

Northwest Child Development Center

PARENT HANDBOOK



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A Program of Adventure Kids, Inc. Vincent & Carol Pellecchia, Owners

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State Licensing Regulations can be viewed/downloaded on our Web Site

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INTRODUCTION:

Thank you for selecting the Northwest Child Development Center for your child. We feel that you have made a wise choice for the care, growth and development of your child and of your family, and we will do our best to assist your child to grow and develop. We have prepared this Parent Handbook and the accompanying enrollment documents to help you to become familiar with our programs and policies and to serve as a reference should future questions arise. Should you have questions that cannot be answered by these documents, or if you wish to discuss any of our policies, we encourage you to contact your Center Director at any time and she will be happy to assist you. Your child will gain the highest benefits from his/her experience with us based on how well we can work together. This Handbook will help us to develop that relationship.

REMEMBER: *Read this Handbook at least once and keep it available for a reference to become more informed about our Center and the policies that we all must follow.*

A MESSAGE FROM OUR STAFF:

We are pleased to have the opportunity to provide for the daily care and education of your child as s/he grows and develops during the early childhood years. We strive to provide your child with a creative learning environment that will enhance his or her ever changing personality, confidence level, and contribute to a well-rounded early childhood experience. Please feel free to email, call, visit and ask questions regarding your child's progress, our program, or the staff.

OUR GOAL together is to build a very special relationship with you and your child!

MISSION STATEMENT:

The early years of life (birth to age 5) for a child form the building blocks for the future success in life. Northwest Child Development Center is committed to provide creative, fun and age-appropriate programs and environments to meet all of the children's needs in a healthy and clean environment. Using a variety of assessment methods that are sensitive to and informed by family culture, experiences, abilities and disabilities and home language that have been designed to be meaningful and accurate and used in settings familiar to the children, we plan curriculum for all of the children in the group as well as individually. We are very nurturing to all children and wish to involve the families served and reach out to the community as well. Time and space is provided to enable the children to socialize, have quiet space, and for small and large group experiences. Our developmentally appropriate curriculum is carried out in a relaxed and fun environment, encouraging learning through play. Our center serves children eight weeks old through age 5, and includes an annual graduation at Leominster City Hall in June of each year. The center operates on a year-round basis – Monday through Friday.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:

Our goal is to ensure that all current and potential clients are able to arrange appropriate child care services at our Center, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, cultural heritage, political beliefs, disability, marital status, or toileting status. All families and children are welcome and our staff will do all that we can to ensure maximum participation and benefits. Our curriculum and program will reflect the population served.

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT POLICY:

We are all concerned about possible child abuse/neglect of children. We are available to help you if needed through a confidential meeting. As “Mandated Reporters,” by law, we MUST report any witnessed or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families. Whenever possible, prior to reporting any such cases, we will arrange to meet with the parent(s) to discuss our concerns and offer any assistance that may be desired. If such a meeting is not possible to arrange, we will contact the parent/guardian by phone to inform them of our need to report the situation. Our first priority is the safety and well-being of the child. Our second objective in these situations is to be helpful to families in solving their issues or providing resources/referrals to assist the family. Please see our “Referral Plan” for social services.

Should a staff member be suspected of child abuse/neglect, s/he will be immediately suspended from work until an official investigation is completed and a final determination is made by the Department of Early Education and Care if a staff person can return.

All staff must undergo a Background Record Check (BRC), which includes a CORI review, conducted by the Mass Department of Children and Families and the Department of Early Education and Care, and the FBI requires fingerprinting as well, prior to being hired. The staff also receives training in child abuse/neglect and signs and symptoms thereof.

OUR PHILOSOPHIES AND GOALS:

We have always been “child advocates” and feel that it is a basic right of all children to grow and develop in an atmosphere of warmth, comfort, safety, cleanliness and in an environment that challenges their individual needs. Ideally, we feel that a child care service selected must provide appropriately for all of the child’s needs. We must remember that early learning experiences are an integral part of our children’s future education. Preschool experiences provide the fundamental skills for learning and thinking that enable our children to evolve into enthusiastic learners and important individuals. Children are the basis on which our future is built.

Our Developmental Philosophy

The development of young children requires an understanding of the goals needed to achieve this mission. You will find that our philosophy is humanistic in theory and developmental in approach. We feel that by using these basic guidelines we have included the needs of all children in our goals. The following is an outline of these goals which we strive to achieve in our programs offered to children:

Rights for All Parties: We all must have clearly specified rights in this very special agreement for the care of your child. Please review and understand:

- * Parent’s Rights: See the “Parental Rights section of this Handbook (Page 18)
- * Center’s Rights: See the “Policies to Remember” section of this Handbook (Pg. 8)

DAILY SCHEDULES:

Children are placed in groups based on their “developmental level” (using the child’s birth age as only a guide), and each level has a Daily Schedule and Curriculum Plan. These are posted in the classroom for your review each week. We follow themes each week and send home monthly “Parent Newsletters” to keep you informed. There is also a wealth of information on our Web Site.

The Daily Schedule is as follows: the teachers in each group plan their own curriculum

7:00 - 9:00	Arrival of Children/Free Play (individual, small/large group)
8:00 - 8:45	Breakfast/Clean-Up/Toileting
9:10 - 9:30	Calendar/Weather/Music/Creative Movement/Story/Discussion of the day’s activities
9:30 - 10:45	Classroom Learning Centers
10:45 - 11:20	Outside Play/Organized Games/Sandbox/Bicycles
11:20 - 11:30	Hand Washing/Prepare for Lunch
11:30 - 12:30	Family Style Lunch/Brush Teeth & Prepare for Rest
12:30 - 2:00	Rest Time with Music, Books and Cuddly Toys
2:00 - 2:15	Wake up from Rest/Preparing for Play/Toileting
2:15 - 3:00	Free Play/Learning Centers (Self-Initiated) and Snack
3:00 - 3:30	Small Group/Large Group Activities/Movement
3:30 - 5:00	Various Outdoor Activities (weather permitting), or Indoor Activities

Child Assessment and Curriculum Planning Tool

Northwest Child Development Center uses the “Teaching Strategies GOLD” child assessment tool. Teaching Strategies GOLD is a seamless system for assessing children from birth through kindergarten. Extensive field tests have shown it to be both valid and reliable. Available online and in print, the system can be used with any developmentally appropriate curriculum. Grounded in 38 research-based objectives that include predictors of school success and are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, state early learning guidelines, and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, Teaching Strategies GOLD truly helps teachers focus on what matters most for school readiness. It can be used to support all types of learners, including children with special needs and children with advanced knowledge and skills. Teaching Strategies GOLD is a fully bilingual tool and it offers teachers support for assessing the dual-language learners of English and Spanish in their classrooms.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

As our day gets underway and children are arriving, free play activities which are self-directed, are set up and supervised by staff. Throughout the day, individual activities are available to help achieve a developmentally appropriate balance. Children are given the opportunity to explore interest centers focusing on concepts and developmental skills.

Circle Time or Morning Meeting is a time for discussions, sharing ideas, organized games, reading stories, finger plays, and creative movement as well as calendar and weather.

Snacks are offered every afternoon. These meals are presented as an activity which encourages children to serve themselves, socialize and pick-up after themselves. Hand washing is required before all meals and snacks.

Breakfast is offered every morning between 8:00 and 8:45 and is served family style. Hand washing is required before all meals and snacks.

Lunch is sent from home (NO heat ups) and is a fun, social experience for all, while it encourages self-help skills and healthy nutritional habits. Clean up is part of their routine and promotes great skills. Before and after lunch children will wash hands and brush their teeth - good personal hygiene is always encouraged!

Tooth Brushing. After lunch all children will brush their teeth, with staff assistance if needed. Please provide a small tooth brush. You may opt out if you please.

Large and Small Motor Activities are balanced throughout the day, both during indoor as well as outdoor activity. Activities will range from tactile experiences, cutting, coloring, painting, puzzle making, beading and puppetry to the climbing structures, bean bag games, parachute activities, dancing and parading around with instruments.

During *Story Time*, books are read and poems recited. Children are encouraged to talk about pictures and recall and relate experiences. Children are read to on an individual basis and in small groups as well.

Rest Time is a time for children to sleep or rest quietly. You may send a small blanket, and a small comfort item ("stuffy") or small pillow. Pillows or blankets are not allowed for infants.

Please always feel free to join us during the day for any of the activities mentioned above. Visitors are always welcomed and encouraged. Come "get dirty" and have some fun!!!

CHILD ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS REPORTS:

Individual, written "Progress Reports" are prepared every six (6) months (every three months for infants/toddlers and children with documented special needs), and "Parent Conferences" are encouraged to discuss your child's progress in our program. We will also provide more informal progress reports for your child in between the two (2) more formal ones. You will receive a copy for your family's records. These reports must become part of your child's Center Record. Your child will be assessed using the Teaching Strategies GOLD tool. (see page 5). Our staff will bring any special concerns, problems, or significant developments to your attention as soon as they may arise.

Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. The Center staff may not distribute or release information in your child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for your child without your written consent. You will be notified if your child's record is subpoenaed.

REFERRAL SERVICES:

A comprehensive “Social Services and Referral Plan” for health, emotional, educational, and other services is available to parents who may need assistance with issues affecting their child and/or family. A summary of this plan, the “Social Services & Referral Plan”, is available on request.

We can provide referrals to other services, including other child care programs should our Center not be appropriate to meet your child’s needs or to help support your family and assist in the growth and development of your child.

HOLIDAYS AND OTHER CLOSINGS:WE WILL BE CLOSED ON THE FOLLOWING HOLIDAYS:

New Year’s Day	Martin Luther King Jr. Day	President’s Day
Patriot’s Day	Memorial Day	Independence Day
Labor Day	Columbus Day	Veteran’s Day
Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday)		
Christmas Eve (Half Day)	Christmas Day	

We will also close the last Friday of August (before Labor Day) for a Staff Development Day.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

We do make every effort to remain open during inclement weather. However, if there is a declared “State of Emergency”, or if the weather is such that the safety of our staff or your children is at risk, we may need to close our program. These days are rare and will depend on the track of the forecasted storm. Additional information will be available to you through our Facebook page and through an email notification.

INDIVIDUAL HEALTH CARE PLANS: (CMR 7.11 (3))

An individual health care plan (IHCP) will be maintained for each child with a chronic medical condition, which has been diagnosed by a licensed health care practitioner. The IHCP must describe the chronic condition, its symptoms, and any medical treatment that may be necessary while the child is in our care, the potential side effects of the treatment, and the potential consequences to the child’s health if the treatment is not administered. A staff member may administer routine, scheduled medicines or treatment to the child with a chronic medical condition in accordance with written parental consent and licensed health care practitioner’s authorization. (See: “Authorization to Medicate” form). Notwithstanding the provisions of regulation 606 CMR 7.11 (2)(e), the staff member must have successfully completed training, given by the child’s health care practitioner, or, with the program’s health consultant, that specifically addresses the child’s medical condition, medication and other treatment needs.

In addition to the requirements for the routine, scheduled administration of medication or treatment set forth in the section above, any unanticipated administration of medication or treatment for a non- life-threatening condition requires that the staff must make a reasonable attempt to contact the parent(s) prior to administering such unanticipated medication or beginning such unanticipated treatment, or, if the parent(s) cannot be reached in advance, as soon as possible after such medication or treatment is given. The staff member must document all medication or treatment administered, whether scheduled or unanticipated, in the child's medication and treatment log.

The written parental consent and the licensed health care practitioner authorization will be valid for one year, unless withdrawn sooner. Such consent and authorization must be renewed at least annually for administration of medications and/or treatment to continue.

POLICIES TO REMEMBER:

Payment Policies:

All tuition payments are FIXED WEEKLY RATES and must be paid even if your child is absent because you are purchasing a specific block of time. "Make-up" days are not possible.

Payments are due IN ADVANCE for the week the child is to be in attendance. A "Late Payment" fee will be charged for any payment that is not on time. The current late payment fee is \$10 per day.

We reserve the right to suspend or terminate child care services if the tuition is not paid.

(See the "Suspension and Termination Policy" section of this Handbook (Pages 13-14)).

A two (2) week written notice is required to terminate child care or to request a change in the days/hours of enrollment.

A DEPOSIT equal to one (1) week's tuition fee is required at or before the time of the child starting the program, which will be applied to the child's last week of attendance when leaving the program. This deposit will be forfeited if a two (2) week notice is not given prior to terminating child care services.

An annual one (1) week "Vacation Allowance" is available after one year of 12 months continuous child care only if all tuition fees are paid up to date. The vacation allowance is based on the number of days/hours your child is enrolled for. Requests for vacation are to be sent to the Center Director.

A "Late Pick-Up Fee" will be charged for every fifteen (15) minutes that you are late in picking up your child from the center based on the hours enrolled. Note: a fifteen (15) minute "grace period" may be granted by the Center Director. Repeat late pick-ups could result in termination of child care services. The current late pick-up fee is \$20 for the first fifteen minutes and \$1 for every minute after.

Please refer to your "Enrollment Agreement", "Fee Agreement", and "Tuition Rate Schedule" enclosed with your enrollment documents for complete details and current fees.

Tuition fees and other changes may be made by the agency upon a two (2) week notice.

CENTER HOURS:

Our Center operates during the following hours (Monday through Friday): 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM

NO EXCEPTIONS: All children must be picked-up by 5:00 PM or by the time agreed upon.

All children are enrolled for specific hours and days and changes can only be made by the Center Director.

CHANGES/PROBLEMS AT HOME:

Whenever a change or problem occurs at home, it can have effects on your child at the center as well. A situation (financial, marital, death, sickness, behavior issues, moving, "sleepovers" on a school night, new job or work hours, divorce, etc.) that is upsetting to an adult is very likely to be stressful for a child as well, which can affect the child's behavior. Changes in a child's "normal" home routine (medications, different bedtime, new sibling/household member, up all night, etc.) can have an impact on a child. Please share this information with the classroom teachers so that we may understand your child's daily feelings and moods. This will allow us to more effectively assist your child throughout the day.

CHILDREN'S RECORDS:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts regulations require that all children's records be kept for at least seven (7) years, unless transferred to the parent. All files will be destroyed after seven (7) years from the date the child leaves our program. All records and information kept in the child's file is CONFIDENTIAL and will not be released without the written consent of the parent(s). Parents may request a copy of the child's records at any time, and there is no charge. Parents may review a child's file by appointment and have the right to add information or request deletion of information in the file. Records may be transferred to any other person or agency by written request of the parent.

EMERGENCY HEALTH CARE:

We have a very detailed policy and procedures manual to guide our staff in managing emergencies. Our Emergency Health Care procedures are available for review on our Web Site or you are welcome to make an appointment to review our Health Care Policy and Procedures Manual with our administrative staff.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN:

We have written plans for a variety of emergency situations which could possibly occur, with the assistance of the Leominster Emergency Management Agency. Please ask for more information if you are interested.

ENDING CHILD CARE SERVICES: *We require a two (2) week written notice prior to ending your child's enrollment at the center. Failure to do so will require that you pay for the two (2) week period. The same two (2) week requirement applies to changing a child's hours/days of enrollment.*

EXTRA CLOTHING:

All children **MUST** have a complete change of clothing (socks, underwear, etc.) at all times and be appropriate for the season of the year. Remember, children do grow, so you may need to make adjustments from time to time. **PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING.** We are not responsible for lost items that are not labeled. If you “borrow” center clothing, please wash the item(s) and return them as soon as possible. Seasonal items: sunscreen, bathing suit, water shoes, towel, boots, ski pants or snowsuit, warm overcoat, mittens, hat or hooded overcoat, sweater or light jacket.

HAND WASHING POLICY:

Hand washing has been proven to be the best way to prevent the spread of illnesses. Staff will assist children with proper hand washing technique as needed to successfully complete this task.

When to wash hands: Upon arrival at the center (children, staff, volunteers and parents).

After using the bathroom/toilet. After handling bodily fluids, blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, touching mucus or blood or vomit (even if using protective gloves).

Before meals or snacks. After handling trash or cleaning. Before & after sensory table & play dough. Staff do not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or removing smeared fecal matter. Before & after administering medication. When moving (visiting) from 1 group to another. After handling pets & other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals. After handling raw food that requires cooking.

How to wash hands: Wet hands. Apply soap. Rub vigorously for 20 seconds (include back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under nails) – sing ABC’s, etc. as a “timing” method. Rinse with warm running water. Dry hands with paper towel. Turn off water with paper towel.

Children who are developmentally able are taught appropriate hand washing procedures and are periodically monitored.

ILLNESS/SICK CHILD POLICY:

We have a very detailed Health Care Policy and Procedures manual to guide our staff in managing illnesses/sick children. You are welcome to make an appointment to review our Health Care Policy and Procedures Manual.

Children with fevers, severe colds & coughs, communicable diseases (including Head Lice), sore throats (strep), vomiting or diarrhea that is not controllable, etc. will not be admitted to the center until a health care practitioner approves of the return.

Children present at the center who exhibit these symptoms will be sent home.

Repeated abuse of this policy is a reason for termination of child care services.

Please consider the impact on the other children and staff. You probably would not want your child to be unnecessarily exposed to illness! Here’s a tip: A child who is unable to participate comfortably in both indoor and outdoor activities should not be sent to the center. We have a very busy day. **WE CAN NOT KEEP A CHILD INSIDE WHEN THEIR GROUP GOES OUTSIDE** (not allowed by state regulations). We suggest that you make alternative plans to be prepared for a child’s possible illness.

We reserve the right to hire an appropriate healthcare professional at the family’s expense if necessary to care for an ill/sick child.

MEDICATION POLICY: We would prefer not to have to give medications to children. Please try to arrange a medication schedule that allows you to give all medications to your child at home (please let us know if your child is being medicated - it may affect behavior). However, we understand that we will need to do this at times or regularly for those children with medical or behavioral conditions requiring daily medicines/treatments. We have developed a policy to guide our staff in the proper medication of children. All staff who administers medications/treatments is required to be currently certified in First Aid/CPR and must take an "Administration of Medications" training offered by our health care consultant and another on-line training from the Department of Early Education and Care. Parents who do not follow our policies will be required to keep the child home or make arrangements to have medicines/treatments administered.

Basic Medication Guidelines to follow:

- * An "Authorization to Administer Medications" form must be completed and signed by the parent for any prescribed medications/treatments (*downloadable from our Web Site*).
- * A valid written "order" by the health care professional (doctor, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, etc.) is also required (in addition to the parent's signature) for NON-PRESCRIPTION medicines (children's Tylenol, cough syrup, etc.). All non-prescribed medications must be provided by the family, and will only be used for their child. *Note: the medicine noted on the written doctor's order MUST match the medicine provided* (For example, "CVS Brand Ibuprofen" cannot be administered if the doctor's order says "Children's Tylenol").
- * ALL medicines must be in original containers and labeled with the child's name, name of the medications, dosage, and directions for administration and storage. The medicine must also not be expired. DO NOT SEND MEDICINE IN BAGGIES OR OTHER CONTAINERS!
- * Topical non-prescription medications (sunscreen, ointments, etc.) require an "Authorization to Administer Medications" form completed and signed by the parent, but does not need a signed written order of the health care practitioner.
- * Unused medications will be returned to the family.
- * The healthcare professional can email the permission authorization.
- * An Individual Health Care Plan is also required.

Parents are required to inform NCDC about possible side effects, reactions, behavior changes, etc. to any medication to be better able to understand your child's behavior while medicated, and to watch for possible effects on the child.

Families must provide any measuring device needed (eye dropper, medicine spoon, applicator, etc.

PARENT CONFERENCES: Parent conferences are available any time, for any reason, usually by appointment. Please contact your Center Director. Parent conferences are available to discuss "Progress Reports" that are periodically (see page 11) prepared for your child. Feel free to ask for a confidential meeting with the Center Director for any assistance your family and/or child may need. Should our staff express concerns regarding a child and/or family, we will offer a parent conference to discuss any issues.

PICKING-UP/DROPPING-OFF YOUR CHILD: Always pick-up your child on time, in accordance with your scheduled hours on your "Enrollment Agreement". Being late can seriously upset your child, our routines, and possibly the safety of the other children present. A "Late Pick-Up Fee" may be charged whenever it is necessary to keep staff overtime due to children not leaving on time (See "Payment Policies" section, page 8).

ATTENDANCE: Whenever your child is going to be absent from the center, please call and let us know. Also, if your child is going to be late, please call to notify us within one hour of your scheduled drop-off time. Absences may result in adjusting staffing, especially during the summer months and holiday periods, and if we do not hear from you that you will be late, we may assume that your child will be absent. Try to remember that children are on schedules, and when schedules are changed, it may be disruptive to your child's day as well as the child's classroom. Try not to disturb sleeping children or busy staff. **DO NOT** allow your child **or** siblings to "run crazy" through the center or out of the building. **DO NOT** allow your child to enter an empty classroom to get their belongings, etc. Children **MUST** be accompanied by an adult (not another young child/sibling) **AT ALL TIMES**. Please be respectful of other children and staff when picking up (or dropping off) your child. Communication with staff is important, but please try to wait for a free moment or convenient time, as children may "act up" if they see the teacher is "sidetracked" and not fully focused on their supervision.

PROBLEMS/CONCERNS/QUESTIONS: A confidential meeting can be arranged if, at any time, you feel you need to discuss any issues or concerns. Please do not hesitate to ask for a meeting. We will accommodate your request at the earliest time convenient. We ask all parents/visitors NOT to discuss any problems, concerns, etc. in public in front of children or other parents/visitors. We value your input and like to hear from parents to assist us in providing a high quality child care program.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN: NEVER send a "stranger" to pick-up your child. Sending someone, even a close family member, who is not properly registered with us is like sending a "stranger" to pick-up your child no matter how well you know and love this person.

Whenever it is necessary to send someone other than yourself to pick-up your child, you must follow certain safety precautions:

- * **Notify** the Center Director, not simply the child's teacher, *in advance*;
- * Fill out a "*Child Release*" form, or put it in writing;
- * Only send a person who is listed in the child's "*Enrollment Book*" - we can only release your child to someone pre-registered as an "Authorized Pick-Up" person, unless prior written arrangements have been made;
- * *Be sure the person can prove his/her identity with a valid picture identification card.*

Telephoning the Center to authorize a child's release poses some difficulties, and should only be done by contacting the Center Director or authorized "person in charge" in the Director's absence. You can also **arrange with the Director** to email (director@northwestchilddevelopment.com) the written authorization. Whenever there may be custody issues or restraining orders, we must have a copy of written legal documents (Court Order) on file in order to honor requests concerning limitation to be picked-up by biological parents. Legally, we must have current documentation on file.

WE WILL NOT RELEASE A CHILD IF WE ARE NOT CERTAIN THAT IT IS SAFE TO DO SO!!

SUSPENSION/TERMINATION OF CHILD CARE SERVICES: There are times when a child may present challenging behavior(s) that may need intervention to be able to function in our educationally based classrooms which are designed to provide a high level of early education and care. This may be especially true for new children just entering the program. The educator will immediately call to the Director for assistance, who will respond to help the immediate situation and begin a plan of action. The behavior(s) will be appropriately logged on the "Child Incident Report" (a copy is given to the parent). The parent will be contacted as soon as possible to come to the Center and meet with us to discuss the matter.

At this "Parent Conference" we will:

- Discuss any issues or concerns in an attempt to discuss options other than suspension/termination;
- Offer referrals to parents for evaluation, diagnostic or therapeutic services;
- Pursuing options for supportive services to the program, including consultation and educator training;
- Developing a plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the program.

If the child continues to exhibit challenging behaviors, a suspension can be issued until we can have an effective plan of action in place. Sometimes our program may be unable to provide for the child's needs and alternative arrangements can be made. Also, see our Behavior Management Plan (page 16).

CHILD TRANSITIONS:

Whenever children are preparing to transition to a new classroom, NCDC will:

1. Collaborate and share information between each classroom (with parental permission);
2. Assist the child with the transition in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand (i.e. visits to the new classroom prior to beginning in the new class).

SIGN-IN & SIGN-OUT SYSTEM: Just as most parents have to "clock in" and "out" at work, we must sign the children in and out of the center daily on attendance lists we prepare for this purpose. These "Sign-in Sheets" enable us to keep an ongoing attendance count throughout the day and as a check list in case of an emergency situation (i.e. evacuation, fire, etc.). Please make sure to notify a staff person when your child arrives and departs from the Center if you are not immediately noticed. NEVER LET YOUR CHILD ENTER OR LEAVE THE BUILDING ALONE. THEY MUST BE ESCORTED BY A PARENT/GUARDIAN, or authorized pick-up person. Your cooperation is required and appreciated as staff can be involved with the children and not immediately notice you.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN: We do not provide transportation to or from our Center. Transportation for "field trips" is done either by "hired vehicles", or outside services. Written permission from parents will be obtained for any field trips not included in the "Enrollment Book". Children must ride in an appropriate booster/car seat in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws. Written parental permission is also required for children who may be transported due to "outside services" provided by other agencies (school systems, health care agencies, etc.). Local Emergency Rescue Services (EMS) will be used to transport children during an emergency situation. A staff member will accompany the child until a parent can be present.

TOOTH BRUSHING PLAN: National research indicates that dental caries (tooth decay) is the most chronic childhood disease, five times more common than asthma. If untreated, dental caries results in cavities, pain, and infection and, in some instances, devastating consequences for a child's overall health, including sickness and mortality. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "When done routinely and properly, tooth brushing can reduce the amount of plaque which contains the bacteria associated with gum disease and tooth decay." Our agency's center provides time and supervision for children in attendance for more than four hours to brush their teeth, at a time that best fits the program's curriculum. We will encourage children to brush their teeth and assist them. However, children will not be forced to brush their teeth. Parents can "opt out" if they do not wish their child to brush at the center. *The child's family is required to provide a tooth brush for each child enrolled* (we keep a few on hand should a child forget to bring one). *Please send a simple tooth brush as "fancy" ones can present storage and sanitary issues. Individual parents who do not want their child to brush their teeth while in care must make a request for non-participation in writing (on a state required form that we will provide).* This request will be maintained in the child's record, and must be renewed annually (606 CMR 7.04(9)).

VISITING THE CENTER: Parents, relatives and friends of the family are always welcome to visit the center. The only time we may limit these visits would be if a child is having a difficult time adjusting, having "separation anxiety", or if your presence upsets or confuses the child or other children. We have an "open door" policy, and visitors often come to view our program, especially when "shopping" for child care. We would appreciate it if you wish to visit to let us know ahead of time so that we can prepare for your visit (i.e. set aside time to chat, gather resources/necessary paperwork, etc.); "unannounced visits" are allowed if you wish to do so.

VISIT US ON THE WEB: We recommend that you visit our Facebook daily. The site is fun and full of information about our program & policies, current events and activities and lots of photos and videos. Our website will also feature links to community services that families can get help with raising their children and their growing family. You can also learn about the curriculum themes, songs and books that the children are involved with. You will also be able to email your child's teachers directly to see how your child's day is going and to have dialog with his or her teachers. The web address is: www.northwestchilddevelopment.com.

Adventure Kids, Inc.

Board of Directors

Vincent R Pellecchia, Executive Director

Carol A Pellecchia, Educational Director

NORTHWEST CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Vincent R Pellecchia, Executive Director

Samantha St John, Center Director

Toileting and Diapering Plan:

(Anyone changing/diapering a child must wear protective (plastic) gloves)

Children will always be supervised during toileting. Children will wash their hands with soap and water after using the toilet. Staff members assisting with toileting will also wash their hands in the same manner. Paper towels are to be used at all times. (No cloth towels).

Children who are toilet trained and have an accident during the day will be changed immediately. All staff will wear disposable rubber gloves to do this. All soiled clothing will be bagged in a sealed plastic bag, labeled with the child's name and date and stored apart from other items. Children are encouraged to be a part of the changing process. Affected areas (floors, wall, toilet, etc.) will be washed with soap and water and disinfected with the agency's approved bleach/water solution. All cleaning utensils will be disinfected according to NCDC maintenance policy. Items or areas soiled by vomit or blood will be cleaned using approved disinfecting method. The staff member will then wash his/her hands. *All trash cans used for disposable diapers will be emptied, washed and sanitized daily.*

Infant Requirements: Families are required to provide diapers (a bag/box) and diaper cream ointment as needed. Please label everything.

Toddler Requirements: Families are required to provide diapers/pull ups and diaper cream ointment as needed. Please label everything.

NCDC will provide wipes (local store brand) for all children unless the family requests use of a specific brand which will then be supplied by the family.

Potty Training is not required for entry into our Preschool Classrooms. The teachers will work with the families and child to provide a training schedule that works for each individual child.

CHILDREN WILL NOT BE PUNISHED FOR SOILING OR WETTING THEMSELVES!

Please See "Extra Clothing" Policy on page 10 of our Parent Handbook.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PLAN:

The proper guidance and supervision of children is required for managing their behavior. Staff must be positive in their approach and plan activities that are appropriate for the developmental level (ages & stages) of the children in the group. Equipment and materials must also be geared to the child's level of growth and development. All children must be made aware of the rules and expectations of the early education and care center by setting positive limits.

All behaviors that are not acceptable will be treated in the SAME MANNER:

1. The child will be asked to behave in an acceptable manner AND reminded of the rules;
2. The child (after step # 1) will then be placed in another area within the room, away from the group, until ready to return;
3. The staff person will discuss the behavior with the child, and suggest a more acceptable way or ways for the child to behave or solve the issue(s).

A SCHEDULED PARENT CONFERENCE will be arranged whenever a child is having a continual problem in the classroom (as documented in the child's records). Parents are expected to be supportive with the center staff in an attempt to solve the issue(s), to enable the child to participate in an acceptable manner. Staff and parents will cooperate together to decide what is in the best interests of the child.

The following process will be recommended to the family as a means of professional interpretation of the child's behavioral issues whenever circumstances deem necessary:

1. Health, emotional, and/or developmental screenings will be suggested if the center staff feels the child's behavior is not typical for the child's age or level of development, or if there are unusual circumstances surrounding the problem(s).
2. We will make every attempt reasonable to work with the child and parents, guardians and/or professional resources to solve any behavior issues. However, if we are not successful, we will assist the family with referral(s) to more appropriate placement possibilities.
3. We reserve the right to suspend or terminate child care, without notice if warranted, when it is determined that a child's behavior could endanger the health, emotional well-being, or safety of other children, staff or him/herself.
4. Parents will be asked to remove the child if they cannot behave in an acceptable manner.

Requirements for Discipline:

Discipline and guidance is to be consistent and based on an understanding of the individual needs and growth and development of children. Our efforts will be to direct discipline with the goal of "maximizing" the growth and development of the child and for protecting the group of individuals within the classroom.

Situations that are prohibited and will result in termination of employment of any agency staff:

1. Corporal punishment: spanking, hitting, etc.;
2. Cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, or verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment including any type of physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats, or derogatory remarks;
3. Depriving children food (including "desserts" or treats), outdoor time, or force feeding children or otherwise making them eat against their will, or in any way using food as a consequence.
4. Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting;

5. Confining a child to a swing, high chair, crib, playpen, or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in lieu of supervision; and
6. Excessive time-out. Time-out may not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within an educator's view.

Child abuse/neglect in any way is a very serious offense. Staff even suspected in any such issue will be immediately suspended from the Center until an investigation is completed. The staff member will be terminated if sufficient cause is determined by the DEEC. Center administration, staff and legal counsel will cooperate to the fullest extent possible. The Massachusetts Department of Children Families and the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care will be notified immediately of any action in this regard; as well as any state/federal agency that provides financial support (grants, vouchers, etc.). We are all "Mandated Reporters" by law, and must report any witnessed or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. We have a variety of handouts available to assist you with behavior management and parenting, and occasionally will put these out on our Parent Information Board, or Web Site. If you don't see what you need just contact the Center Director and we will find resources for you. Behavior Management is included in our Staff Orientation, and our staff are routinely updated and retrained on various behavior issues. They are required to read and sign a copy of our BMP, and this is kept in the employee personnel file to certify that the BMP is understood and the employee will follow the principles outlined therein. In addition to being in this Handbook, the BMP is posted in the classrooms for staff and parents to review.

SERVICES PROVIDED:

We are pleased to offer your family the following services:

1. Early educational and care programs for children ages 8 weeks to 5 years.
2. Classrooms individualized according to the ages of children (i.e. infants (8 weeks to 15 months), toddlers (15 months to 2.9 years), 3's, 4's, 5's).
3. Qualified teachers and aides who develop activities which emphasize listening, verbal, and other pre-reading skills as well as fine and gross motor skills.
4. State of the art, air conditioned facility.
5. Cheerful classrooms filled with learning activities and materials/equipment.
6. Computer aided instruction, with computers in every classroom.
7. A well-equipped, well maintained playground.
8. Year round services, closing only for the major holidays and severe weather conditions.
9. Nutritious breakfasts and PM snacks.
10. Nutrition education for children and parents to assist children to develop healthy eating habits.
11. Health Care & Behavioral Consultants.
12. Formal assessment of your child's progress (Progress Reports) using the ASQ-3 and Teaching Strategies GOLD tools.
- 14 Individual and Class photographs.
15. Referrals to family and child services. Including interpreters when needed.

LUNCH REQUIREMENTS: Parents provide lunch from home. Nutritious breakfasts and PM snacks will be served daily and the menu is posted in the classrooms and on our Web Site. Please keep your menu posted at home for reference. Should your child not like what we are serving on a particular day, please feel free to send a breakfast/snack from home. Our staff will provide supervision, encouragement and socialization. Sorry we cannot reheat any food – unless as part of a child’s Individual Health Care Plan. Keep in mind that children have a real busy day “at school”. To a child, it is the same as your day at work. Parents who send their children to our center must make careful plans to ensure that they get a full day’s worth of nutritional foods and beverages. Try to avoid “sugar drinks” (anything with more than 10 grams of sugar is a “sugar drink”) – because they can “trick” a child into thinking s/he is full in addition to the damage caused by too much sugar. We follow the USDA recommended guidelines for children (visit Myplate.gov). Ask us for information if you need it. Make sure that you include foods from the grain group, fruits and vegetables, milk and protein (meat, fish, poultry, cheese (1.5 oz.), eggs, beans (3/8 cup), peanut butter (3 tbsp.), and yogurt.

Infant requirements: Send premixed bottles daily or breast milk, and food for your child based on their needs.

Toddler requirements: Daily lunch and a sippy cup (please label everything).

REMEMBER: When it comes to food and children, “looks” is everything! Generally, if they know what it is and it looks good, they may try it. A good idea is to let your child help plan and prepare their own lunches. They can tell you what they are in the mood for and what other children are eating at school that they might like.

Some IDEAS to try: We have provided “handouts” on our Web Site for your assistance.

Sandwich or “finger foods”, with bread or crackers. Try sending fruit for desserts instead of sweets. Try using “themes” such as a “Red Day” and pack items that are red in color; or follow your child’s classroom theme for ideas to get the child’s interest. Instead of sandwiches, try: cheese chunks or slices, peanut butter and crackers or celery (“ants -on-a-log” are fun); hard-boiled egg (take the shell off at home and **DON’T FORGET an ice pack**); potato salad, macaroni salad (yup, the ice pack again); slices of chicken, turkey, etc.

We encourage the children to eat properly at the center, and to eat their “growing foods” first. Parents can help our staff by sending lunches that are “ready to eat” (fruits & veggies peeled and cut up, hard boiled eggs peeled, etc.) or precooked food in a thermos container (not in a can). **Please remember to send eating utensils (spoon/fork).** Please avoid candy or “junk foods”. They may only cause problems. Try to avoid “sugar filled juices” as they fool kids into thinking they are full. Oh yes, try including a little note from home in your child’s lunch box to let him/her know you love them. You will make your child a little bit happier!

PARENTS’ RIGHTS: We are a family oriented agency and encourage family involvement in many ways. In addition to events and activities at the center, we have a fabulous Web Site full on information and links to the community. You have a right to make unannounced visits to your child’s classroom while your child is present.

Parent Input: We have a procedure for allowing your input in the development of center policy and procedures. You can make suggestions, but it is up to the program to decide whether or not they will be implemented. We also send out periodic Program Evaluation forms and questionnaires

Conferences: You have a right to request an individual conference with the program staff.

Meeting prior to Admittance: The Center Director or his/her designee will meet with you prior to admitting your child to tour the facility and ask any questions.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROGRAM:

Providing information to the Massachusetts Licensing agency: We must make available to the MA Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) any information required to be kept and maintained under state regulations and any other information reasonably related to the requirements of the regulations. This includes information in your child's records. Authorized employees of the DEEC are not to remove identified case materials from the center premises and are required to maintain the confidentiality of individual records.

Reporting abuse and neglect: All Center employees are mandated reporters. *We are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect* to both the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Early Education and Care, or to the Center Director who will usually file the report. The agency's written policies and procedures for reporting are outlined in this Handbook.

Notification of injury: We must notify you immediately of any injury which requires emergency care. We must also notify you, within 24 hours, if any first aid is administered to your child.

Availability of Regulations: We keep a copy of Massachusetts 606 CMR 7.00, Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Family Child Care, Small Group and School Age and Large Group and School Age Child Care Programs, on premises. These regulations are available for review upon request. The Center Director can help you with this. You can also review and/or download the regulations on our Web Site.

OUR HISTORY AND BACKGROUND:

Vincent and Carol Pellecchia began their careers in the child care field in 1970 & 1971 respectively. While they started out in different directions, their paths eventually crossed and they forged an award winning child care agency (Adventure Kids, Inc.). Carol began her career in the private sector when she started her own center in Leominster. Vincent began his career with the Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc. (MOC, INC.) Head Start program through the former Emergency Employment Act for Unemployed Vietnam Era Veterans. Vincent started as an assistant to the Head Start Program Director until he became responsible to create, develop and manage the MOC, Inc.'s Family Child Care System over a ten year period of time. Mr. Pellecchia became very proficient in writing grants and generated close to \$1,000,000 in annual funding during his time at MOC, Inc. They then successfully responded to a bid request from Mount Wachusett Community College, formed Associated Children's Services and opened the first on-site child development center. They went on to operate at two locations at MWCC for a ten year period.

The Pellecchia's purchased their first private center in 1987 and created Adventure Kids, Inc. which grew into a multi-site child care agency. They eventually opened the Adventures After School and Summer Camp Program at a different location. In 1989, they once again were successful bidders to be the first child care concessionaires at Fitchburg State College (University). During the next eighteen years they operated the highly regarded FSC Child Development Center and Lab School. The FSC Center became widely used as a Lab School by students at FSC as well as other college students and high school students from Monty Tech, Fitchburg High, Leominster High and others.

2008 saw the Child Development Center/Lab School at FSC come to an end when the college administration decided there was “no need for an on-site child care program”. However, Vincent and Carol were prepared and moved the entire center to a new location in Fitchburg and expanded four (4) times over the first two years. 2008 was a dynamic year for another reason - The Pellecchia's purchased the Northwest Child Development Center in Leominster, one of the area's premier preschool programs. They won the “2008 Business of the Year” award (the only local business to do so) as part of the “Celebration of Excellence” offered by the Enterprise Bank and Trust Company.

Other Highlights:

- * Chosen by the Mass Department of Education as a “model program” which was used to implement the USDA Child Care Food Program for family child care providers.
- * Implemented 1 of 4 models for the Mass Day Care Voucher Project, which was eventually chosen as the model to use state wide due to its success.
- * Vincent was the Chairperson of the Leominster Community Partnerships for Children Advisory Council (“Project Apples”) for the five years (09/17/2010 - June 2014).
- * Assisted Leominster and Fitchburg in writing grants and establishing their Community Partnerships for Children Councils (called Project Apples).
- * Served on numerous committees, boards and councils relating to child care and human services over the years, including the former Leominster Multi-Service Center.
- * Numerous awards and citations for recognition of excellence in the child care field.
- * Created two (2) Massachusetts corporations and eventually merged the two (2) to become Adventure Kids, Inc.
- * Many years of consulting experience.
- * Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
- * Maintained outstanding relations with the Massachusetts and local agencies responsible for licensing our centers.
- * Obtained one of the state's first Teenage Parenting Grants while at MWCC.
- * One of the first center based agencies in Worcester County to offer infant & toddler childcare.
- * The second agency to operate “on-site” child care centers (MWCC & FSC) in North Worcester County.
- * Always have had outstanding relationships with the families of children enrolled.

OUR LICENSING AUTHORITY

Licensed by: Mass Department of Early Education and Care
 324R Clark Street, Worcester, MA 01606
 508-461-1464 www.eec.state.ma.us
 Rosa Semidei-Molina, Licenser: rosa.l.semidei-molina2@mass.gov
 606 CMR 7.00: M.G.L. c. 15D / LicensingStandards

Families may feel free to contact the DEEC with questions, or for our licensing history.

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The NORTHWEST CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER is owned and operated by Adventure Kids, Inc.
Vincent and Carol Pellecchia, Proprietors.



You can e-mail your child's teacher as follows:

Ducklings: ducklings@northwestchilddevelopment.com
Ducks: ducks@northwestchilddevelopment.com
Guppies: guppys@northwestchilddevelopment.com
Munchkins: munchkins@northwestchilddevelopment.com
Stars: stars@northwestchilddevelopment.com

Northwest Child Development Center

HANDBOOK VERIFICATION FORM

This is to verify that I have met with the Center Director to review and discuss the program's "Parent Handbook." I understand and accept all policies contained in the Parent Handbook. I have been given a copy to keep as a reference and understand that the policies mentioned in the Handbook are considered legal documents for parents and NCDC.

NOW ON THE WEB: www.northwestchilddevelopment.com

I further know that all of the information contained in the Parent Handbook is also on Northwest Child Development Centers' web site to further assist our family in obtaining the best early education and care for my child. We understand that the NCDC Web Site has links to community services that can help strengthen our family, as well as provide information about things to do and places to go for families.

The Web site also will keep us up to date on school events and needs.

This Parent Handbook can be viewed and downloaded on our web site on the Admissions Page.

Parent Signature: _

Date: _

Parent Signature: _

Date: _

AgencySignature

Date: _

[Visit Our Web Site Daily to Keep Informed and Up to Date!](http://www.northwestchilddevelopment.com)

www.northwestchilddevelopment.com

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