

NORTHWEST CHILDCARE & DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Parent Handbook



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Quick Guide

Renewed Annually (or as needed)

- Physical
- Immunization records

Tuition Payment Schedule

- Payments are due in advance for the week
- \$10 daily late payment fee

Late pick up / early drop off fees

- \$20 for the first fifteen (15) minutes and \$1 for every minute thereafter

Withdrawal Policy

- Minimum two (2) week written notice required

Introduction

Thank you for selecting the Northwest Childcare & Development Center (NCDC) for your child. We feel that you have made a wise choice for the care, growth and development of your child and your family. We will do our best to assist your child to grow and develop. We have prepared this Parent Handbook and the accompanying Enrollment Book 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 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 they grow and develop during the early childhood years. We strive to provide your child with a creative learning environment that will enhance their 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 through age 5) for a child form the building blocks for future success in life. Northwest Childcare & 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. To ensure our curriculum meets the needs of all children, we employ a variety of assessment methods. These methods are designed to be

sensitive to their experiences, abilities and informed by each child's family culture and home language. The assessment has been designed to be meaningful and accurate, and is used in settings familiar to children. Our curriculum is planned for all 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 are 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 in June of each year. The center operates on a year-round basis – Monday through Friday.

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. A high-quality childcare service should prioritize meeting all of a 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 grow into enthusiastic learners and important individuals. That is the foundation on which NCDC operates. Children are the basis on which our future is built.

Our Development 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 special agreement for the care of your child. Please review and understand:

- Parent’s Rights – see the “Parental Rights section of this Handbook (page 20)
- Center’s Rights – see the “Policies to Remember” section of this Handbook (page 9)

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

The safety and well-being of our children is our top priority. We are committed to creating a safe environment for all children. We are available to help 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.

Classroom Breakdown

- Ducklings – Infants: 8 Weeks – 15 Months
- Ducks – Toddlers: 15 Months – 2.9 Years
- Guppies: 2.9 Years – 3.6 Years
- Munchkins: 3.6 Years – 4.6 Years
- Stars: 4.6 Years – 6 Years

Child / Staff Ratios

Ducklings – 1:3 or 2:7

Ducks – 1:4 or 2:9

Guppies / Munchkins / Stars – 1:10 or 2:20

Educators

All of our employees are trained in Pediatric CPR and First Aid.

In order to develop a close, loving relationship, your child will remain with the same teacher throughout most of the day. In the case of a teacher absence due to illness or vacation, your child will have a different teacher. If there is low attendance for any given reason, classrooms may be combined.

Our goal is to be available to communicate with you each day, and to allow time for concerns and questions. Please feel free to contact your child’s teacher and/or the Center Director if you need to request a meeting.

Daily Schedules

Children are placed in groups based on their “developmental level”, using the child’s birth age as only a guide. 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 [website](#). Please note that 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
11:20 – 11:30	Hand washing / prepare for lunch
11:30 – 12:30	Family style lunch / brush teeth and prepare for rest
12:30 – 2:00	Rest time with music, books and cuddly toys
2:00 – 2:15	Wake up from rest / prepare for play / toileting
2:15 – 3:00	Free play / learning centers (self-initiated) and snack
3:00 – 3:30	Small / large group activities / movements
3:30 – 5:00	Various outdoor activities (weather permitting) or indoor activities

Child Assessment and Curriculum Planning Tool

Northwest Child Development Center uses a child assessment tool called Teaching Strategies GOLD. 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, share ideas, organized games, reading stories, finger plays, creative movement as well as calendar and weather.
- **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!
- **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.
- **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 6). 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.

Holidays and Other Closings

Northwest Childcare & Development Center will be closed the following holidays:

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

The Center will also be closed 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 Policy

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.

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 15)).

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

If for any reason you must withdraw from the Program in the week you have already paid for, you are not eligible for a return of funds.

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 hours your child is enrolled for. Requests for vacation are to be sent to the Center Director.

A “**late pick-up / early drop-off fee**” will be charged for every fifteen (15) minutes that your child is in the care of NCDC outside of the hours they are enrolled in. 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 NCDC upon a two (2) week notice.

Disclaimer: Northwest Childcare & Development Center reserve the right to adjust and apply tuition rates at any time. However, we typically only review tuition on an annual basis for the upcoming school year. We do not take tuition adjustments lightly and pay close attention to the cost of staffing, cost of operating expenses, and to the vendors we use to provide the best care possible for our families.

Center Hours

Northwest Childcare & Development 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 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 per request 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

NCDC 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 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. 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. **PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING.**

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.

Keep your child at home when any of the following occurs

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees (normal temp is 98.6 degrees)
- Possible contagious skin rashes of undetermined nature, open weeping wounds
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting two or more times in a 24-hour period
- Mouth sores, unless a physician states that the child is non-infectious
- Evidence of lice, scabies or other parasitic infestations
- Sever and/or persistent coughing, copious amounts of yellow or green nasal drainage
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellow skin or eyes
- Stiff neck with temperature
- Redness, swelling or discharge from the eye
- Injury which requires attention by licensed health care professional

- Rash with a fever or behavior change until the physician has determined that the illness is not a communicable disease

Children exhibiting these symptoms 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.

Child may return to the center when they have

- Completed at least 24 hours of an antibiotic or other medication regiment with doctor clearance
- Maintained normal body temperature for at least 24 hours following any change, and without the aid of an over the counter (OTC) fever reducer
- Maintained usual bladder, bowel and stomach function for at least 24 hours following any noted change from usual function (diarrhea, vomiting, etc.)
- No evidence of lice (nits) noted on head, scabies or other parasitic infestation on the body. Must complete at least one application of pediculicide shampoo / fine tooth comb treatment, pediculicide body lotion or cream. Parents must accompany the child upon returning to school for a head or body check before being allowed to return to the classroom.

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. If your child is required to take medicine, you must sign the medication consent form and notify your child's teacher. 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 [website](#)).
- 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”).
- The first dose of any new medicine must be administered at home.
- 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!**
- A measuring device must be provided (eye dropper, medicine spoon, applicator, etc.)
- **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.

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 7) 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.

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.

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. During pick-up, parents are responsible for their children once the child has been signed-out of their classroom. Your cooperation is required and appreciated as staff can be involved with the children and not immediately notice you.

Dropping-Off / Picking-Up 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 Policy” section, page 9).

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 (see page 17).

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)

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.

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.

Toileting and Diapering Plan

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 pages 10-11 of the Parent Handbook.

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

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 are 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
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 [website](#). 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 through 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.
13. Individual and Class photographs.
14. 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 [website](#). 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 License 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.

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.

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, Licensor: Rosa.L.Semidei-Molina@Mass.Gov
606 CMR 7.00: M.G.L. c. 15D / Licensing Standards

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

Administration and Classroom Contacts

Center Director | *Samantha St. John* – Director@NorthwestChildDevelopment.com

Ducklings – Ducklings@NorthwestChildDevelopment.com

Ducks – Ducks@NorthwestChildDevelopment.com

Guppies – Guppys@NorthwestChildDevelopment.com

Munchkins – Munchkins@NorthwestChildDevelopment.com

Stars – Stars@NorthwestChildDevelopment.com

Welcome to the NCDC family!

Please read the Parent Code of Conduct and sign the Parent Code of Conduct Acknowledgement below*

Please sign the Handbook Verification Form below**

Parent Code of Conduct

Our goal at NCDC is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of NCDC, but it is the responsibility of each and every person who enters the Center.

Everyone who enters the classroom will affect our school environment. Therefore, NCDC requires the parents/guardians of enrolled children to constantly be conscientious of following the conduct guidelines in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. Violations of the Parent Code of Conduct will result in meeting with NCDC Administration to address the breach of contract. NCDC reserves the right to remove any family for violating this policy.

Swearing / Cursing

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on Center property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive to many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At no time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

Threatening of Employees, Children, Other Parents or Adults Associated with NCDC

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. All threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the Center will not assume the risk of a second offense. PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR, AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOIR AT ALL TIMES.

Physical / Verbal Punishment of Your Child or Other Children at NCDC

While NCDC does not necessarily support, nor condone corporal punishment of children, such acts are not permitted in the child care facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate, it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher, and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. No parent, or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or Center director. Parents are not permitted to intervene in conflicts between children while the children are in the Center. The teachers and staff are responsible for such matters at our Center and are therefore the only adults permitted to do so.

Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher, or Director's

attention. At that point, the teacher and/or Director will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of the discussion, teachers and/or Director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our Center have privacy rights. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the Center.

Smoking

For the health of all NCDC employees, children, and associates, smoking is prohibited anywhere on Center property. Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot of NCDC. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot.

Violations of the Safety Policy

Parents are required to follow all safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed not as inconveniences, but to protect the welfare and best interest of the employees, children and associates of NCDC. Please be particularly mindful of NCDC entrance procedures. We need to be careful to never allow unauthorized individuals into the Center. Holding the Center door open for the person following you may be polite, however, that person may not be authorized to enter the Center. Security procedures are only as strong as the weakest person in our organizational chain. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any breaches to the Center Director.

Confrontational Interactions with Employees, Other Parents or Associates of NCDC

While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees or other parents of Northwest Childcare & Development Center, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point, and are strictly prohibited. These types of interactions may be the cause for immediate dismissal.

Violations of the Confidential Policy

NCDC takes confidentiality very seriously. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families, and employees associated with NCDC. Any parents who share any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents for information which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy, and risks being dismissed from the Center.

Harassment

Any parent who engages in activity or conversation that result in distress, fear, discomfort, marginalization, alienation, or ostracization of any adult, or child affiliated with our Center will be subject to dismissal from our program. This includes acts of racism and bias.

Please understand Northwest Childcare & Development Center reserves the right to dismiss a family at our discretion at any point throughout the school year. This implies that NCDC may request a removal from our program which does not align with the above guidelines.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding!

Parent Code of Conduct Acknowledgement

I, _____, parent/guardian of _____
have read, understand and consent to the aforementioned policies and procedures regarding Parent Conduct while my child is enrolled at Northwest Childcare & Development Center.

Signature

Date

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 _____, parent/guardian of _____ have read, 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.

I further know that all of the information contained in the Parent Handbook is also on Northwest Childcare & Development Center’s website to further assist our family in obtaining the best early education and care for my child. We understand that the NCDC website 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 website will also keep us up to date on school events and needs.

This Parent Handbook can be viewed and downloaded on our website on the Admissions page.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Agency Signature: _____ Date: _____

Visit our website daily to keep informed and up to date!

www.NorthwestChildDevelopment.com