licensed to care for 12 children, with a minimum of 2 full time employees. In order to keep the adult to child ratio as small as possible, ABC may also employ part time help and regular volunteers. All employees are CPR and First-Aid certified.

## **About the Owner:**

In 2009, Alison graduated from the University of Maine at Farmington with a degree in elementary education. For three years, she worked as a long-term substitute in kindergarten and as an educational technician in a local school district. She also spent more than a dozen years working as a nanny and babysitter for several local families with young infants and toddlers. In January of 2012, Alison opened ABC, fulfilling a dream to own and operate her own childcare.

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## Admission and Enrollment

After registering your child, you must provide the following forms:

- Child's Record
- Copy of Child's Immunization Records
- Signed Childcare Agreement

All forms must be turned in before your child will be allowed to attend ABC.

Reserving your child's "slot" before your child begins attending ABC requires a weekly payment of one-half the regular rate. Regardless of any verbal and/or signed agreement with ABC, the slot is not reserved until receipt of the first slot payment. Non-payment of any required slot payments, automatically cancels your slot reservation, opening the slot for another child to fill. This requirement applies to all children, full and part time. If you chose to cancel your slot reservation, all slot payments are non-refundable.

## Hours of Operation, Holidays and Vacations

ABC operates Monday – Friday from 7:30am – 5:30pm.

ABC will be closed for 3 week-long, paid vacations during the year, and they are as follows:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> full week in April (school vacation week)
- First week in July/4<sup>th</sup> of July week
- Last week in December (Christmas Eve – New Year's Day)

Payments for these vacations are due the first day of the week prior to the vacation. Any late vacation payments are subject to a late charge of \$10/day.

ABC will also be closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Eve and New Year's Day (occur during December's vacation)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Patriot's Day (may occur during April's vacation)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day/July 4<sup>th</sup> (closed on Monday or Friday if holiday falls on a weekend)
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving and the day after
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (occur during December's vacation)

All holidays are considered part of your child's regular weekly attendance; therefore the regular weekly payment is required.

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## Snow Days, Sick Days and Personal Days

In the event that staff is sick or requires a personal day and suitable replacement cannot be found, ABC will close. You will not be charged for this day.

ABC will close in inclement weather when Falmouth Public Schools close. There will be no change in your weekly payments.

## Rates and Payment Schedule

<u>Ages</u>	<u>Rates</u>		
	Half Day (<5 hours)	Full Day (>5 hours)	Full Week (4-5 days)
6 weeks - 17 months	\$30.00	\$55.00	\$215.00
18 months - 3 years	\$27.00	\$50.00	\$195.00
3 - 5 years	\$25.00	\$45.00	\$175.00

A 2 week deposit is required in addition to the first weekly payment. This deposit is due at the time of the first weekly payment. This deposit will be applied to the final 2 weeks your child attends ABC. A minimum of 2 weeks notice is required for withdrawing from ABC. If less than 2 weeks notice is given, the 2 week deposit is non-refundable.

Payments are due regardless of your child's attendance, including days your child is absent due to illness and vacations.

All payments are due the first day of the week that your child attends ABC (usually Monday). A \$10 fee is applied for each day the payment is late.

All returned checks are subject to a \$25 charge, paid in cash. ABC reserves the right to request payments in cash or by cashier check at any point that returned checks pose an issue.

## Inclusive Child Care

ABC does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion or ethnic origin in the administration of its policies or the admission of children.

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## Early/Late Drop-Off and Pick-Up

If your child is picked up later than 5:30pm, a late charge will be imposed in the amount of \$5 for each 5-minute increment. This charge is due upon the late pick-up.

If your child is dropped off earlier than 7:30am, a early charge will be imposed in the amount of \$5 for each 5-minute increment. This charge is due upon the early drop-off.

It may be possible to arrange earlier drop-offs and later pick-ups, given at least 24 hours notice.

## Withdrawal and Discharge

A minimum of 2 week notice is required to withdraw your child from ABC. If less than 2 weeks notice is given, the 2 week deposit is non-refundable.

ABC reserves the right to discharge any child from care. Two weeks notice will be given. However, in severe cases, ABC may be forced to discharge a child without 2 weeks notice. If less than 2 weeks notice is given, the 2 week deposit is non-refundable. Reasons for discharge include, but are not limited to:

- Child is consistently physically or verbally aggressive towards other children or staff
- Child is consistently unhappy, unable to transition and become comfortable with staff
- Parent continuously abuses pick-up and drop-off times
- Parent continuously abuses payment schedule
- Parent fails to communicate consistently with staff
- Parent does not work with ABC staff as a team to provide consistent guidance and discipline
- Parent poses a threat to the safety and wellbeing of their child, other children and staff

Any person suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while at ABC will be asked to leave. ABC cannot legally keep a child from their legal guardian. ABC will work with the parent to arrange alternative transportation for the child. However, if the parent refuses offers for alternative transportation, ABC will contact the local authorities to intervene. ABC seeks to protect children, not offer judgment of lifestyle choices.

## Mandatory Reporting

All ABC staff are mandated reporters, as determined by Maine state law, and are required to report any suspected instances of child abuse and/or neglect. Failure to report is punishable by law.

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## Illness

To ensure a healthy environment and the best possible care for all children at ABC, a strict illness policy will be enforced. Children who display any of the following symptoms should be kept at home and will be sent home until they meet the required recovery periods.

- A temperature of more than 100 degrees  
Child must be fever free for at least 24 hours without medication to return.
- Diarrhea  
Child must be free of diarrhea for at least 24 hours without medication to return.
- Vomiting  
Child must be free of vomiting for at least 24 hours without medication to return.
- Contagious illness that requires medication, such as pink eye  
Child must be no longer contagious and on prescribed medication for at least 24 hours to return.
- Any illness or symptom(s) that prevent your child from actively engaging in childcare activities, such as a severe cold, that leaves your child with little energy or requires significantly more staff time and energy to help the child follow the childcare routine.

ABC reserves the right to require doctor's orders in writing stating the child is no longer contagious should a parent abuse the illness policy.

If your child becomes ill during the day, you will be notified and expected to pick up your child as soon as possible.

If your child will not be attending ABC due to illness, please notify staff or leave a message before business hours.

## Prescription Medication

All prescription medication must be kept in the original container labeled with:

- Child's full name
- Name, dose and time of medication

All prescription medication must be accompanied by written permission from the parent for dispensing medication, including time and dose of medication.

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## Over the Counter Medication

Parents must provide written authorization to administer any over the counter medications. Written orders must include the name of the medication, dose, time/frequency and reasons for administering medication.

Parents are expected to provide all over the counter medications. All medications must be in their original containers labeled with the child's full name.

Parents must provide diaper cream, labeled with their child's full name.

Parents must provide sunscreen and bug spray. ABC will apply, as needed, throughout the day.

## Parent Communication

ABC has an "open door" policy. Parents are welcome at any time during the day, without an appointment.

Staff is always available by phone during regular business hours at 207-274-0869.

A home-to-daycare communication notebook is required and provided by the parents. Parents are expected to write information about their child's previous night/day (such as sleeping and eating habits, and health concerns). ABC staff will write about the child's day. This communication notebook is crucial for the child's well being as it allows parents and daycare staff to observe any patterns early on, so a plan can be implemented to work on any concerns.

## Nutrition

ABC will provide nutritious morning and afternoon snacks. Snacks will include the following:

- Fruit or veggie
- Grain
- Milk, water or 100% fruit juice

Parents are expected to provide lunch, including a healthy drink and child-sized utensils, if desired. Please do not send gum, candy or "treats" with your child. Parents must provide "sippy" cups, if desired, which will be sent home to be cleaned.

Parents are expected to provide breast milk and/or baby formula, jarred baby food and baby cereal. Parents must also provide baby bottles and nipples, baby spoons and bibs, which will be sent home to be cleaned and/or sterilized. There is space available to store extra baby items.

Please communicate any food allergies, special eating habits or concerns to ABC staff.

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## Clothing

Your child should be dressed in comfortable clothing that allows him/her to move and play freely. Outdoor play is an important part of the day, so children need to be dressed in appropriate outdoor clothing for all seasons, as follows:

- Spring and Fall: light weight jacket or rain coat  
sneakers or rain boots  
light weight hats and gloves
- Summer: light weight clothing  
sneakers or closed toed shoes  
hats  
bathing suits (for sprinklers)
- Winter: heavy winter jacket and snow pants  
lined winter boots  
thick hats, gloves, scarves and warm socks (if desired)

Due to the wide range of activities that ABC offers, children's clothing may easily become dirty or stained. Soiled and wet clothing will be sent home at the end of the day. Parents are expected to provide clean clothing the next day. For parents' convenience, there is space to leave extra clothing and seasonally appropriate outerwear in your child's classroom.

For the safety and health of the babies and toddlers at ABC, outdoor shoes will not be worn in ABC. Parents are required to provide suitable indoor shoes, such as lightweight sneakers or cros. These indoor shoes can be stored at ABC for parents' convenience.

## Diapering and Toilet Training

Diapers will be changed regularly, including before and after nap time. Diapers will be changed after bowel movements. Staff will wash hands before and after diaper changes.

Parents will supply diapers and pull-ups, which can be kept at ABC for parents' convenience. Wipes are provided. Parents must provide diaper rash creams/treatments, labeled with child's full name.

ABC will work with parents to toilet train their child when the parents decide the child is ready. Parents are expected to send in a steady supply of clean clothing. Please provide clothing that is easy for your child to manage independently, such as elastic waist pants. Overalls, onesies and tight fitting clothing make it hard for the child to achieve success and independence in this important time of growth.

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## **Napping and Rest Time**

Every child at ABC will have a nap and/or rest period daily. Sleeping is not required but quiet rest time is. Older children will have access to books and puzzles for their rest time.

Parents may send in a comfort/security item with their child for nap/rest time only, such as a blanket or stuffed animal. These items help ease the transition from home to daycare. However, please do not send in personal toys with your child as they may become lost or broken and often create issues over sharing. Toy weapons, violent games and books are never allowed at ABC.

Sleeping mats and pack-and-plays are provided. Parents are expected to provide blankets or sleeping bags. Parents are expected to take blankets or sleeping bags home over the weekend to be cleaned.

ABC will work with parents of young infants to maintain the infant's natural sleeping habits. Parents are expected to provide pacifiers, crib sheets, blankets and/or "sleep sacks", which are recommended for young infants. Space is available to store extra blankets and sheets.

## **American Sign Language**

ABC utilizes basic American Sign Language to help young children express their needs and communicate more effectively. ABC will teach your child, starting as an infant, a few dozen basic signs to help the child express him/herself more clearly. Signs include please, thank you, more, yes, no, help, finish/all done, food items. Older children will also learn the signs for colors, letters, toys, books, action words/verbs, animals, people etc. ABC will happily teach parents the signs as well to make communication at home easier.

## **Birthdays, Special Occasions and Field Trips**

ABC loves to celebrate birthdays and special occasions. ABC will provide the birthday treat. ABC will notify other parents at least 2-3 days in advance to accommodate for food allergies and religious preferences. Parents and siblings are welcome to join in the fun, if their schedules allow.

ABC will host an annual holiday party for children, staff, parents and siblings. This party will be held sometime in December with at least a month's notice. The party will be at ABC at the close of the daycare day (usually 5:30pm). More information will be available closer to the date.

ABC will plan 2-4 family field trips every year. With several weeks, or months, notice, ABC will arrange for children and their families to meet at an outside location, such as the Wildlife Park or Children's Museum. Parents will be responsible for transporting and supervising their own children. Depending upon the field trip, ABC may be open for the afternoon, after the outing

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## **Behavioral Guidance and Discipline**

ABC believes in positive behavior reinforcement balanced with consistent, clear limits and expectations. ABC creates an environment of respect, kindness and fairness. Children will learn to be respectful, kind and fair to themselves, other children, staff, parents and property. Children will also learn to be responsible for their actions.

To help children achieve these goals, ABC will model appropriate social behaviors throughout the child's day. Children love to engage in creative play. With guidance from ABC staff, dramatic/creative play is a valuable learning opportunity for children to act out the right and wrong ways to behave. ABC staff will also intervene in situations where two or more children are engaged in a verbal conflict to teach children how to appropriately solve conflicts.

ABC staff values early interventions in situations as this offers children the best opportunities for continual growth and development of character. Clear directions and redirections will be used first, along with explanations of why the behavior is not acceptable. Should a behavior continue, children may be asked to leave an activity and/or move to a more calming activity, such as a puzzle or a book. Young children are learning self-control, which is a crucial part of their development. Directing a child to move from an intense/high stress activity to a calming/low stress, quieter activity models for the child an acceptable method for developing self-control.

Safety is a priority at ABC. If a child becomes physically aggressive towards him/herself, other children, staff or property, ABC staff will intervene immediately. A clear direction will be given for the child to stop the behavior as well as why the behavior is not acceptable. If the child continues the behavior, staff will speak to the child privately. Staff may ask the child to take a break to calm down until the child can regain control of his/her body. Afterwards, ABC staff and the child will discuss the behavior and alternatives to aggressive behavior. ABC believes behavioral intervention is an important learning opportunity, and all situations will be treated as opportunities for growth.

If a child continues to be physically and/or verbally aggressive towards other children, staff and property, ABC reserves the right to discharge the child from care.

ABC staff will never engage in abusive, neglectful, frightening or humiliating punishment. Corporal punishments and physical restraints will never be used.

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## Transitions

Transitions are hard for any child. The transition from home to daycare is no exception. ABC recognizes that some children have greater difficulty with transitions than others. Please adhere to following rules to help create a smoother transition for everyone involved.

Before coming to ABC:

- Some mornings your child might refuse breakfast. Parents are welcome to send in a nutritious snack/breakfast for their child. ABC will work with the parents to devise a plan should this become a regular occurrence.
- Spend a few extra minutes one-on-one with your child
- Designate a special transition toy or book that will travel to and from daycare with your child. Upon arrival at ABC, please put this item in your child's bin for safe keeping during the day.
- Create a special good-bye ritual with your child: two kisses and hug, a special wave, waving from a window.

Arriving at ABC:

- Parents are expected to help their child hang up his/her coat and change into his/her indoor footwear before coming into the classroom.
- Give ABC any necessary information verbally and turn in the communication book.
- Put your child's transition item in the child's bin.
- Place ABC staff in charge of your child.
- Tell your child it is ok to be sad and that you will be back later.
- Complete the good-bye ritual and then leave.

Please do not prolong the good-bye as this only increases your child's separation anxiety, making the transition even more difficult.

Leaving ABC:

- Allow your child to show you something and/or finish the activity they are engaged in.
- Pickup the communication book and verbally discuss any necessary information with ABC staff.
- Pick-up your child's transition item from his/her bin.
- Parents are expected to help their child change into outdoor footwear and pick-up any soiled clothing.

Your child needs the first 10 minutes of your attention upon returning home. He/she has been eagerly awaiting your return all day. All children need at least 10 minutes daily of one-on-one attention to be emotionally healthy.

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## Sample Schedule

7:30 – 9:00	Free Play and Transition Activities (indoors only)
9:00 – 9:30	Bathroom, Wash Hands and Snack
9:30 – 10:00	Circle Time (calendar, music and movement, finger play, stories)
10:00 – 10:45	Fine Motor Development Activities (color, cut, stamp, puzzles, blocks)
10:45 – 11:45	Gross Motor Development Activities (outside – weather permitting)
11:45 – 12:30	Bathroom, Wash Hands and Lunch
12:30 – 1:00	Bathroom, Story Time and Settle for Nap/Rest Time
1:00 – 3:00	Nap/Rest Time
3:00 – 3:30	Bathroom, Wash Hands and Snack
3:30 – 5:30	Free Play (indoors or outdoors – weather permitting)

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## Childcare Agreement

I am enrolling \_\_\_\_\_ in Apple Blossom Childcare (ABC) between the hours of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ days per week at the rate of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per week; regardless of attendance.

ABC's rates will be reviewed twice yearly on January 1<sup>st</sup> and July 1<sup>st</sup> and are subject to change two weeks later.

ABC will update its policies as needed and will give 2 weeks' notice of any policy changes before they become effective. The parent/guardian will then be asked to sign a form acknowledging receipt of and agreement to the new policies.

### OTHER TERMS AND SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF CARE:

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I have received and read ABC policies and service agreement. I understand and accept the terms of the policies and agreement of service.

PARENT/GUARDIAN

APPLE BLOSSOM CHILDCARE:

PRINTED NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_