

# Parent Handbook



## Magical Minds Childcare & Learning Center

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Magical Minds Childcare and Learning Center and its staff are honored to have your child enroll with us. This Handbook contains useful information regarding the daily operation of our center. If additional questions arise, please contact our Director, Heather or Shelby. If at any time, you wish to contact the Department of Human Services, division of licensing, you may do so at (651) 431-6500. Magical Minds receives monthly Health Consultant Services from Health Consultants for Child Care.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of Magical Minds is to provide child care that offers educational programs for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years old while providing an encouraging, safe, educational environment allowing for growth physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially.

### **Creed**

Because we at Magical Minds take such pride in the vast culture of our community, no child or family will be discriminated against on the bases of race, religion, sex, creed, national origin, or financial status.

### **Age categories served**

Magical Minds is Licensed for 68 children

24 Infants: 6 weeks to 16 months

21 Toddlers: 16 Months to 42 Months

23 Preschool: 43 months – first day of Kindergarten

### **Hours of Operation**

Magical Minds is open Monday through Friday 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

### **Holiday Closures**

Magical Minds will be open Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Magical Minds is closed on the following Holidays: New Year's Day, President's Day (Staff Professional Development Day), Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Day, Christmas Day and the day after Christmas. If the holiday falls on a weekend, Magical Minds will be closed on the adjoining weekday.

### **Smoke-Free Workplace Policy**

Magical Minds prides itself on a high quality safe environment for children. As part of those qualities we are implementing a smoke free workplace. In order to comply with the Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act (MCIAA) and in the interest of providing a safe and healthy environment for employees, visitors and children, smoking restrictions have been established. Magical Minds is a smoke free property without exception. There will not be any tobacco smoking on the property or within 50 feet of the property lines.

### **Tuition Payments**

The preferred method of payment at Magical Minds is Electronic Funds Transfer through Tuition Express. Full tuition is due when children are absent and when Magical Minds is closed due to a holiday, professional development day or severe weather closure. All clients will be billed on Mondays for the following two weeks. There will be a late fee of \$10.00 per day for each day the payment is late. If payments are more than 5 days overdue, the enrolled child will not be able to participate at Magical Minds until all payments are received. Payments that are returned through Tuition Express will incur a \$25 fee.

In order to maintain quality staff and keep up with yearly cost-of-living increases, Magical Minds will implement a rate increase of 5% on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 and then 3% each year after that.

### **Late Pick Up**

Late pick up fees will be assessed when a child is picked up after 6:00pm. Families' first occurrence will be billed at \$1 per minute. Any additional occurrences will be \$1.00 per minute for the first 5 minutes and then \$5.00 per minute for each additional minute. This is added to your tuition and paid directly to the staff person required to stay with the child. If the child is not picked up by one half hour after closing and every effort has been made to contact the parents and alternate persons, Magical Minds will be required to call the Stillwater Police Department for assistance.

### **Diapers**

Parents are asked to provide their own diapers. In the event a child needs a diaper and it is not supplied by the parent, there is a charge of \$1 per diaper. Cloth diapers are allowed to be used and will be provided by parents. Diapering wipes will be provided by Magical Minds and each child will have their own labeled container. Magical Minds will use unscented wipes purchased through Sam's Club, Costco or Target. Procedures for diapering are approved by our program's health consultant and are posted in the diaper changing area. Diapering may only be done in designated areas.

### **Vacation**

Families that have been enrolled at Magical Minds for one full year will receive 1 free week of vacation tuition. This week must be taken in a Monday-Friday sequence. Families must notify Magical Minds 2 weeks in advance when taking this vacation time. Please note: vacation days cannot be used for any holiday closure days that we have listed in our handbook.

### **Educational Methods for Teaching**

Magical Minds uses The FrogStreet Curriculum for our Toddler and Infant programs and Scholastic Big Day for Pre-K in our preschool program. All of our teachers ensure that your child will be given the opportunity to learn and grow using five developmental areas: physical, emotional, cognitive, social and creative. A lesson plan is posted in each classroom weekly for parents to see what their child will be able to explore on a daily basis. We encourage our parents to take this information home and talk with your child about their day. A daily schedule is in place for the children to form a sense of "routine", however when given the opportunity to go with a "teachable moment," our staff will change events to accommodate the needs of the classroom. Magical Minds also

understands that not all children develop in the exact same way; we will adapt our curriculum on a daily basis to meet the needs of all children in the classroom.

## **Behavior Guidance Policies**

### *General Requirements*

- A. All children at Magical Minds will be provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior.
- B. The procedures at Magical Minds will be tailored to the child's developmental level and the child's age.
- C. Magical Minds staff will redirect the children away from problems toward constructive activity in order to reduce conflict.
- D. Our staff will teach children how to use acceptable alternatives to problem behavior in order to reduce conflict.
- E. The safety of the children and staff will be protected at all times.
- F. Magical Minds staff will provide immediate and directly related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior.

### *Persistent Unacceptable Behavior*

- A. Procedures for staff observation and recording the child's unacceptable behavior
  - 1. Verbal warning/correction.
  - 2. Written Incident/Behavior Report kept in child's file and parents will be notified.
- B. Procedures for developing a plan to address the behavior documented
  - 1. Conference with parents to discuss tangible Behavior Plan including discussion of previous behavior reports, expectations for future behavior, home and center strategy to encourage and achieve acceptable behavior, measurable goals for success, and professional intervention if necessary.
  - 2. If Behavior Plan does not achieve the required results the child will no longer be invited to participate at Magical Minds.

### *Prohibited Actions*

- A. At Magical Minds, any form of physical punishment such as rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting, or spanking is strictly prohibited and is grounds for immediate dismissal.
- B. Also prohibited is any subjection of a child to emotional stress, which includes but is not limited to: name calling, shaming, ostracism, making derogatory remarks about the child or their family, or the use of language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens any child.
- C. Separation from the group except within rule requirements.
- D. Punishment for lapses in toilet training.
- E. Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, or needed medical care as a punishment for unacceptable behavior.
- F. The use of physical restraint other than to physically hold a child where containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm.
- G. The use of mechanical restraints, such as tying.

*Separation from the Group.* No Child will be separated from the group unless the following has occurred:

- A. Less intrusive methods of guiding the child's behavior have been tried and were ineffective.
- B. The child's behavior threatens the well-being of the child or other children in the program.
- C. A child who requires separation from the group must:
  - 1. Remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by a program staff person.
  - 2. The child's return to the group is contingent on the child's stopping or bringing under control the behavior that precipitated the separation.
  - 3. The child will be returned to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated the separation abates or stops.
- D. Children between the ages of six weeks and 16 months will not be separated from the group as means of behavior guidance.

*Separation Report.* All separations from the group must be noted on a daily log that must include the following:

- A. The child's name
- B. The staff person's name
- C. Time
- D. Date
- E. Information indicating what less intrusive methods were used to guide the child's behavior
- F. How the child's behavior continued to threaten the well-being of the child or other children in care.
- G. If a child is separated from the group three or more times in one day, the child's parents shall be notified and the parent notification shall be indicated on the daily log.
- H. If a child is separated five or more times in one week, eight or more times in two weeks, the procedures for Persistent Unacceptable Behavior must be followed.

### **Nap and Rest Policy**

**Confinement limitation:** A child who has completed a nap or rested quietly for 30 minutes will not be required to remain on a cot or in a crib or bed.

**Placement of equipment:** Naps and rest will be provided in a quiet area that is physically separated from children who are engaged in an activity that will disrupt a napping or resting child. Cribs, cots, and beds will be placed so there are clear aisles and unimpeded access for both adults and children on at least one side of each piece of napping and resting equipment. Cribs, cots, and beds will be placed directly on the floor and will not be stacked when in use.

**Bedding:** Separate bedding will be provided for each child in care. Bedding will be washed weekly and when soiled or wet. Blankets will be washed weekly and when soiled or wet.

**Crib standard:** A crib will be provided for each infant for which we are licensed to provide care. The equipment will be of safe and sturdy construction that conforms to the Code of Federal Regulations. Also, see Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.146, for additional crib safety standards including routine crib inspection requirements. Magical Minds will place each infant in a crib

directly on a firm mattress with a fitted crib sheet that fits tightly on the mattress and overlaps the mattress so it cannot be dislodged by pulling on the corner of the sheet. Magical Minds will not place pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskin, pillow-like stuffed toys, or other soft products in the crib with the infant. (Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.1435)

Infant sleeping position: Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.1435, Magical Minds will place each infant on the infant's back, unless Magical Minds has documentation from the infant's parent directing an alternative sleeping position for the infant.

### **Nutrition**

Magical Minds provides breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Breakfast is served at 8:30 a.m. and lunch at 11:45 a.m. All meals will be provided by Lancer Dining and are included in the daily rates. Please let the director know if your child has any food restrictions so that we can discuss potential accommodations with our catering company. Since we are not licensed by the health department as a full-service kitchen, we cannot allow shared food and snacks to be brought in the center. Birthday treats must be in individual portions and commercially prepared. (Bakery cupcakes are fine. Bakery cakes are not. Please feel free to ask if you have any questions about this.)

**\*\*Magical Minds prohibits the serving of peanut products, however, we CANNOT, guarantee that peanuts are not in our facility.**

### **Meal Requirements:**

Per USDA requirements a meal **must** consist of the following food groups:

- 1 serving fluid Milk (provided by MM)
- 1 serving of protein
- 2 servings of vegetables and or fruit
- 1 serving grain / bread

### **Outdoor Activities, Winter Clothing & Sunscreen**

In accordance with licensing regulations, outdoor play activities will be scheduled daily, weather permitting. Children need to be dressed appropriately to play outside. During the colder months, we enjoy exploring outside and all that the snow has to offer! In the winter temperature guidelines, will be in effect: Children may go outside when the temperature and wind chill combined are over 0°F for the Preschool age children, over 10°F for the Older Toddlers and over 20°F for the Young Toddlers. Please make sure to bring boots, snow pants, mittens (not knit as they get wet) and hats. Because many children have similar clothing, we ask that you PLEASE LABEL ALL OUTDOOR CLOTHING. Sunscreen must be provided by the parent in accordance with our health policies and will be applied by staff before going outside.

### **Open Door Policy**

Magical Minds has an open-door policy and we strongly encourage parents to stop by and visit whenever possible.

### **Babysitting**

Often parents will use Magical Minds staff for “babysitting” services outside of Magical Minds. Magical Minds claims no responsibility for staff or their actions while they are not “on the clock” at Magical Minds. Parents are to use their own judgment and discretion while choosing babysitters. Magical Minds will not share opinions nor do we share information concerning the employee with families that is not for the sole purpose of our staff’s employment at Magical Minds.

### **Conferences**

The physical, emotional, social and intellectual progress of each child will be documented in each child’s record and will be communicated to parents in writing during conferences which will be offered in November and April. All families enrolled will have the opportunity to a conference with their child’s teacher. Open communication is the key to a successful program. You are always welcome and encouraged to talk with the staff regarding your child’s progress.

### **Field Trips**

Magical Minds offers field trips to children ages 31 months and older. Additional fees may be charged to parents to cover the costs. Parents must fill out and sign a permission slip for their child to attend a field trip. Once the permission slip is signed the family will be charged for the field trip even if a child is unable to attend. Transportation for most of the field trips is provided by a licensed bus company.

### **Health Record**

Due to licensing requirements, parents are required to provide current immunization records by their child’s first visit to Magical Minds. It is also the parent’s responsibility to make sure that immunization records are updated as needed. We do not enroll children without a current immunization record and we do not accept an exemption form for any reason. Within 30 days of enrollment, parents must provide a Health Care Summary form signed by a physician. Failure to supply this documentation will be cause for exclusion from Magical Minds. Because it is required that these forms be kept up to date, a new medical examination or an updated immunization record may be necessary. Parents are required to inform Magical Minds when their child has a special medical condition, need or allergy.

### **Pandemic Planning**

Magical Minds will cooperate with state and local government disaster planning agencies working to prepare for or react to emergencies presented by a pandemic outbreak.

### **Illness**

In an effort to protect children from the spread of illness, sick children will be excluded from Magical Minds for a minimum of 24 hours following the last occurrence of fever or symptoms. Children with any infectious or contagious illness or any of the following symptoms are considered a sick child and must be excluded from Magical Minds:

- A reportable illness or condition determined to be contagious until a physician determines otherwise.
- Vomited once after admission on any given day.

- Three or more abnormally loose uncontained stools after admission on any given day.
- Contagious conjunctivitis or pus draining from the eye.
- Bacterial infection such as strep or impetigo and has not completed effective antibiotic therapy.
- Unexplained lethargy.
- Lice, ringworm, or scabies that is contagious to others.
- An auxiliary temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher of undiagnosed origin before fever reducing medication is given.
- An undiagnosed rash or a rash attributed to a contagious illness or condition.
- Significant respiratory distress.
- Unreasonable discomfort in participating in the childcare program activities.
- A need for more care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.

***A parent must inform Magical Minds if any of the above occur. Should a child become ill while at the center, the following steps will be taken:***

- The child will be isolated in a comfortable, supervised location.
- A parent or alternative person specified on the enrollment form will be notified. The sick child must be picked up within an hour after notification.
- A child's doctor or emergency personnel will be contacted and treatment sought if deemed necessary.

A contingency plan should be in place before enrollment so parents are prepared should this occur. When an enrolled child develops an infectious or contagious illness, parents must notify Magical Minds. Notices will then be posted to inform parents of the illness, symptoms, incubation period, and treatment.

### **Injury**

In the event a child is injured at Magical Minds, staff will administer First Aid or CPR as necessary. If emergency treatment is indicated, staff will call 9-1-1 and a parent or other authorized adult listed on the emergency form and explain the situation. If a child needs to be transported, they will likely be brought to Lakeview Hospital in Stillwater and it will be at the parent's expense. The Director will accompany the child and will remain with the child until a parent arrives. The child's health and consent forms will be sent with him/her.

### **Medications**

On occasion medication will be needed. Magical Minds will only administer medication (including non-prescription medications such as Tylenol) with a parent's written permission as well as a physician's written direction. The medication must be in its original container with complete instructions. The label must have directions for dispensing, name of the medication, physician's name, date of prescription (must be current), and the child's name. Parents are required to call their clinic prior to bringing their child to the center and have the clinic fax a note to Magical Minds stating authorization along with the dosage amount. Our fax # is 651-430-8093

## **Inclement Weather**

Magical Minds will follow School District 834 with regards to snow day closures. If the school district closes due to cold temperatures, Magical Minds will remain open. The director will post on our Facebook page as well as an email to notify everyone as soon as possible. If Magical Minds must close when in operation due to severe weather, parents or other contacts as indicated on the Emergency Card will be contacted so that all children get picked up. In the event of impassible roads, the center will close. Staff will stay at the center until all children have been picked up. All children will be well cared for until arrangements are made for the children to return home.

## **Infant Guidelines**

### **Formula Preparation:**

Formula bottles need to be prepared at home. Prepare each bottle with the appropriate amount of milk for one feeding. (Once a feeding begins, a bottle is only usable for one hour.)

- Bring bottles to Magical Minds in a labeled insulated container.
- All bottle parts will be labeled with the child's full first and last name.
- Take bottles home at the end of the day. Bottles may have been rinsed, but must be washed and sanitized at home.

### **Breast Milk Preparation**

1. Wash hands, breast, and breast pump. Express Milk.
2. Use a clean bottle or storage bag
3. Fresh breast milk, if kept refrigerated, may be used up to 48 hours.
4. Thaw frozen breast milk in the refrigerator overnight. Fill each bottle with the appropriate amount of milk for one feeding. (Once a feeding begins, a bottle is only usable for one hour.)
5. Label with child's full first and last name and the date.
6. Bring bottles to Magical Minds in a labeled insulated container.
7. Bottles are refrigerated upon arrival at Magical Minds.
8. Please take all bottles home at the end of the day. Bottles will not be rinsed, and will be returned to parents for sanitation.
9. Unused breast milk bottles will be sent home with the parent.
10. Parents are required to bring as many prepared bottles as your child usually drinks within the time period reserved.

### **Food Preparation**

Magical Minds will provide all baby food. If you choose to send your own baby food, please bring it in labeled (first and last name) containers inside an insulated bag. This will be refrigerated upon arrival at Magical Minds.

### **Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) and Abusive Head Trauma (AHT)**

When placing an infant to sleep, Magical Minds will place the infant on their back, unless we have documentation from the infant's physician directing an alternative sleeping position for the infant. The physician directive must be on a form approved by the commissioner and will remain on file at the center. An infant who rolls onto its stomach after being placed to sleep on its back may be allowed to remain sleeping on its stomach if the infant is at least 6 months of age or Magical Minds has a signed statement from the parent indicating that the infant regularly rolls over at home.

Magical Minds will place all infants in a crib directly on a firm mattress with a fitted sheet that is appropriate to the mattress size that fits tightly on the mattress, and overlaps the underside of the mattress so it cannot be dislodged by pulling on the corner of the sheet with reasonable effort. Magical Minds will not place anything in the crib with the infant except for the infant's pacifier. This applies to infants younger than one year of age.

If an infant falls asleep before being placed in a crib, Magical Mind's staff must move the infant to a crib as soon as practicable, and must keep the infant within sight of staff until the infant is placed in a crib. When an infant falls asleep while being held, staff must consider the supervision needs of other children in care when determining how long to hold the infant before placing the infant in a crib to sleep. The sleeping infant must not be in a position where the airway may be blocked or with anything covering the infant's face.

Placing a swaddled infant down to sleep in a licensed setting is not recommended for an infant of any age and is prohibited for any infant who has begun to roll over independently. However, with the written consent of a parent or guardian according to this paragraph, Magical Minds may place the infant who has not yet begun to roll over on its own down to sleep in a one-piece sleeper equipped with an attached system that fastens securely only across the upper torso, with no constriction of the hips or legs, to create a swaddle. Prior to any use of swaddling for sleep by Magical Minds under this chapter, Magical Minds must obtain informed written consent for the use of swaddling from the parent or guardian of the infant on a form provided by the commissioner and prepared in partnership with the Minnesota Sudden Infant Death Center.

### **Pets**

Parents will be informed of pets in Magical Minds at the time of admission. Some potential pets may include fish, amphibians or reptiles. Parents will be informed and updated on the status of pets through communication on classroom bulletin boards. Magical Minds staff will care for pets following proper sanitation procedures. On occasion, we will be learning about pets and animals. We may have pets visit the center and parents will be notified in advance. Please inform staff if you do not wish for your child to participate in this activity.

### **Daily Connect Expectations**

We use a communication app called Daily Connect to send messages throughout the day to communicate and send pictures to parents or caregivers. We want to be clear that our priority is caregiving and meeting all the needs of our students prior to sending any messages or pictures through the app. The app is a wonderful tool that we use to communicate but we do not promise a specific number of pictures or messages each day. We will do our best to send as much information as we can but that can vary from classroom to classroom, teacher to teacher or day to day. We also can't promise complete accuracy on this app. We do our best to send messages throughout the day but on occasion, information can be entered incorrectly by mistake. If this happens, please let us know so that we can fix it right away or clarify what should've been entered instead.

### **IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) Part C**

As a child care provider, we continually monitor the development of all children in our care through ongoing observation and recording. We want the best outcomes for all children. Child care providers are considered a primary referral source for early intervention under federal IDEA special education law. We are required to refer a child in our program who has been identified as having developmental concerns or a risk factor that warrants a referral as soon as possible, but in no case more than seven days after the identification. While this is a mandate, we want to keep open communication with parents and caregivers about their child and any concerns we have before a referral is made. We can assist the parent with the referral or partner with them in the referral process.

***Magical Minds Child Care Program plan is available for your review. Please see the Director for a copy.***

***Magical Minds will obtain written parental permission before each occasion of research, experimental procedure, or public relations activity involving a child.***

## Potty Training Policy

Magical Minds is happy to help and support your child as they learn to use the toilet. Because toilet training is a complex process, we have developed this policy to ensure it is a successful experience. We are committed to supporting families and children tackle this important developmental milestone, but please keep in mind the high activity level at Magical Minds and the importance of a child being able to share they need to use the toilet and be able to control their body for a few minutes until they reach the toilet.

The first step in considering if it is time to begin potty training is to determine if your child is ready. Potty training is much easier – and is more successful when your child is developmentally ready. Children are generally ready to potty train between 2 and 4 years of age. Children that are ready to potty train:

- ❖ Are able to follow simple directions
- ❖ Can walk to and from the bathroom
- ❖ Are able to remove and put on their own clothing to use the bathroom
- ❖ Can recognize the sensation of being wet or soiled, and have expressed their discomfort with soiled and wet diapers
- ❖ Have shown an interest in wearing big kid underwear and using the toilet
- ❖ Are dry for at least two hours at a time during the day and are dry after naps

If your child displays most of these skills, then they may be ready to potty train. If they do not have most of these or have a negative reaction to potty training, then they may not be ready, and they should be provided with more time. Attempting to potty train a child too early can actually delay the potty-training process, causing stress and frustration for your child.

When a child is ready to potty train, we are happy to partner with you to support your child. When you are considering beginning potty training, please communicate with your child's teachers of your intentions and keep them updated of your child's at home success. Potty training should begin during a vacation or weekend. When beginning potty training, there are many different techniques and suggestions. We recommend the following tips to aid in your at-home success:

- When you feel your child is close to being ready, make a point to talk about the different steps in using the toilet. It is also helpful to practice them, even if your child does not need to go to the bathroom.
  1. Recognizing how their body feels when they need to use the bathroom and vocalizes the need.
  2. Waiting to go to the bathroom until they reach the toilet.
  3. Undressing themselves so that they may use the toilet.
  4. Using the toilet.
  5. Wiping, going front to back.
  6. Dressing themselves after using the toilet.
  7. Flushing the toilet.
  8. Washing their hands with soap and water.
- Even if your child is not able to make it all the way through the eight steps, provide position encouragement for their success at each step.

- It can be helpful to watch a video of a child that is potty trained and discuss the steps and watch them follow them.
- Incorporating potting training into daily routines and activities can also be helpful (reading children's books about using the toilet and potty training).

Once your child has had a successful weekend at home with little to no accidents, then they are ready to continue their potty training at Magical Minds. We have child size toilets and toilet trainers to help make the transition to using toilets as smooth as possible. Our staff take a calm and relaxed approach to potty training, using positive encouragement. When your child is ready to start toilet training at Magical Minds you may bring them in underwear. All children must be wearing a diaper, easy open side pull-ups, or underwear. Please be sure to dress your child in clothing they can easily remove on their own to use the bathroom. Please do not dress your child in the following:

- ❖ No pants with zippers, snaps, or buttons (elastic waists are best)
- ❖ No tunic shirts or shirts that snag in the waist area
- ❖ No belts
- ❖ No overalls
- ❖ No one-piece outfits

In addition to dressing your child appropriately to aid the ease of potty training, you must also bring two sets of extra clothing (including socks and underwear) in case of accidents. Soiled clothing will be put in paper bag for you to take home at the end of the day.

At Magical Minds children are offered the opportunity to use the toilet throughout the day at consistent times (before and after breakfast, before and after lunch, before and after nap, before and after going outside, before going home). Teachers watch children for signs they need to use the bathroom and encourage them regularly to use the bathroom. When a child shares that they need to use the toilet – or they give signs they need to go to the bathroom – teachers will take the child to the bathroom to use the toilet. Teachers are patient with children, giving them time to try to use the toilet. At Magical Minds we use anatomical words for body parts (penis and vagina). Children are not forced to sit on the toilet if they do not want to and are never punished for accidents. Children will be taught to wipe from front to back and to always wash their hands after using the toilet.

If a child has two accidents in a day, they will be put in a diaper for the remainder of the day. We will try again then, the following day. If a child continues to have frequent accidents, potty training will be put on pause and will be attempted again once the child displays all six of the signs of readiness for toilet use.