

MANCHESTER CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Parent Handbook

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Manchester Child Development Center would like to welcome you to our center. We have been providing quality Child Care since 1976 and are looking forward to continuing this tradition with your family. Our mission is to provide the highest level of care to the families that we work with, and this starts with a caring environment. In this home-like atmosphere children are happy, safe, and ready to learn.

As a school and a business, we have policies that we expect every family will follow, so that everyone at Manchester Child Development Center will be part of a happy, safe and special community. Please read the following information carefully and keep it as an important resource.

Mailing Address:

Tax Id#: 45-2699898

Manchester Child Development Center
2020 Goff Falls Road
Manchester NH 03103

PROGRAM GOALS:

Manchester Child Development Center's program goal is to engage the children in a very structured age and developmentally appropriate curriculum within a learning environment that promotes social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth. In the early childhood field, we recognize the importance of the first four to five years of life as a time when children are interested in learning through explorative play and open-ended activities. Knowing this, we offer a program that engages children in many activities, challenges, and interactions with both peers and adults throughout each day.

General Curriculum

Our curriculum covers the following areas: music, art, math, science, social studies, dramatics, language arts, reading, readiness, cooking, motor development, and creative movement. We believe socialization is particularly important for young children, and our program's routine and structure reflects this by allowing plenty of time for the children to play with friends outside during free-play, and during free-choice in their classroom learning centers. Making decisions about where they play and who they interact with allows them to be socially confident, accepting, and independent.

Infants and Toddlers

Social interaction, physical, and sensory experiences are key components to our Nursery program. Our caregivers nurture and guide the children by providing them with emotional and behavioral support and by offering the children a variety of opportunities to grow and learn naturally. The Nursery maintains a daily routine which helps each child feel safe and secure. They know that they can depend on a schedule. We provide every child with enough one-on-one time, because above all infants and toddlers need comforting and holding. We use a positive approach to discipline and behavior management by utilizing redirection and by setting up classrooms that are appropriate for the children. Their days are filled with fun and positive reassurance, so that they form a loving bond with their caregivers.

Potty Training

There are several areas of child development that may be difficult for your child. Potty training need not be one of them. Firstly, potty training must start with the child's family at home. Though we are here to help start a routine and develop a skill, the effort must first come from the parents or guardians.

Generally, we find that around age 2, children begin showing interest in using the potty. We bring diapered and already potty-trained children into the potty together. Flushing can easily be made into a fun activity! There should never be any pressure on a child to use the potty, and the majority of children ease right into it. When we feel a child may be ready; we will encourage you to purchase training pants—special underwear to try at home. We will not under any circumstance pressure a child into using the potty. It is a struggle where everyone loses. As children become more proficient at using the potty, we encourage them to

clean themselves. By the time they are ready to enter the Preschool room with other 3 year olds, they should be able to clean themselves after a bowl movement. Please work on this with them at home. As your child matures, we will all decide when he/she is ready for the next room. At this point your child should be fully potty trained, have some basic self-help skills, and be ready for more structured activities. We will gradually transition each child through this period.

Parent Involvement

Another vital part of our program is the strong bond between the teachers, children and their families. As caregivers, we dedicate ourselves to providing children with a very nurturing, supportive and appropriate environment. This is an absolute necessity for high-quality childcare programs, and because of this devotion, we form very strong bonds with the children in our school. Equally important are the crucial partnerships we have with the families that come to our center. We recognize you as the child's first teacher and look to build a foundation of trust. We are here to work in cooperation with families in doing what is in the very best interest of each child.

Part of developing good communication is daily contact with families. Our open door policy welcomes each of you into your child's world and encourages you to become involved with your children's education and social lives by visiting their classrooms and getting to know your child's routine. Talk to us at drop-off and pick-up times. Ask questions, explore the classrooms, or stay for morning snack. What are they learning about, what can they do, who are their friends? Visit for a reading, share a talent, or help with a party. Ask teachers questions about their progress and get advice about behavior concerns. Above all, speak to your child about their day at school. When children grow up knowing that their family communicates with their teachers, then their chances of great achievement are considerably increased.

GETTING STARTED/DAILY NEEDS:

On your child's first day of school there are some things that you will need to know that are not related to enrollment, tuition, medical records, and etc., and they are:

- ✓ Bring in and have at school each day: a full change of clothes, including underwear and socks.
- ✓ Please provide extra warm clothes like a sweater or sweatshirt during the cold season and a pair of shorts and a t-shirt during the warm season. The weather in New England fluctuates frequently.
- ✓ Healthy lunch and two healthy snacks. We provide snacks for toddlers only. ('healthy' is discussed further in Diet and Nutrition)
- ✓ A toothbrush for 3 to 6yrs. We supply toothpaste.
- ✓ Please be sure that your infant/toddler is freshly diapered, clothed and fed before arriving.
- ✓ Please feed all children breakfast at home so that they may start the day right.
- ✓ End of the day reports are given to parents daily for infants and toddlers. We rely on important face to face communications and would rather talk to a family in person.
- ✓ Parents supply diapers and wipes. Please keep an ample supply.
- ✓ Boots, hats, gloves/mittens, and winter coat during cold months—this is very important.
- ✓ Bathing suit and towel for summer.
- ✓ Closed-toe Water Shoes
- ✓ Sunscreen from April to October.
- ✓ Children ages 1-6 need a sleeping blanket and sleeping friend (optional). Take home Fridays to launder. Return on Monday.
- ✓
- ✓ Slippers for inside wear.
- ✓ Lunchboxes need an icepack. Just heat up food and put it in a thermos for hot food. We do not heat or refrigerate food (except for infant formula).
- ✓ No toys...we have plenty☺

Drop-off and Pick-up

Please try to maintain a consistent daily schedule, as this is an important part of establishing a secure feeling for your child. Children thrive on consistency. They are happiest with a morning and evening routine to rely upon. Also, pick-up and drop-off times need to remain constant as they affect our staff to child ratios. If you are going to pick up your child later than normal, please contact the center so that we can make staff adjustments if necessary. More often than not we can accommodate an occasional variation; nevertheless, if each family changed their times daily we would not be able to maintain strict staff to child ratios.

Please try to maintain a 9.5 hour limit (9 for infants and toddlers) whenever possible. Over the years, we have found that children that spend over 9 hours in childcare become over tired by the end of the day. We realize that this is not possible for all families, however, if it is, please try to keep them at school for as short as possible—for the child's benefit.

When you enroll you are asked to fill in your child's daily hours. You are asked to stay within these hours each day. Staffing is based on ratios and we do not exceed the state mandated ratios. Please respect the challenges that staff often face in making sure that the classrooms operate according to the state laws.

Opening

Our center opens at 6:30 a.m. (7:00 a.m. for the Nursery). Other than staff, no one is allowed on the premises prior to this time unless otherwise arranged with the director. The routine portion of our day begins at 8:45 a.m. We request that your child arrive at school by this time (8:30 is ideal). An on time arrival assures that your child can take advantage of all the great learning and social activities that we have planned for the day. It will also prevent disruptions of activities that are going on in each classroom. We value family communication as a huge priority in our center, and if the teachers are in the middle of an activity they may not be able to talk with you.

Closing

We close at (5:00 for the Nursery) 5:30 p.m. You and your child are expected to be out of the building by this time. A late fee will be charged to you payable directly to the teacher in charge. A \$10.00 fee for the first 15 minutes, and an additional \$10.00 for the next 15 minutes and a \$30.00 fee from 6-6:30 will be charged to you immediately. If you have not come to pick up your child by closing time, have not called the school to notify us of your status, and we cannot reach you, we will immediately call the person(s) listed on your Emergency/Registration form to come pick up your child. We will leave a note on the door specifying which emergency person picked-up your child. This is a worst-case scenario and we hope that you will do your best to contact us if you anticipate being late. A phone call will not waive a late fee. Please try to understand that our staff has been here all day for your child and many of us have commitments of our own at days end (second jobs, families, workshops, meetings, etc.). We ask that you be courteous and be ready to leave the building by 5:30 p.m. Any questions or concerns you have at this time will have to be addressed the following morning or arrange a time during the day to call the center or stop by. We welcome any opportunity to speak with you and share in your child's progress.

Health Form and Immunizations Records

Upon entering our center, you are responsible for providing us with official proof of current immunizations for your child. A current physical examination record done within the last 12 months is due within 60 days of admission. Immunization schedule must follow the schedule determined by the NH Division of Public Health. Child health forms are provided by us and must be updated on an annual basis. Required immunizations due between physicals must be documented and submitted to the center. It is your responsibility to make doctor's appointments well in advance and to return the proper forms and documentations to the center. Your child may not be able to attend if their records are not kept current. Be sure to request a new child health form from us prior to your child's appointment and return it to us immediately. We understand that pediatricians are very busy and often book 6 months in advance, so please keep track of when the next physical form will be due. Thank you for helping us keep kids safe and healthy.

Emergency/Registration Form

This form is where you list all of your contact information as well as the names and contact information of people other than you that will be picking up your child. We need this form filled-out completely on the very first day that your child is in our school. No exceptions will be made. It is very important that you keep this form up to date AT ALL TIMES in case we need to contact you during the day. Forms may never be removed from the premises. Be sure to carefully fill out the section concerning people who may pick up your

child other than you. We will not release your child to a minor. If your child is to be picked up by someone that is not on your emergency list or alternate list we require WRITTEN PERMISSION GIVEN TO US BY YOU. A phone call is not sufficient. It must be in writing. If the alternative pick up person is listed on the form we require verbal confirmation from you. Only those people who have legal custody can give permission for an alternate person to pick up your child. We require photo ID from anyone picking up your child. We follow these rules exactly for the safety of the children in our care.

Custody Rights/Parents Rights

While a child is in our care we will only release them to the persons listed on the **Emergency/Registration Form**. If your family has a legal arrangement that we need to be aware of, please provide us with a letter from the court that explains these custody rights. We cannot withhold a parent or guardian's rights if they are listed as a parent or guardian on the Emergency/Registration form and we are not provided the appropriate legal documents stating that it is not their visiting time. Without legal documentation of rights we are powerless. Likewise, we will not release a child to a parent or guardian if we have the appropriate legal documentation stating it is not that parent or guardian's visiting hours. Most importantly, please do not put our school or our staff members in the middle of your family's difficult situation. We are here for the children.

PAYMENT AND TUITION:

In both the Admissions application and the Enrollment agreement contract the following policies are explained in the same terms. Please carefully read the following information and keep in mind that the policies are in place to make the running of the business more efficient so that we can focus all of our attention on the children.

Enrollment/Advance/Payment

- ✓ We require a 50% deposit on the first week's tuition to be paid in advance along with any supply fee.
- ✓ All advance tuition monies and kindergarten supply fees paid to hold a slot are **NONREFUNDABLE**.
- ✓ The first week's tuition deposit is applied to your child's first week only and the balance of the first week must be paid on your child's first day.

Tuition

Your on-time payment of Tuition allows Manchester Child Development Center to meet payroll and maintain the grounds and facilities of the school. Yearly tuition is broken down into weeks to make payment easier. Late or non-payments make it very difficult to run the program properly. Please follow the guidelines below and speak to the Director if you have any questions:

- ✓ Tuition is due on **Monday** of the current week for that week.
- ✓ \$35.00 late charge for payment received later than Monday. This fee is accrued weekly until paid. The return check fee is \$45.00 and a late fee will be applied.
- ✓ If you pay monthly, payment is due the first of the month for that month.
- ✓ If you forget to bring in a check or are late in paying for your child's tuition, the late fee is expected, without being reminded or prompted by Director or staff person.
- ✓ Please call-in if you forget your check or if you plan on being late in payment. However, please pay your late fee if the check is in past noon at the beginning of the week, even if you have called-in as a conversation with the Director does not mean that you do not need to pay the late fee.

Sick/Missed/Holidays/Closed Days

- ✓ Tuition is required for vacation weeks, missed days and holidays.
- ✓ Legal Holidays that we are closed are considered regular school days and regular payment is expected.
- ✓ If your child is not in school because of illness, then tuition will be due the following day.
- ✓ If you expect to be out for an extended period of time or if your child is sick for a couple of days, please drop it off at your child's school or put the check in the mail and send it to the address listed in the front of the handbook.

If we close (due to bad weather, no power, etc., which is very rare) you are expected to pay for that day as well.

- ✓ Please be sure to watch WMUR Channel 9 to be sure that we are open.
- ✓ Please do not call the school.

Tuition guarantees your child's place in our center and we still must maintain the same staff/student ratio upon their return. We cannot substitute any other day for a missed day.

Withdrawal/Leaving

- ✓ Please notify us as soon as possible of your intent to withdraw your child from our program.
- ✓ You must also notify us IN WRITING 2 weeks prior to your child's last day.

It is important for record purposes to have your notice 'in writing', we hope that you would let us know in person of your intent to withdraw your child from our program. As teachers and child caregivers, we dedicate ourselves to providing children with a very nurturing and supportive environment. This is an absolute necessity for high-quality childcare programs, and as a result of this devotion, we form very strong bonds with the children in our school. It is always sad when a child leaves our school. So, please let the teachers and Director know in advance so that we may say our goodbyes and facilitate an appropriate transition for your child and the other children in the program.

If you remove your child from our program for any length of time without paying tuition (i.e. summer vacation), we cannot guarantee a slot for his/her return. We must fill openings as they become vacant. Of course we will do our very best to try and find an opening if you intend to return. Please let your Director know of your plans we will do what we can to meet your needs.

HEALTH AND SAFETY:

The following are ours and the State of NH's policies regarding the health and safety precautions to be taken by the family and the center staff. They are intended to promote and ensure the health and safety of all of the children in our center.

Illness

Children with the following symptoms or conditions will not be admitted or kept at school. We will call you to pick up your child if he/she has any of the following:

- ✓ A fever at or over 101° Fahrenheit
- ✓ Inability to participate in the regular child care activities
- ✓ More than one episode of vomiting in one day
- ✓ More than one episode of diarrhea in one day
- ✓ Uncontrolled coughing or wheezing
- ✓ Unusual or extreme fatigue or lethargy
- ✓ Skin lesions that have not been diagnosed or treated by a licensed health practitioner
- ✓ Any unidentified rash
- ✓ Ear ache
- ✓ Sore throat
- ✓ A contagious disease

If we cannot reach you we will call the emergency pick-up persons listed on your Emergency/Registration form (discussed later). Please choose these persons carefully and be sure to let them know that they may be contacted in an emergency.

In order to readmit any child that had a contagious disease, we require a written release from your doctor stating that your child may return to school. *Children must be symptom free for 24 hours in order to return to school. FEVER FREE MEANS WITH NO TYLENOL FOR 24 HOURS.

If you feel that your child is not feeling well in the morning (excluding the above symptoms) and you feel that you must send him/her to school, please follow these guidelines:

- ✓ Please notify the staff of their symptoms and of any medications.
- ✓ Do not ask the staff not to let your child go outside to play, as play is an important part of our daily program and everyone goes outside.

Please be considerate of everyone at our school, including the other children and your child's teachers, and keep your child home if they are not feeling well in the morning. We understand the challenges of working parents and we are here to support you when life is stressful and demanding. Given our understanding please avoid dosing an obviously sick child with Children's Tylenol or Motrin and sending them into school. More often than not that same child leaves school before lunch because symptoms have not improved or gotten worse. Children need to rest at home when they are sick and bringing them to school is not in their best interest. We encourage and expect you to be open and honest with us regarding your child's health and well being.

Emergencies

Children get bumps, bruises and scrapes. It is a part of growing up and interacting with the world around them. We take a great deal of pride in keeping the children safe by means of establishing a very protected and well-supervised environment. Your children are watched very closely, but injuries still occur. All staff members are trained in infant and child CPR and must have current First Aid certification. While in our care, your child's safety and protection from harm are our foremost concern. Nonetheless, we have procedures in the event a child is injured while at school.

If a child receives an injury we record the injury on an accident report. Please review, sign and return it. State law requires us to keep these reports on file. Any type of head injury will result in an accident report and a personal call to you.

If a child is injured and it is not life-threatening or an urgent emergency, but it seems that they will need to go home or perhaps seek a doctor's advice, we will immediately contact the first family member listed on the Emergency Registration form (generally this is a mother or father). If that person is not available, we will contact the other people listed as Emergency contacts. The child may be removed from the group setting to rest.

If a child is injured, and they need immediate medical attention, one staff member will perform CPR or First Aid while another immediately calls an ambulance. After the ambulance is called, a staff member will call the child's parent or guardian right away.

Medications:

We will give medication if the following procedures are adhered to:

- ✓ Initial doses of any and all medication must be administered at home or in the doctor's office.
- ✓ Over-the-counter medications must be accompanied by parental written permission to include precautions, the maximum 24 hour dosage and a signature and date.
- ✓ A "blanket note" for as needed prescription medications is acceptable for six months.
- ✓ We will not administer over-the-counter medications for longer than a three day period, at which point we advise you to take your child to the doctor.
- ✓ Prescription medication must be in the original bottle and have the pharmacy label on it bearing the child's name, date and dosage amount. (Pharmacies may provide a duplicate bottle if you ask)
- ✓ If medications must be refrigerated please bring it to the attention of the teacher.
- ✓ A medicine request form must accompany all medications. We can provide you with one upon request. It must be filled out correctly and be current.

Safety

Please, No open or concealed firearms allowed on premises.

It is all of our responsibility as adults to ensure the safety of children while teaching them the rules of safety and good common sense. We realize that it is easy to forget these rules, but we feel that they are very important so we strictly enforced them to assure your child's safety and protection. We expect everyone in our community to assist us in providing a very secure environment:

- ✓ All children must be accompanied by an adult at all times in any building, classroom, playground, walk-way or parking area. This includes younger and older siblings that accompany you to pick-up or drop off your child.
- ✓ Do not send any child into a building or parking area alone for any reason. If you forgot something inside, you must accompany your child back into the building.
- ✓ Do not leave a child unsupervised in the parking lot or get out of your control while around moving vehicles. If this kind of behavior happens often, please speak to a staff person or the director so that can help you address it.
- ✓ Parents are responsible for bring your child into school or onto the playground and releasing him/her DIRECTLY to a staff member. Either verbal or non-verbal (a wave that a teacher acknowledges) are necessary so that we know that the child is safe.
- ✓ Our responsibility with a child begins as soon as they are directly dropped off and when the parent arrives in the classroom to pick their child up.
- ✓ During drop-off, pick-up and any other times, parents are requested to reinforce school rules so that your child will get a clear message regarding acceptable behavior, i.e.:
 - ★ No running inside or on the blacktop. This rule alone will stop so many preventable injuries.
 - ★ Children must hold railings and walk up and down stairs.
 - ★ Children must stay with their parents/guardian/pick-up person at all times and not be allowed to run in between classes or go into the bathrooms unsupervised.
- ✓ All vehicles parked on premises must be turned-off. This is an enforced State Law.
- ✓ All children under 18 years must be accompanied by an adult on the premises and in parking lot at all times.
- ✓ Keep contact numbers current.
- ✓ Never leave a child unattended in your vehicle. Even young infants must accompany you inside during the cold months. Keep in mind that we are advocates for child safety.
- ✓ Drawstrings will be promptly removed from your child's clothing. When purchasing clothing (including jackets, sweatshirts, etc.) please keep in mind that drawstrings may be very hazardous around playground equipment. Remove all strings prior to sending your child to school.
- ✓ Appropriate outdoor clothing is a requirement. In warm weather supply a change of clothes if the temperature changes. All children must have a hat, gloves or mittens, and boots for the cold weather. If your child refuses to put them on for you in the morning, then bring them in a separate bag and notify a staff member. Children have daily recess and need to be dressed properly. When it comes time to go outside to play with their friends, most children will choose to put on the proper outdoor attire.
- ✓ Remember to apply sunscreen before dropping your child off during the warm months of the year. We will apply the sunscreen that you supply to your child before going outside in the afternoon.

While at our school your children will be in the care of a group of adult staff that are committed first and foremost to providing you with a safe, secure and well-supervised place for your child to spend the day. As teachers, we are legally mandated to report any incidents or evidence of child abuse or neglect to the state. In most cases, a staff member will discuss this with the center director, who will then notify the appropriate authorities. Staff can also contact the correct authority if they feel that it is necessary. We would like to make certain that members of our community feel comfortable enough with any staff member and especially the director to approach with any concerns they may have while visiting our center.

Diet and Nutrition

Please follow the state guidelines, which are designed so that children are offered healthy and nutritious choices to help them grow and develop properly. As child obesity rates increase so do the serious health risks attached to this problem. Our responsibility is to teach children to eat a nourishing and wholesome diet.

- ✓ 1½ to 2 servings of milk or milk alternate (cheese, yogurt, soy products, other dairy).
- ✓ 2 to 4 servings of meat or meat alternate (peanut butter, soy products, hummus, beans)
- ✓ ¼ cup to ¾ cup of fruit or vegetable or 100% fruit or vegetable juice. Most commercial boxed drinks are not 100% fruit juice and contain mostly high fructose corn syrup). Look for brands such as Apple & Eve, Juicy Juice and read the labels. Avoid corn syrups and color additives—these things are not good for people, especially young children.
- ✓ ½ to 1 slice of bread or 1 to 2 servings of bread alternate (crackers, pasta, cereal). Wheat, rye, and whole grain breads are far superior to white breads and are a much better choice for young children. Keep in mind that an entire sandwich is a great deal of food for children. Try packing ½ a sandwich to leave room for a fruit, vegetable and some yogurt!
- ✓ Morning and afternoon snack must be a healthy choice from these state requirements.
- ✓ Please do not send in candy as we will send it back home.
- ✓ Try sending in fruit cups, fruit cocktail, applesauce, ritz, animal, wheat, cheese or oyster crackers, pretzels, dry cereal, graham crackers, cheese sticks, peanut butter crackers, peanut butter and celery, bananas, etc. Oftentimes if your child will not eat something at home, s/he will eat it at school. Send it in and we will try to get them to try new things.

We thank you for your cooperation in all of these matters. The lines of communication are always open at Manchester Child Development Center.