

# Family Handbook

## 2023-2024



## The Children's Center

*serving families since 1974*  
*Granite Steps for Quality Step 3*

### Magic Moments Preschool

*celebrating 10 years*  
*Granite Steps for Quality Step 2*

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Table of Contents:

From the Executive Director..... 4

Mission ..... 5

Philosophy ..... 5

Licensing..... 5

Non-Discrimination Policy ..... 6

Hours of Operation ..... 6

Program Overview..... 7

    The Classrooms & What to Expect..... 7

    Early Care and Education for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers..... 7

    Before and After School Program ..... 8

    Summer Programs ..... 8

    Early Childhood Education..... 9

    Social Services..... 9

    Magic Moments Preschool Lab Program..... 9

    Parent and Family Engagement ..... 10

    Feeding and Food Allergies..... 10

Enrollment..... 11

Payment..... 12

Security ..... 13

Meals ..... 14

Policies ..... 16

    Health ..... 16

    Parental Transportation..... 22

    Communication ..... 22

    Toys and Electronics from Home ..... 23

    Nap & Rest Periods ..... 23

    Outdoor Play..... 23

    Drop Off & Pick Up..... 24

    Discipline..... 25

    Exclusion or Expulsion ..... 26

    Social Media..... 27

    Confidentiality ..... 27

    Babysitting ..... 27

    Field Trips..... 27

# ***From the Executive Director***

Welcome to The Children's Center,

Little did I know when I returned home with my family to the Lakes Region from the Midwest that I would end up spending my second working career as part of an organization that has become one of Wolfeboro's greatest assets.

The Children's Center has served thousands of children since its humble start in 1974. In the beginning, founder and director, Edie DesMarais and her partners managed to rent a building in South Wolfeboro to care for about 30 children ages 3 to 12.

Ever since, The Children's Center has responded to our community's needs. Under Edie's and her successor Susan Whiting's leadership as executive directors, as well as a dedicated Board of Directors, The Children's Center has consistently taken on the challenge of doing something to help families and their children. The continual effort to respond to the needs of the larger community is precisely what distinguishes our Center from so many other childcare facilities and home daycares.

Whether it be the need for infant and toddler care, quality early care and education, preschool special education, drop-in care, school-age before, after, and summer programs, social work consultation, parent education, grandparents support group, abuse prevention programs, services for socially and emotionally challenged children, nutritional and fitness programs to address childhood obesity, literacy programs, naturalized play areas and a garden for children to have the chance to interact with nature, funds for families who are unable to cover the cost of child care, put food on their tables, pay for needed car repairs, or buy fuel in the winter, The Children's Center has addressed them all.

Audrey Hepburn once said, "Nothing is impossible, the word itself says 'I'm Possible.'" This has been the guiding attitude for nearly 50 years...and it will absolutely continue.

I feel a deep sense of gratitude to be a part of such a caring and generous organization. I also am proud to be part of a community of practice who values things like respect, support, and commitment. Specifically, we believe each and every child is entitled to a safe and nurturing environment. We also believe each and every family deserves support in meeting the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and education. And we believe society is stronger when it ensures that children and families succeed.

These beliefs, along with others we hold dear, hang in poster form on our walls. But more importantly, these words passionately come to life with each member of our staff, as we strive to make a genuine difference in every life, every day.

Thank you for entrusting us to care for your child(ren) and believing in our quest to love and learn.

Sincerely,



Teri Ann Cox, Executive Director

# ***Mission***

The Children’s Center is a not-for-profit organization, founded in 1974 to enhance the well-being of families in our community by meeting their needs through comprehensive, affordable, high-quality childcare and early education, and to collaborate with other agencies serving the needs of children.

The annual meeting of the Corporation takes place on the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) Monday of the month of September, when the election of the representative Board of Directors takes place.

The Board of Directors typically meets on the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) Monday of the month, excluding December, to decide all policies of the center. Corporate members (parents and guardians with signed contracts) are welcome at any meeting and are encouraged to serve on committees to participate in the decision-making process of the Corporation.

# ***Philosophy***

We recognize that all children are unique individuals with different needs and talents according to their rates of development and previous experiences.

Our goals are to provide a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment that encourages positive self-esteem, individuality, exploration and self-expression; and to guide a child, through play, and our program-wide expectations, in the important work of learning and interacting with the world.

# ***Licensing***



The Children’s Center has been considered by New Hampshire Child Care Licensing a “high-quality” program for many years. We first earned the “Licensed Plus” status in 2007 and have received this recognition by renewing every three years since (with this status remaining in effect as planned until January 2024). However, in late 2022, NH introduced a new Quality

Rating and Improvement System called “Granite Steps for Quality” (GSQ).

The new voluntary quality recognition system focuses on improving the overall quality of Early Care and Education and Out-of-School Time Programs. Programs who participate in GSQ “promote a culture of continuous quality improvement thereby improving the outcomes for children and families to thrive in school and beyond.” Rather than licensed, licensed-plus, or accredited, there are four GSQ quality steps that are available to apply for. These steps focus on the standards of staff qualifications and learning environments. The Center is proud to have earned Step 3 in the Granite Steps for Quality.

# ***Non-Discrimination Policy***

In accordance with federal civil rights law, this institution will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

## ***Hours of Operation***



Open: 6:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday – year round

The exceptions are New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the Friday after, and Christmas.

The Center is also closed to families on Indigenous People’s Day in October, so the staff can attend a full professional development day, which includes reviewing and practicing

emergency procedures.

### **Fees are not reduced when the Center is closed.**

The Center very rarely closes on regularly scheduled days. In the event that we must close, e.g., severe weather that would make travel difficult for families or staff, we will post the closure notice on WMUR-TV and Facebook, and message families via our communication app, ProCare Connect. Should we have to close early, we will notify parents by ProCare Connect and if needed by phone.

# Program Overview

## The Classrooms & What to Expect

The Center promotes the philosophy of “learning through play” as play is essential to every aspect of a child’s development. In each classroom, the teachers foster learning and development in age-appropriate ways. Center-wide, we teach and model our program expectations “Be Safe,” “Be Responsible,” “Be Kind,” and “Be Respectful.”

- *Our infants* are busy daily learning the basics. They begin to develop a sense of self, build relationships with caregivers and peers, begin to express their needs and emotions, explore movement and their environment, listen to music and stories and interact with teachers and each other.
- *Our toddlers* move on to learning daily routines and a degree of independence in caring for themselves. Teachers introduce them to colors, shapes, objects and concepts through music, movement and stories during short circle times. The toddlers have the time to explore and observe, work on sharing, listening and taking turns.
- *Our preschoolers* participate in a robust curriculum that addresses all areas of preschool development: early literacy, math, science, social science, health education, the arts, and social-emotional learning.

## Early Care and Education for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers



Our infant/toddler program provides a warm and nurturing environment designed to encourage our little ones to explore and learn new skills. Because we are able to maintain low child-to-staff ratios, there is plenty of opportunity to cuddle and meet the individual needs of each child. The toddler program focuses on teaching self-help skills, potty-training, and appropriate social skills, while the children enjoy a variety of sensory experiences and art activities. Singing and music is part of our programming. Screen time is not. Outside, our separate infant/toddler playground offers the chance to explore without the intrusion of older children.

Play is the important work of a preschooler at the Children’s Center. Activities are designed to encourage children to question, seek answers, make decisions, and work together with others. All classroom teachers are trained in the Pyramid Model framework, which supports the social and emotional development of children. Preschoolers learn by interacting with the world around them. Technology and screen time are rarely used in the classroom. On occasion, a special “pajamas and movie day” may be planned or our interactive TV or a tablet may be used to promote creative play (e.g. dancing or a physically active game). In general, we agree with the American Academy of Pediatrics that the time



that children age 2-5 spend in front of a screen should be limited. Screens for children younger than 24 months should be avoided, except when video chatting with family.

Our goal is to provide experiences that entice your child to want to learn more. Our children go on to kindergarten with the confidence and skills to listen, follow directions, make good choices, problem solve, interact cooperatively, and succeed academically.

## **Before and After School Program**



During the school year, children attending Carpenter and Crescent Lake schools may be enrolled before school, after school, and on no school days. This includes vacation weeks, school holidays (with the exception of Indigenous People's Day in October) and those often called by the school district because of weather. A variety of activities are provided, as well as games, Legos, and toys that pique the interest of children ages of 5 through 12. Outside time on the spacious playground, the basketball court, and lower field provide lots of opportunity for gross motor activity and organized group games.

## **Summer Programs**



The summer brings a more relaxed atmosphere throughout the Center. Preschoolers and our Mis Amigos, a separate classroom of kindergarteners, enjoy lots of outdoor play, picnics on the playground, walks to Cate Park and Foss Field and the occasional trip to Squam Lakes Natural Science Center or Dover Children's Museum. The Children's Center has its own bus for field trips, which is only driven by qualified staff or board volunteers (who are also background checked).

Camp All Stars is ten weeks of exploring, experimenting, and exceptional fun for the school-age child during summer vacation. Hiking, swimming, biking, and kayaking are weekly adventures, along with group games and lazy afternoons on the playground. Plenty of arts and crafts activities are offered throughout the week, with beach days every Friday (weather permitting). Because we have a certified lifeguard on staff, we can take trips to the Basin and Kinsman Falls, Odiorne Point and Echo Lake. Knowing your school-age child is enjoying a camp-like program along with extended hours of 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., makes the summer less stressful for our working parents.



## Early Childhood Education

The Children's Center is a best in class Early Childhood Education Program that provides an inclusive preschool environment with special education services and supports for children ages 3 through 5 years. We have a special education team consisting of an administrator from the Governor Wentworth Regional School District, a special educator, an occupational therapist, a speech therapist and collaborating classroom teachers who provide educational service to children with individualized educational plans. Please feel free to contact our Preschool Special Needs Coordinator if you would like to learn more about the services we offer.

## Social Services



The Children's Center is fortunate to have a master's-level counselor/social worker on staff to provide resource and referral services, child and family counseling, parent training, and classroom consultation. The counselor also administers our Family Assistance Program. The Children's Center understands that financial stress takes it toll on the well-being of families so, each year, the Children's Center raises funds to help families facing a financial crisis. Families have accessed the funds to pay for energy costs, food, rent, car repairs, etc.

Please feel free to contact our social worker should you find yourself needing professional consultation, financial assistance, or are concerned regarding your child's mental health.

## Magic Moments Preschool Lab Program



Magic Moments Preschool is a collaboration between the Children's Center and the Lakes Region Technology Center, which is located adjacent to Kingswood High School. The licensed program, for children ages 3 to 5 who are potty trained, runs daily from 9:00 to noon at the Technology Center. The large, lab-style classroom is staffed by a preschool educator and teacher assistant. The team follows the same preschool curriculum and Pyramid Model framework as their colleagues at The Children's Center. Magic Moments has earned Step 2 in the Granite Steps for Quality. Additional assistants in the classroom are high school students enrolled in the Careers in Education Program. These students spend part of their class time working in the Magic Moments classroom getting practical experience. Because this program is housed in a public school, we follow the GWRSD school calendar. We are also able to access all the beautiful amenities of the Kingswood complex including the dance studio, the agriculture Center, and the culinary arts restaurant. Before-care is often available from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m.

## Parent and Family Engagement



With a Strengthening Families approach, the Children’s Center encourages families to participate in the many networking opportunities held throughout the year at classroom events, Center-wide celebrations, and community-focused activities. The Children’s Center invites parents to serve on the board of directors that set policy and practices.

Feel free to share your talents and ideas with the Center staff. We welcome your contributions, whether in the form of sharing music, art, woodworking, foreign languages or another interest. Your presence, time and sharing make a difference in your child’s early education experience. We also hope you will complete our annual family engagement surveys, so that we can learn, improve our programming, and support positive child outcomes.

## Feeding and Food Allergies

Feeding and food allergies are very important subjects when it comes to enrollment. Infants who are solely breastfed and never introduced to a bottle at home tend to have a harder transition into childcare. We ask that you introduce the bottle one to two months before enrollment and use this method at least once to twice a day before enrollment.

Up to 25% of children with food allergies have their first reaction at a childcare or school setting. Because food allergies such as milk, eggs, and nuts are common, we provide a milk alternate and have a strict nut-free environment in an effort to prevent severe food reactions to peanuts and other tree nuts.

# Enrollment



Upon enrollment and annually, families will provide the Center with a completed *Child Care Registration and Emergency Information* form which will accurately contain identifying information, including where the parents/guardians can be reached while a child is in care, and contact information of an alternative person who could assume responsibility for the child in an emergency, or who could pick up the child if the parent/guardian cannot be reached. Families will also indicate if the child has any chronic conditions, allergies, or takes any medications which could be important in an emergency. Families will authorize medical treatment in the case of an emergency.

If a child has a medical condition which could develop into an emergency situation (e.g. asthma, food or bee-sting allergies, diabetes, and seizure disorders), upon enrollment, please provide the Center with a completed *Emergency Action Plan* or *Special Care Plan*, signed by the child's physician, with clear direction as to the course of action caregivers can follow to care for the child, should such an emergency take place.

Families agree to inform the Center whenever there is change in the emergency contact information or if the child develops a new medical condition and provide any necessary *Emergency Action Plan* or *Special Care Plan*. Additional enrollment policies and practices include:

- Children are enrolled for full days. Partial-day enrollments are not an option, except for school-age children.
- The Center grants care on additional days as space is available. Please contact the office if you need to adjust your child's schedule.
- You must report all changes in address, phone numbers, places of employment, emergency contacts, etc., to the office in writing as they occur.
- The Center requires a two-week written notice when canceling or changing enrollment. Insufficient notice will result in all fees for that two-week period.
- There is a minimum withdrawal period of eight weeks before a child can be re-enrolled. The registration fee will be charged upon re-enrollment. The executive director may make an exception under special circumstances.

# Payment

**Weekly fee:** At the time of enrollment, parents will be notified of their weekly charge. Weekly bills are not issued.

**When is payment due?** Payment is due on the first day of attendance every week. Biweekly or monthly payments are accepted as long as the biweekly payment does not fall at the end of a two-week period. Monthly payments are due at the beginning or middle of the month.

**Forms of payment:** We accept payment by cash, check, credit card, or ACH debit. Weekly or monthly credit card or ACH payments can be set up to occur automatically. The monthly automatic payment occurs on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Payments by credit card (including debit cards) will be subject to a 2.75% convenience fee. There is no cost for the ACH debit. Parents are also able to log into “MyProcare” to pay their accounts online.

**Where/who do I pay?** If not set up to pay automatically, payment may be given to the Receptionist or dropped in the locked mailbox outside the front office.

**Late fees:** If payment is not received by noon on Friday for services provided that week, a late fee in the amount of 10% of the balance, up to a \$10.00 maximum, will be charged. In order to use the services of the Center the following week, the previous week tuition, the late fee, and the current week’s tuition must be made. Parents who are late two times in one quarter will be required to pay a security deposit in the amount of one week’s tuition.

**Repeated late payments:** Parents whose accounts are in arrears three times in one quarter will be required to enroll in a monthly payment plan through the use of their credit or debit card or by ACH bank debit. Parents who do not own a credit card, or choose not to use it, will be required to pay a one-week deposit, which will be held in a non-interest bearing account, to be applied to the last week of tuition. Parents who choose to pay the deposit must keep their accounts current.

**We will not be able to care for the child(ren) of any parent/guardian whose fees are not paid each and every week or are enrolled in one of the plans described above.** Families who experience unexpected, temporary financial setbacks may apply for special tuition assistance to help them get back on a regular payment schedule. Please speak with someone in the office for details.

**Rates are based on a child’s schedule** and take into account the eight holidays the Center is closed. There is no reduction of fees for absence or Center closure.

Please see the Center’s rate sheet for information on additional fees, such as late pick up or payment.

**Scholarship:** State and Center scholarship funds are available to eligible parents who are actively seeking employment (limited time period), enrolled in a formal job training program, attending school full time, or employed. Determination of likely eligibility can be made upon enrollment or in the event of a major life event such as divorce, job loss, etc.

The center is committed to ensuring that childcare for each family is affordable based on their family situation. Please see our enrollment specialist for more information.

# Security



The Children's Center has worked with the N.H. Dept. of Homeland Security, the Wolfeboro Police Dept., Wolfeboro Fire/Rescue and Northeast Security to develop an emergency preparedness plan and adopt emergency procedures to safeguard the children in our care. Many security measures are in place in addition to code access entry. All classrooms are equipped for lockdown, auditory and visual emergency cues are in place throughout the building, emergency alert systems allow for direct contact with the Wolfeboro Police Dept. and staff members are trained in emergency procedures.

All external doors are either always kept locked or are code accessible. When you enroll, the office will assign you a number that will allow you access into the building during hours of operation.

Please DO NOT share this code with children, family or friends. Allow the office to admit them into the building.

DO NOT hold the door for others.

Family situations can change dramatically overnight. Please do not hold the door open for the person behind you. Let parents use their code to enter the building. Always enter and exit the building through the front door.

**If, at any time, circumstances dictate that a parent or family member has been legally denied the right to see your child, advise the office IMMEDIATELY so that we may take the proper precautions.**

In the case of an emergency situation in the Children's Center program facility, children may be relocated to an evacuation site. We will notify parents by text or phone call as to the location of the reunification site.

## Firearms

No individual, parent, guardian or authorized pick-up or drop-off person shall carry a loaded or unloaded pistol, revolver, or firearm or any other deadly weapon, whether open or concealed or whether licensed or unlicensed, upon their person or within any of their person's possessions **within the Children's Center building or onto the playground.** Any firearm in the Center's parking lots must be in locked storage.

The only persons exempt from this policy are law enforcement personnel.

Individuals who violate this policy will be asked to leave the property. Failure to do so will result in a criminal charge of trespassing.

# Meals



The Children's Center provides meals (breakfast, lunch and two snacks) that meet USDA nutritional requirements without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, or political beliefs. The center will provide meal modifications as needed to support medical requirements or religious practices.

The Children's Center believes in the importance of a healthy, active lifestyle and hopes to encourage sound nutrition through its food program. The food program provides nutrient dense foods in a supportive food environment.

Our goals are to:

- introduce children to a wide variety of healthy foods;
- serve an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables;
- limit foods high in sodium, or saturated and trans fats;
- offer whole grains;
- offer an array of protein sources, limiting the amount of red meat and processed foods;
- encourage children to recognize their hunger and satiety;
- encourage children to taste new foods;
- provide a supportive meal environment.

We believe the introduction of a new food should be done with a frequency that increases a child's familiarity with it, and should be coupled with healthy, "old favorites." We encourage children to taste new foods without having undue attention paid to his eating behaviors. We believe a child's willingness to taste new foods should be recognized as a healthy food attitude. Our food program serves balanced snacks and meals, meets a child's nutritional needs and does not require substitution or supplementation.

We believe that no more than a moderate second helping of a popular food should be served to a child with a still almost-full plate of less preferred foods.

The Center does not allow food to be brought in from outside except in certain situations. 1.) A parent/guardian may supply a milk substitute if a child does not drink cow or oat milk. Please refer to Part C. of our "Medical Statement to Request Meal Modification" form and 2.) If you have lifestyle or personal preferences (you are vegan, prefer to avoid gluten, etc.) you may supply your own food for your child(ren). We ask that all meals and snacks be provided in this case.

Per He-C 4002.27 (NH Code of Administrative Rules), child care program personnel cannot serve foods which can cause a choking hazard to children younger than age 3 years of age, or to children who have been identified as having chewing and swallowing difficulties.

Foods from home that we will not serve include:

- Whole or rounds of hot dogs or sausage;
- Whole grapes;
- Hard candy;
- Chips or hard pretzels;
- Raw carrot rounds, baby carrots, peas or celery;
- Marshmallows;
- Nuts or seeds:
- Popcorn;
- Other hard, cylinder-shaped food that may pose a choking hazard.

Foods that are provided from home should be pre-cut if needed, and while we do have a microwave for reheating, we ask that they require minimal preparation.

If your child is allergic or intolerant to certain foods, we ask that you have your child's health care provider complete the "Meal Modification" form. The child will be served substitutions based on the provider's recommendations.

We do observe holidays and birthdays. If you send in a treat for your child's classroom, please be mindful **that the Children's Center is peanut and nut free.** The Children's Center encourages healthy snack items.

Nursing mothers, as well as bottle-feeding mothers and fathers, are welcomed during the day.



# Policies

## Health

### Health History and Physical Examination Requirements

Upon enrollment the Center requires an up-to-date physical exam and health history report for each child, signed by a physician. This report will include an up-to-date immunization record, indication of any known allergies, and any special considerations for the child's full participation in the program.

The Center requires a copy of any subsequent physical exam and health history reports, which are required annually until after the child reaches 5 years of age, and every 2 years thereafter.

### Immunization Policy

The state mandates minimum immunization requirements for child care attendance. All children enrolled in the Center's care must be up-to-date on their vaccinations. (Certain religious and medical exemptions are allowed in accordance with state law RSA 141-C:20-c.) The Center requires the child's immunization record by the first day of enrollment. If the child's immunization status is not current, he/she may be taken out of child care until he/she has begun the series of shots needed. Parents/guardians are responsible for informing the Center when the child receives additional vaccinations.

<u>Age of Your Child</u>	<u>Minimum Immunization Requirement for Child Care Attendance</u>
3 - 4 months	1 DPT, 1 Polio, 1 HepB, 1 Hib
5 - 6 months	2 DPT, 2 Polio, 2 HepB, 2 Hib
7-15 months	3 DPT, 2 Polio, 2 HepB, 3 Hib
16 – 23 months	3 DPT, 2 Polio, 3 HepB, 4 Hib, 1 MMR, (<4 Hib acceptable if last dose given after 15 months)
24 months – school entry	4 DPT, 3 Polio, 3 HepB, 4 Hib, 1 MMR, 1 Varicella (<4 Hib acceptable if last dose given after 15 months)
School age	5 DPT, 4 Polio, 3 HepB, 2 MMR, 1 Varicella (4 DPT acceptable if last dose given after 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday; 3 Polio acceptable if <u>all</u> IPV or <u>all</u> OPV schedule <u>and</u> last dose given after 4 <sup>th</sup> birthday; Hib not required after child's 5 <sup>th</sup> birthday)

Notes: PCV is recommended for all children < 2 yrs of age, and should be considered for all children < 5 yrs of age who attend group child care. Influenza vaccine is recommended annually for children age 6 – 23 months, and strongly recommended for children > 6 months who have a chronic heart or lung condition, such as asthma.

DPT=DTaP,DT,orDTP=diphtheria,pertussis,and tetanus vaccines; IPV=inactivated polio vaccine; OPV=oral polio vaccine; HepB=Hepatitis B vaccine; Hib=haemophilus influenza type b vaccine; MMR=measles,mumps,and rubella vaccine; PCV=pneumococcal conjugate vaccine

### **Illness or Injury: Center Procedure**

The Children's Center does all that it can to reduce the spread of communicable diseases. (Please see the center's Pandemic Handbook for our policies and procedures during the Covid-19 pandemic.) Hand washing is the number one step in curtailing illnesses. The caregivers and children wash their hands frequently throughout the day, (e.g.), before and after each meal and food preparation; after each diaper change or toileting; after contact with a body fluid; and after cleaning up and/or handling garbage.

The Children's Center observes N.H. Child Care Licensing rules regarding the care of ill children. If a caregiver observes the following, we will ask you to come promptly to pick up your child:

- your child has an auxiliary temperature of 100.4 degrees F or above
- your child has more than one episode of vomiting in 24 hours
- your child has uncontrolled diarrhea, or an increased number of water stools not contained by a diaper
- your child has uncontrolled coughing, wheezing, or difficulty breathing
- your child has skin lesions not diagnosed by licensed health care practitioner, or a rash with fever or behavior change
- your child has a persistent, new, and unexplained runny nose that they are unable to attend to
- your child requires more care than personnel are able to provide without compromising the wellbeing of the ill child or the other children in their care
- your child is unable to participate in regular activities

In the event a child develops an emergency illness or sustains an emergency injury, the Center will quickly assess the child's condition, call 911 as needed, give first aid and CPR if necessary, and follow the plans as put forth in an *Emergency Action Plan* (if such a plan has been completed for the child for that specific condition) and then contact the child's parent or legal guardian, or alternative person listed on the *Child Care Registration and Emergency Information* form.

A staff member shall supervise the ill or injured child and provide for the comfort (and privacy, if needed) of the child until a parent or legal guardian or another designated emergency contact person arrives to take the child or until the child is transported to the emergency room.

### **Illness or Injury: Parental Responsibilities**

In an effort to prevent the spread of illness and disease, it's important to keep your child home if they show signs of an acute illness in the morning. If your child has an *oral* temperature of 101 degrees F or higher OR an *auxiliary* temperature of 100.4 degrees F or higher, they must not come to school or daycare. Should your child become ill or injured while at the Center, you will be notified. If the Center determines your child should be excluded from group child care because of an illness or injury, please plan to promptly pick up your child or make alternative arrangements for pick up. If a child is excluded because of

illness that is accompanied with fever (greater than axillary or temporal temperature of 100.4 F), the child shall not return to the Center until he has been fever free for 24 hours.

Please inform the Center by calling the office or messaging your child's teacher when your child has a potentially contagious condition, or will be absent due to illness.

The following infectious medical conditions will require temporary exclusion from child care as follows:

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Duration of Exclusion</u>
BACTERIAL CONJUNCTIVITIS	Until 24 hrs after treatment is initiated
CHICKEN POX (Varicella)	Until 1 week after chicken pox rash first appears or when blisters have scabbed over
HEAD LICE	Until after first treatment
IMPETIGO	Until 48 hrs after antibiotic is initiated
PINWORMS	Until 24 hrs after treatment is initiated
RINGWORM	If unable to cover lesion, then until treatment begins and the lesion starts to shrink
SCABIES	Until 24 hrs after family has been treated
STREP THROAT and SCARLET FEVER	Until 24 hrs after treatment is initiated
COVID-19	Until 5 days (returning on day 6 if a negative Covid test is provided)

If an acutely ill child develops a potentially contagious condition while at the Center, staff members will isolate the child from other children and susceptible staff members. Your child's condition will be documented on a *Sent Home Sick Form*. Children ages 2 and up may be required to wear a mask while awaiting pick up. All injuries will be recorded in an *Accident/Incident Report*. A copy of the completed form will be given to the sick or injured child's parent or legal guardian, and a copy will be maintained at the Center. Reports will be periodically reviewed for accident prevention and infection control surveillance.

### **Center COVID-19 Guidelines**

On June 1, 2020, the Center's first Pandemic Handbook was published to help guide staff and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the handbook has been discontinued as of May 1, 2023, many of the best practices are still relevant and include the following:

#### **Hand Washing**

Once in the classroom, all children will wash their hands before beginning to play. Please remind your child to do this at drop off if a teacher is occupied with another child or parent.

#### **Mask Wearing**

We understand there are personal opinions and choices related to wearing face masks. Throughout the multi-year pandemic, face mask use was consistently proven to be an important measure in controlling the spread of COVID-19. When you wear a mask, you protect others as well as yourself. We believe we should still use all the tools available to prevent and slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, especially if community transmission is high or we have an outbreak within a program. There may be times again in

the future when the decision will be made for staff and/or children to wear masks while inside the building. We appreciate our families' and staff's support if this decision is made. Unless such a decision is made, masking is optional at the Center and Magic Moments.

### **COVID-19 Symptoms and Exclusion**

Children and staff with any new symptoms of COVID-19; this includes even mild symptoms, such as a consistent runny nose, will be excluded from school and childcare. These individuals are asked to stay home and be tested for COVID-19 (regardless of vaccination status). Children and staff can return when either of the following criteria are met:

- A person has received an approved COVID-19 test that is negative, AND the person's symptoms are improving (and is fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medications). Approved tests include a PCR-based molecular test or an Antigen test that is conducted within 5 days of symptom onset. Antigen home test kits that are FDA-authorized may be used if your child is two years or older and has COVID-19 symptoms. A photo of the results will be accepted. For more information about self-testing, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/self-testing.html> As a reminder, these tests are most reliable when done correctly, and for those who continue to not have symptom improvement, a second test 36-48 hours after the first test is recommended by all leading brands (e.g. Quidel QuickVue and BinaxNOW).
- A person who tests positive will be excluded from the Center for a minimum of 5 days after the onset of symptoms. They must be fever free at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medications and all other symptoms are improving. Moreover, the Center uses a test-based strategy, therefore a negative rapid antigen test result will be required to return on day 6. If one tests positive, they will need to remain isolated at home until they test negative and are therefore no longer considered infectious. For the CDC Quick Guide: Isolation for ECE programs, see: [Quick Guide: COVID-19 isolation for early care and education \(cdc.gov\)](#)

Any child showing concerning signs of respiratory issues: excessive coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, etc., will be sent home and may not return unless the child tests negative for COVID-19, and/or a doctor's note is provided for return.

If a child has a chronic health condition, such as a frequently runny nose from seasonal allergies, the parent or guardian must provide documentation from their child's healthcare provider describing the health condition and typical symptoms. A child with a diagnosed chronic allergy condition, where their nose runs frequently, will not be excluded from the program, if the symptoms do not exceed what is considered "typical" for their condition.

### **Confirmed Household Case or Direct Exposure**

If anyone in the home has a confirmed positive COVID-19 test, or the enrolled child was in direct contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, the parent/guardian of the child must inform the Center as soon as possible by calling 603-569-1027 during business hours or emailing after hours. Direct contact is defined as, anyone that has been in contact with a person for more than 15 cumulative minutes and while less than 6 feet during contact.

The child who was directly exposed to COVID-19, especially to someone in the household, is at risk of developing COVID-19 in the 14 days following. If the child cannot wear a mask, sleep in a different room, use a different bathroom, and avoid ongoing close contact with the person who has been diagnosed, the child will be required to stay home for a 5 to 10-day period. Return date to childcare will be determined together with administration based on several public health factors.

After being directly exposed to someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19, the family should start precautions immediately, including watching for symptoms. The child will not be excluded from the Center IF they have a negative antigen test themselves and are able to mask while at the Center. We will also require that the enrolled child be tested again on day 6 (at least 5 full days from last exposure) to be able to continue to remain in our care, given that the likelihood of contraction of the virus occurs most often between days 2-10.

It is critical that families not only test their child if they have symptoms, but also test them on day 6 following direct exposure, regardless of vaccination status. This proactive screening and identifying asymptomatic children who have COVID-19, will help us curb community transmission within the Center. Unlike the school districts, who have subs and are not held to licensed teacher-student ratios, when we have spread that affects the staff, classroom closures (due to our inability to cover with the right number of teachers) can be a significant consequence for our working families. We appreciate our families' cooperation and support in meeting these heightened expectations unique to our environment.

### **Infectious Disease and Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Requirements**

State law requires the reporting of some suspected or confirmed diseases to the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Communicable Disease Control. If a child were to develop a communicable disease that requires reporting, the health department would then determine what control measures need to be taken to prevent the spread of the disease to others and how long the child must be kept out of child care. The list of reportable diseases is too extensive to copy here but includes such conditions as bacterial meningitis and measles. The Center retains the complete list of reportable communicable diseases.

In cooperation with local and state health departments, The Children's Center or the health department shall notify parents or legal guardians about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed.

It is also the responsibility of the Children's Center to report any suspected cases of child neglect or abuse to the State's Division for Children, Youth and Families.

### **Medications**

Should your child need medication while at the Center, parents/guardians must comply with the Center's medication policy and complete a *Medication Administration Form*.

### **Benadryl**

The Children's Center programs serve very young children, many of whom have not had exposure to potential allergens in their environments. In the event that a child exhibits signs of a severe allergic reaction such as wheezing, croupy cough, hoarseness, difficulty breathing or swallowing, chest or throat tightness, drooling, slurred speech, confusion, weakness and fainting, rash, hives, itching, and facial swelling, we will:

- Administer an age and weight appropriate dose of Benadryl;
- Call 911;
- Contact parent or other designated emergency contact;
- And observe the child closely for changes until the emergency medical team arrives.

You will be asked to give permission for the center to give your child Benadryl if needed on enrollment paperwork.

### **Sunscreen and Bug Spray**

In season, The Children's Center uses Rocky Mountain Sunscreen Enhanced Broad Spectrum SPF 30, (fragrance free, water resistant) lotion as our standard sunscreen, and Deep Woods Off (25% DEET recommended by the EPA) to protect your child from mosquitoes, ticks, biting flies, and West Nile Virus.

You may elect to use the Center provided protection for free, or you may provide your own sunscreen and bug repellent. Please indicate your preference by selecting one of the options upon enrollment.

You will be asked to give permission for the center to apply sunscreen and bug spray to your child on enrollment paperwork.

### **Weighted Materials**

Weighted vests, lap pads, and blankets can be beneficial for children who have difficulty with sensory modulation or sleep. Such materials can support a child's ability to attend and/or can be used as a calming tool. If weighted materials are recommended by classroom staff or requested by a parent/guardian, the Preschool Special Needs Coordinator or program coordinator will be contacted. From there, a doctor's note and/or OT observation/recommendation is required with specific details around the weighted materials use. The Center follows strict protocols with the use of such materials and a signed permission slip from both parent/guardian and the teacher team is required.

## Parental Transportation



As childcare providers, we have the responsibility to protect the health and safety of the children we serve. Use of alcohol or drugs by adults prior to transporting children can create an unsafe situation. If, in our opinion, the person picking up a child cannot safely transport the child, we will ask that person not to transport. We will suggest that the person contact another person to transport.

If the person picking up does not agree to this and insists on transporting the child, he/she will be told that we will immediately call the police to report the potentially unsafe driving situation.

## Communication



We value our partnership with our parents and hope to establish and maintain open communication channels.

Check the email you have provided and/or your parent mailboxes daily to stay abreast of information concerning your child and the Center. Monthly newsletters and weekly menus along with special dates and events are posted on [thechildrenscenternh.org](http://thechildrenscenternh.org). Visit our Facebook page or follow us on Instagram for regular updates.

Please feel free to share your thoughts and concerns with your child's teacher. Should a situation arise when you feel that a concern is not being adequately addressed in the classroom, please speak with your child's program coordinator. If you think a matter requires greater attention, do not hesitate to speak directly with the executive director. We wish to create the most beneficial environment for your child(ren) and need your help to do so.



A member of office staff is available during all of the Center's operating hours.

The infant/toddler program offers parent conferences in the spring. The preschool program encourages parents to meet with their child's teacher in November and May to review developmental assessments and discuss any concerns.

The Children's Center uses an interactive app called ProCare Connect that allows our teachers to send daily updates via email. You can receive it using your favorite email program, whether on your phone, tablet or computer.



## Toys and Electronics from Home



With the exception of an occasional “show and tell” toy or naptime stuffy, we ask that you keep your child’s personal toys and electronics at home or in your vehicle. We serve children ages 6 weeks through 12 years and are required by N.H. Child Care Licensing to strictly monitor each child’s environment to protect them from danger and injury. We can’t effectively do this if we don’t know which toys have been brought from home.

## Nap & Rest Periods



New Hampshire Child Care Licensing requires that we “provide children who are in attendance for more than 5 hours the opportunity for at least one hour of rest, relaxation or sleep, depending on the child’s needs.”

Infants have on-demand rest schedules. We provide cribs and crib sheets. Toddlers and preschoolers rest after lunch daily on individual mats. We provide mats and mat covers. We launder the crib sheets and mat covers weekly, or more often if needed. If your child is over a year old, you may provide a special stuffy or blanket for use during rest time. Children who do not fall asleep within 30 minutes will have the opportunity to do a quiet activity.

The Children’s Center reduces staff, by one less staff person in a classroom than required at other times, during naptime for children ages 24 months through 5 years old according to NH Licensing Rules (He-C 4002.23 (i) through (l)).

## Outdoor Play



Your child will spend time outdoors on a daily basis whenever the weather permits. Please dress your child for the weather and for active play. Understand that a busy child will get their clothes dirty. We ask you keep a spare set of clothing in your child’s cubby.

We strongly recommend sturdy footwear for outdoor play. Your child will miss out if they are not wearing sneakers or comparable shoes. Flip flops are prohibited on the playground.

Please label all of your child’s clothing including towels.

## Drop Off & Pick Up



Please accompany your child into and out of the building and classrooms.

Please make personal contact with your child's caregiver upon drop off or pick up, particularly when your child's group is outdoors.

Enter the driveway slowly. Be alert to children and traffic. Talk to your child (who is walking independently) about parking lot safety.

- For the safety of your child, and at the request of the Wolfeboro Police Dept., NEVER leave a child unattended in your vehicle or leave your vehicle running in the parking lot (with the exception of vehicles with remote care starters). Remove your key from your vehicle.
- The NH Child Care Licensing Unit require that you provide the time of drop off and pick up of your child each day. You will sign your child in and out through ProCare Connect, either using your phone or a provided tablet.
- We will only release your child to an adult that you have authorized as a pick-up person on your registration form. We will ask for photo identification until the person is familiar. When it is necessary for someone other than an authorized person to pick up your child, you should notify both the front office and your child's teacher in writing.
- We cannot deny a parent access to their child unless we have a copy of the custody agreement or a court order that relinquishes such parental rights on file in the office.
- **Please phone the Center or message your classroom teacher through ProCare Connect when your child will be absent.**

## Discipline



The Children's Center understands that each child's behavior is driven by his/her developmental level, a need for independence and natural curiosity. Our role is to guide a child as they learn how to get along with others and behave in an appropriate manner. We believe that a child must have the freedom to learn from poor choices and experience the consequences of his/her actions and decisions.

The Center uses the Pyramid Model, which is a positive behavioral intervention and support (PBIS) framework. The model helps our educators build skills for supporting, nurturing and responsive caregiving, creating learning environments that include social-emotional skills, and support children with challenging behavior. Specifically, our staff has been trained in the following proactive practices:

- Establish clear expectations with reasonable limits
- Communicate our love for the child even when rejecting the behavior
- Give verbal warnings and redirect child from negative behavior
- Reassess classroom environment, suitability of activities, level of supervision
- Use positive methods of listening and language while disciplining children
- Allow choice making and praise appropriate behaviors
- Apply natural and logical consequences consistently
- Intervene quickly when children are physically aggressive and help them develop positive strategies for resolving conflict
- Give time and safe place to regain control using de-escalation strategies

As part of our program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model, the leadership team uses the Behavior Incident Report System (BIRS) to collect and analyze incidents that are not developmentally normative or are a cause of concern for the teacher. We use such data to make decisions about providing supports to teachers and children within the preschool and school-age programs. To learn more, visit <https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Pyramid/overview/index.html>.

If a BIR is needed to document an incident, then an "Oops" or "Major Infraction Form" will be filled out for the parent to sign. The intent of this form is to ensure communication is happening between the parent/guardian and the teacher team.

## Exclusion or Expulsion

We will do everything possible using the above-mentioned methods to keep a child at the Center, including working with the family to prevent such an occurrence. Rarely do we exclude a child, but there are sometimes reasons we must remove a child from our program. The following are reasons we may have to expel a child from the Center:

### CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself
- Failure of child to adjust to a larger, inclusive environment after a reasonable amount of time
- Uncontrollable tantrums / angry outbursts / physical aggression
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children

### PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CONTRACT TERMINATION

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in tuition payments
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records
- Verbal abuse to staff or other parents
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child

### SCHEDULE OF EXPULSION OR CONTRACT TERMINATION

- Child's/Parent's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally or face to face
- Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion
- The director, program coordinator, classroom staff member and parent/guardian will have a conference to discuss how to promote positive behaviors

If after these steps have been taken and depending on the risk to other children's welfare or safety, behavior does not improve, and the Center finds that they can no longer accommodate the child, the parent will be asked to remove their child. The parent will be given a minimum of one week's notice to seek alternate child care, that is unless there is a risk to other children's welfare or safety in which case, the child will be expelled immediately.

## Social Media



The Children's Center staff regularly take photographs. These photographs, with parental permission, are shared in-house, published in the local paper, used in promotional materials, as well as posted on social media or our website. Upon enrollment, you will give us permission as to where your child's photo may be posted or used in print.

## Confidentiality



The Children's Center will not release information to agencies or individuals without written permission from a parent or guardian, except as we are legally bound. We will share information regarding your child only with those individuals directly concerned with your child's welfare and/or program.

## Babysitting

It is the policy of the Children's Center to refrain from recommending any individual or childcare provider, public or private, for private child care /babysitting. Staff members who undertake private child care/babysitting positions do so individually and not as employees of the Children's Center or qualification to undertake and fulfill such positions, nor is the Center in any way connected with or responsible for any such person or their actions. Any staff member agreeing to private child care/babysitting is required to provide a waiver form to parents hiring them to acknowledge the Center's policy.

## Field Trips

Field trips will be offered as a way to support curriculum and enrich a child's understanding of the world. For infants and toddlers, field trips consist of stroller rides to specific places in town (downtown, Brewster Academy, the fire station). Children in our preschool and school-age programs may participate in walking field trips, or, on occasion, ride The Children's Center bus to their destination. Popular bus trips include apple picking and Squam Lake Science Center.

Permission for walking field trips is to be completed on the enrollment paperwork and is renewed annually. For bus trips, sign-up sheets will be posted at the classroom door for the parent/guardian to give permission for each outbound trip. This is required by NH Child Care Licensing.