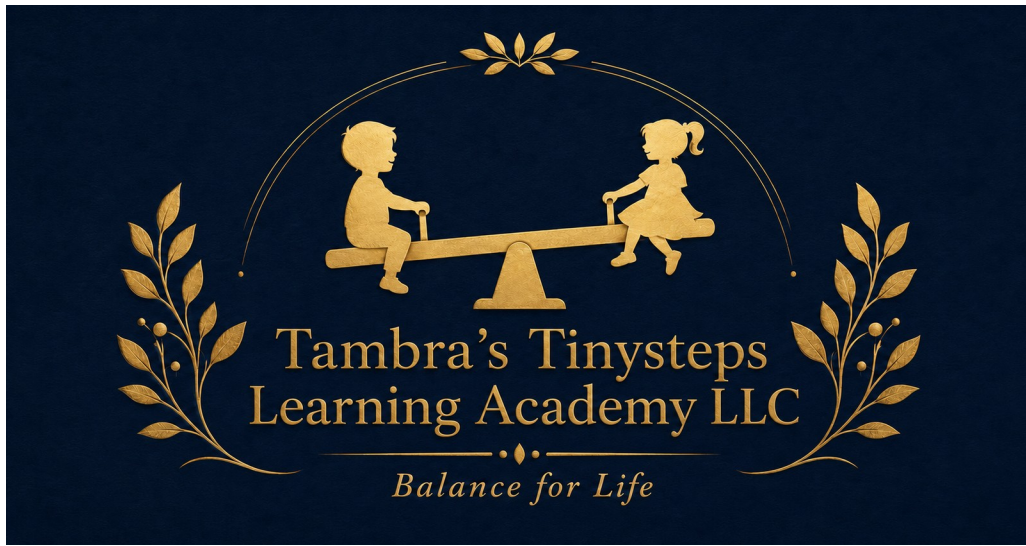




Parent Handbook

Tandra's Tinysteps Learning Academy LLC

Licensed Large Family Child Care Home • License #L13H1013

Ages birth–12 • Capacity 12 children

Brandon, Florida • Serving families throughout the Tampa Bay area

BALANCE FOR LIFE

Effective August 2026

This handbook replaces prior handbook editions.

Welcome to Tinysteps

Thank you for choosing Tambra's Tinysteps Learning Academy LLC. Families entrust us with what matters most: their children. We honor that trust by providing attentive care, meaningful learning, clear communication, and a warm environment where every child can belong.

This handbook explains the program's current operating practices and family responsibilities. It works together with the signed Parent-Provider Agreement, current fee schedule, enrollment forms, health records, permissions, and any child-specific plan. If a signed agreement contains a more specific term, that signed term controls unless prohibited by law or licensing requirements.

Important: This handbook is an operating guide, not legal or medical advice. Florida law, Hillsborough County licensing requirements, public-health directions, and a child's authorized health plan control whenever they require a different procedure.

Program contact information

- Program telephone: 813-654-5373
- Cell telephone: 813-409-4999
- Email: tinystepslearning@yahoo.com
- Website: tambras-tinysteps-learning-academy.sdcqrr4956.chatgpt.site
- Regular operating window: Monday-Friday, 6:00 AM-5:30 PM
- Regular contracted care: one eight-hour daily shift per family, with exact arrival and pickup times stated in the Parent-Provider Agreement
- Drop-in and weekend care: one six-hour shift by appointment, subject to written confirmation, staffing, capacity, and licensing requirements

Handbook contents

- Mission, vision, philosophy, and belonging
- Programs, curriculum, daily routines, and family partnership
- Enrollment, records, attendance, arrival, and release
- Tuition, fees, scheduling, and termination
- Health, illness, medication, nutrition, and safe sleep
- Positive guidance, inclusion, suspension, and expulsion prevention
- Emergencies, transportation, confidentiality, and required acknowledgments

1. Our Identity and Educational Approach

Our mission

Our mission is to provide a safe, nurturing, and engaging early learning environment where children grow through play, caring relationships, and developmentally appropriate experiences. We partner with families to build confidence, school readiness, and strong foundations for life.

Our vision

Our vision is for every child we serve to feel valued, capable, and prepared to thrive in school and beyond—taking tiny steps toward a balanced, joyful, and successful future.

Our philosophy

Children learn through relationships, play, movement, language, routines, exploration, and hands-on experiences. We view each child as a capable individual and plan experiences that respect developmental stage, interests, strengths, culture, language, and support needs.

Belonging and inclusion

Our environment welcomes children and families across races, ethnicities, cultures, abilities, languages, and family structures. Books, music, art, dramatic play, dolls, family experiences, and classroom materials are selected to help children see themselves and learn respectfully about others.

Families should share information needed for safe participation and reasonable support. Tinsteps will communicate with families about accommodations within the program's licensed capacity, staffing, training, physical environment, and applicable requirements. Enrollment in a specialized or one-to-one service is not guaranteed unless separately confirmed in writing.

2. Programs and Learning Experiences

Tinsteps serves children from birth through age 12. Program availability depends on openings, age composition, staffing, schedule, eligibility requirements, and the terms approved for each family.

- Infant care with responsive routines, safe exploration, language, sensory experiences, and developmentally appropriate movement
- Toddler care emphasizing communication, independence, play, self-help skills, and positive social experiences
- Preschool learning supporting language, early literacy, mathematics, science, creativity, motor development, and school readiness
- VPK when active and approved, with eligibility and attendance requirements applying
- Before- and after-school care for eligible school-age children
- Outdoor Discovery Garden experiences involving weather, plants, insects, measurement, observation, nutrition, and supervised STEM exploration
- Optional Zumba® Kids enrichment for eligible ages; additional fees and permissions may apply
- Children's Yoga and Mindful Movement when scheduled with an appropriately qualified instructor

Daily plans include a balance of active and quiet play, indoor and outdoor experiences when conditions permit, meals and snacks, rest, toileting or diapering, individual and group experiences, and child-directed exploration. Routines may change based on children's needs, weather, staffing, special activities, and safety conditions.

3. Enrollment and Required Records

Enrollment process

1. Submit an enrollment inquiry or application.
2. Discuss availability, schedule, care needs, program fit, and fees with Tinsteps.
3. Receive and review the current handbook, Parent-Provider Agreement, fee schedule, and required notices.

4. Complete all required enrollment, emergency, health, nutrition, custody, permission, and signature documents.
5. Receive written confirmation of the child's accepted start date and schedule.

Enrollment is not final until required documents are complete, fees or deposits required by the signed agreement are received, and Tinsteps confirms placement in writing.

Records families must keep current

- Child enrollment and emergency-contact information
- Parent/guardian telephone numbers, email, address, and employment contacts
- Authorized pickup persons and legal identification information
- Custody orders or legal restrictions that the program must follow
- Current physical examination and immunization documentation when required, including applicable Florida health forms
- Allergy, special-diet, medication, emergency, and individualized care information
- Signed acknowledgments, permissions, and Parent-Provider Agreement

Families must notify Tinsteps promptly when any contact, custody, health, medication, allergy, address, employment, or authorized-pickup information changes. Documents containing Social Security numbers should not be submitted unless Tinsteps specifically identifies a lawful and necessary purpose and provides a protected collection method.

4. Attendance, Arrival, and Release

Scheduled attendance

Children must attend according to their confirmed schedule. Families should notify Tinsteps as early as possible when a child will be absent, arrive late, or need an approved schedule change. A schedule change is not effective until Tinsteps confirms it.

Regularly enrolled families receive one contracted eight-hour daily care shift. Drop-in and weekend care are scheduled in six-hour shifts by appointment. Each shift begins at the confirmed arrival time and ends at the confirmed pickup time. Different families may have different shifts within the program's operating window. Care outside a confirmed shift requires advance approval, available capacity, appropriate staffing, and any additional charge stated in the private fee schedule or signed agreement.

Arrival

- An adult must transfer the child directly to an authorized caregiver; children may not be left outside, at the door, or unattended.
- Families must communicate health, medication, sleep, feeding, injury, emotional, or schedule information that could affect the child's day.
- To protect lunch and rest routines, arrivals during the program's designated quiet period require advance approval.

Release and authorized pickup

A child will be released only to a parent/legal guardian or a person listed as authorized by the parent/legal guardian, subject to lawful custody restrictions. Tinsteps may require government-

issued photo identification. Telephone or electronic pickup changes may require identity verification and written confirmation. The program will not release a child when doing so would violate a known court order or create an immediate safety concern; appropriate authorities may be contacted when necessary.

Late pickup

Families must pick up by their contracted time. Late-pickup charges, emergency contacts, and repeated-lateness consequences are governed by the current signed fee schedule and Parent-Provider Agreement. When a child remains after closing and authorized contacts cannot be reached, Tinsteps will follow applicable licensing and child-safety procedures.

5. Tuition, Fees, and Scheduling

Current tuition, registration, deposits, late-payment charges, late-pickup charges, returned-payment charges, enrichment fees, and special-schedule rates are stated in the signed Parent-Provider Agreement and current fee schedule. The handbook intentionally does not list dollar amounts so rate changes can be issued clearly without replacing the entire handbook.

Private fee information: Tuition, drop-in care, weekend care, VPK-funded instructional hours, private-pay wraparound care, enrichment, and special-schedule rates are stated in the family's private fee schedule and signed agreement. This handbook does not publish current rates.

- Payment is due according to the signed agreement and invoice or fee schedule.
- School Readiness, VPK, Head Start, scholarship, or other funding participation is subject to program approval, family eligibility, attendance rules, and agency authorization.
- Families remain responsible for copayments, parent fees, noncovered services, and balances identified in their agreement.
- Online card or ACH payments, when offered, will be processed by an approved payment provider; Tinsteps will not store full card or bank-account numbers.
- Outside payments may be recorded after verification, with a receipt or transaction reference retained in the family account.

Absences and closures

Payment obligations during child absences, vacations, holidays, emergency closures, provider closures, or temporary service interruptions are governed by the signed Parent-Provider Agreement and current closure notice. Tinsteps will communicate planned closures in advance when practicable and emergency closures as soon as reasonably possible.

Withdrawal and termination

Notice requirements for voluntary withdrawal are stated in the Parent-Provider Agreement. Tinsteps may end care when payment obligations are not met; required records are not maintained; schedules or safety rules are repeatedly violated; the program cannot safely meet a child's needs within its licensed resources; or continued enrollment presents a serious risk. When practicable and safe, Tinsteps will communicate concerns, document interventions, and provide reasonable notice.

6. Health, Illness, and Exclusion

Children are observed at arrival and throughout the day. A child may be excluded or sent home when symptoms suggest a communicable illness, the child cannot participate comfortably in routine activities, the child needs care beyond what the program can safely provide, or exclusion is required by licensing, public-health guidance, or an authorized medical professional.

- Fever or fever with behavior change or other concerning symptoms
- Repeated vomiting or diarrhea
- Unexplained rash, eye drainage, breathing difficulty, significant pain, unusual lethargy, or other symptoms requiring evaluation
- A diagnosed or suspected communicable condition requiring exclusion
- Any condition that prevents safe participation or requires substantially more care than staff can provide without affecting supervision of other children

Parents or authorized contacts must pick up promptly after notification. Return timing and documentation will be based on current licensing and public-health requirements, the child's symptoms, and any written medical direction. Tinsteps will not apply an outdated automatic 24- or 48-hour rule when current guidance requires a different standard.

Emergency symptoms: Tinsteps may call 911 or obtain emergency assistance before contacting the family when delay could threaten a child's health or safety.

7. Medication, Allergies, and Individual Health Needs

Medication

Medication will be administered only when Tinsteps has the required written authorization and appropriately trained personnel are available. Medication must be in its original container, properly labeled, unexpired, and supplied with instructions that match the authorization and manufacturer or prescription label. Administration will be documented. Tinsteps may decline to administer medication when requirements are incomplete or administration cannot be performed safely within program operations.

Allergies and emergency plans

Families must disclose allergies, reactions, triggers, prescribed emergency medication, and physician instructions before care begins or immediately after diagnosis. When required, families must provide a current individualized plan and properly labeled medication. Tinsteps will communicate relevant safety information to personnel while protecting confidentiality.

Injuries and incidents

Minor injuries will receive appropriate first aid and be documented when required. Parents will be notified according to the nature of the incident and licensing requirements. Serious injuries or symptoms will receive immediate emergency attention.

8. Safe Sleep, Rest, and Personal Care

- Infants will be placed on their backs to sleep unless a valid written medical order requires another position.
- Infants will sleep in an approved individual sleep space with a firm surface and without loose bedding, pillows, bumper pads, stuffed objects, or other prohibited items.
- Sleeping children will be supervised and checked according to applicable requirements.
- Older children will receive an age-appropriate rest or quiet period without being forced to sleep.
- Diapering, toileting, handwashing, sanitation, and soiled-clothing procedures will follow health and licensing practices.

9. Meals, Formula, and Nutrition

Tinysteps follows applicable USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program meal-pattern principles when participating in the food program. Meals and snacks are planned to support children's nutritional needs. Menus may change because of availability, substitutions, special diets, closures, or program needs.

- Families must provide complete allergy and special-diet information.
- Parent-provided food, formula, breast milk, bottles, or substitutions must follow written program instructions and applicable storage and labeling requirements.
- Infant feeding is individualized according to age, parent instructions, licensing standards, and safe feeding practices.
- Food is never withheld or used as discipline.

10. Positive Guidance and Behavior Support

Tinysteps uses developmentally appropriate, constructive guidance. Staff teach expectations, model respectful behavior, recognize positive choices, redirect children, offer choices, support emotional language, adjust the environment, and help children solve conflicts safely.

- No spanking or physical punishment
- No discipline that is severe, humiliating, frightening, threatening, or degrading
- No withholding food, rest, toileting, outdoor activity, or family contact as punishment
- No harmful restraint, isolation, ridicule, profanity, or comparison intended to shame a child

Persistent or unsafe behavior

When behavior is persistent or creates safety concerns, Tinysteps will communicate with the family, document patterns, review triggers and routines, adjust supports, and consider referrals or a collaborative plan when appropriate. Families are expected to participate honestly and promptly.

Suspension and expulsion prevention

Tinysteps will make reasonable efforts to preserve placement through communication, environmental changes, consistent strategies, referrals, and transition planning when safe and feasible. Immediate removal or termination may occur when there is an imminent safety threat, serious policy violation, failure to provide essential information, or another circumstance in which continued care cannot be

provided safely or lawfully. Decisions will not be based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, or another protected characteristic.

11. Family Partnership, Communication, and Privacy

- Families may request conferences and should share questions early so concerns can be addressed constructively.
- Custodial parents and legal guardians have reasonable access during care hours, subject to identification, custody restrictions, supervision, safety, and the need to protect other children's privacy.
- Daily reports, attendance records, messages, invoices, receipts, and documents may be delivered through the Tinsteps portal, email, paper, telephone, or a temporary management platform such as Brightwheel.
- Parents must not photograph, record, or publish images or identifying information about other enrolled children.
- Tinsteps will not publish a child's name, photograph, artwork, quotation, diagnosis, or personal story without appropriate permission.

Family and child records are confidential and are shared only with authorized persons, licensing or funding agencies, emergency responders, mandatory-reporting authorities, service providers supporting authorized operations, or others as permitted or required by law. Parents should use protected document-upload methods for medical, custody, identity, and financial records rather than ordinary email whenever a secure option is available.

12. Safety, Emergencies, and Transportation

Emergency preparedness

Tinsteps maintains emergency procedures addressing fire, evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, lockdown, severe weather, child accountability, family communication, reunification, continuity of care, and the needs of children with disabilities, chronic health conditions, or medication requirements. Drills and emergency information are maintained as required.

Emergency communication

Families must keep emergency contacts current and respond promptly. During a widespread emergency, Tinsteps may use telephone, text, email, portal messaging, or another available method. Families should follow reunification instructions and avoid entering an unsafe area.

Field trips and transportation

Off-site activities or transportation require applicable written permission and compliance with current transportation, supervision, vehicle, restraint, driver, attendance, and child-accountability requirements. A parent's general handbook acknowledgment does not replace a specific permission when one is required. Tinsteps may cancel an activity because of weather, staffing, safety, vehicle, or participation conditions.

Suspected abuse or neglect

Child-care personnel are mandatory reporters. Suspected child abuse, neglect, or abandonment will be reported as required by Florida law. Staff cannot promise confidentiality or delay a required report while conducting an independent investigation.

13. Personal Belongings and Supplies

Families must label belongings and provide supplies identified for the child's age and program. The enrollment checklist may include diapers or pull-ups, wipes, bottles, formula or breast milk as arranged, a change of clothing, a crib sheet or other approved bedding when requested, weather-appropriate clothing, and a labeled sealable bag for soiled items. Toys, jewelry, electronics, food, medication, and other items should not be brought unless approved.

Tinysteps will take reasonable care but is not responsible for ordinary loss or damage to unapproved or unlabeled personal property.

14. Policy Updates and Questions

Policies may be revised to reflect licensing changes, public-health guidance, program operations, safety needs, services, technology, or fees. Families will receive notice of material changes and may be asked to sign an updated acknowledgment. A current law, licensing directive, or emergency safety procedure may take effect before the handbook is formally reissued.

Questions should be directed to Tamba M. Newton using the program telephone, cell telephone, email, or family portal.

Contract safeguard: Consistent with family child-care business practices, the Parent-Provider Agreement is maintained separately from this policy handbook. The contract states the parties, child, starting date, applicable eight-hour regular shift or six-hour drop-in/weekend shift, fees, payment terms, notice requirements, and termination rights; this handbook explains care practices.

Parent/Legal Guardian Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I received or was given electronic access to the current Tamba's Tinysteps Learning Academy LLC Parent Handbook. I understand that this handbook works together with the Parent-Provider Agreement, current fee schedule, enrollment forms, health records, permissions, and child-specific plans.

I understand the program's positive-guidance practices, illness and pickup expectations, payment and schedule responsibilities, confidentiality requirements, emergency procedures, and my responsibility to keep enrollment and health information current.

I also acknowledge receipt or availability of required licensing notices and brochures applicable to my child's enrollment, including the program's disciplinary practices and expulsion policy and any currently required state or local parent information.

Child's name: _____

Parent/legal guardian printed name:

Parent/legal guardian signature: _____

Date: _____

Provider signature: _____

Date: _____

Current enrollment checklist

- Completed child enrollment and emergency-contact information
- Authorized pickup and custody information
- Required physical and immunization records or lawful documentation
- Allergy, dietary, medication, and individualized-care information
- Signed Parent-Provider Agreement and current fee schedule
- Required permissions and handbook/policy acknowledgments
- Labeled clothing, approved bedding, diapers/pull-ups, wipes, bottles, formula, and other child-specific supplies

Official references reviewed for this edition

- Florida Department of Children and Families, Child Care Laws and Requirements:
myflfamilies.com/services/child-family/child-care/child-care-laws-and-requirements
- Florida Department of Children and Families, Emergency Preparedness:
myflfamilies.com/services/child-family/child-care/child-care-providers-and-staff/emergency-preparedness
- Florida Statutes § 402.305, Minimum Standards for Child Care Facilities:
flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2025/402.305
- Tom Copeland, Taking Care of Business, guidance on separating contracts from policies, defining contracted hours and fees, written policy changes, and termination terms:
tomcopelandblog.com
- Applicable Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing forms, notices, ordinances, and inspection directions.

Document status: Effective August 2026. This edition replaces the former 2010–2011 handbook and any undated handbook copy, except for separately signed agreements that remain in effect.