



Parent Handbook

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Philosophy

At Creative Hands Learning Center we strive to provide a quality program for children 6 weeks to 12 years, fostering social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and creative development through creative experiences and positive relationships. Our goals are:

- To provide a safe, warm, nurturing, stimulating, and comfortable environment where children can explore their surroundings, and create and understanding of the world around them.
- To respect each child as an individual with unique abilities, feelings, needs and wants.
- To develop positive self-concepts by creating an atmosphere geared to successful experiences.
- To promote character development by teaching and demonstrating the values of caring, honest, respect and responsibility.
- To give each child a stimulating and creative childcare experience that provides him/her with the desire to learn, now and in the future.

We strive to create meaningful and trusting relationships between the children, families, staff and community.

We believe that children learn best through play and active involvement with people and materials in their environment.

Curriculum

Creative Hands Learning Center utilizes Creative Curriculum. Creative Curriculum balances both teachers directed and child initiated learning, with an emphasis on responding to children's learning styles and building their strengths and interests. Creative Curriculum is a scientifically based early childhood curriculum that has been shown to improve cognitive and social/emotional outcomes in young children.

Your child will participate in a well planned program, each day the teacher designs developmentally appropriate learning experiences to meet the children's needs for their age group.

Our children are engaged in learning through

- Literacy
- Blocks
- Dramatic play
- Toys & games
- Art
- Library
- Discovery
- Sand and water
- Music & movement
- Cooking
- Computers
- Outdoor play

Our curriculum shows teachers how to

- Offer children opportunities to make choices
- Value children's ideas
- Help children express their feelings in constructive ways
- Provide appropriate play materials that support and challenge children's abilities
- Permit children freedom to get messy during play
- Promote problem solving and appropriate risk taking
- Provide children with ample time for creative expression
- Allow children freedom to explore the environment
- Encourage children to work independently
- Encourage children to see tasks through to completion
- Provide appropriate real-work responsibilities and jobs

The Creative Curriculum reinforces early positive growth and opens the door to lifelong learning.

Hours of operation / Vacation time / Closings

- Normal hours of operation are:
 - Monday – Friday 6:30am – 6:00pm(For any child at the center after 6:00pm, a late fee of \$1.00 per minute, per child will apply. Holiday closings will double said fee.)

- Closings for the center
 - Memorial Day
 - Independence Day
 - Labor Day
 - Thanksgiving and following Friday
 - One early closing Friday in December (holiday party)
 - Holiday break – Christmas eve until the Monday after New Year
 - In-Service end of April
 - In-Service mid OctoberA new closing list with exact dates will be provided yearly.

Child abuse and hotline

Any and all suspected child abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services.

Each member of the staff is mandated reporters and shall report all suspected abuse and neglect. Any teacher who suspects that a child has been abused or neglected will confer with the Director, who will assist in filing with the department of Children and Families.

The child care concern line: 1-800-540-7942

Trial Period

All new children will be cared for on a two-week trial period beginning on the child's first day of care. During this time the parent or provider may terminate the child care agreement with a 24-hour notice. No pre-paid fees will be credited upon cancellation during the trial period. A two week written notice is required by either party to terminate the agreement after the two week trial period.

Child Guidance and Behavior

Discipline of the child is achieved through patience, consistency and positive reinforcement. We also promote respect, kindness and manners.

The rules are explained to the children frequently so that they know what is expected of them. When the child is old enough to understand the rules, and disobeys them with inappropriate behavior (i.e. hitting, biting, aggression) the following developmentally appropriate guidance is used.

1. Positive reinforcement: The child is encouraged and praised when showing acceptable behavior choices.
2. Redirection: The child will be redirected to another activity and given another chance to try another time.
3. Calm down time: This is used as a last resort when the child repeatedly is disruptive, refuses to follow directions, is exhibiting temper tantrum type behavior or is hurting one's self, others or equipment. An age appropriate amount of time (1 minute per year of age) away from the group. When the child shows that he/she is ready to demonstrate acceptable behavior they are encouraged to join the group again.

Please remember that some behaviors are age appropriate and will be handled on a case by case basis.

Communication is essential. We will work with your children to talk any problems they are having with their peers.

You may be called to remove your child from the center if his/her behavior prevents the center staff from being able to properly care for the other children.

If we feel there is a chronic behavioral issue, we will ask you to come in for a conference. We will make every attempt to help your child through behavioral problems. If these problems continue after substantial efforts are made on both sides, other arrangements for the care of the child will have to be made.

Drop offs / Pick ups

- Please do not leave your car running and unattended in the parking lot.
- Please do not leave your children unattended in the car.
- All children must be supervised during drop offs and pick-ups.
- You must sign your child in and out each day.

It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents or cry when being dropped off, please be very brief (no more than 5 minutes) during drop off time. The longer you prolong the departure, the harder it is on the child. A smile, cheerful good-bye kiss and a reassuring word that you will be back is all that is needed.

During arrivals and departures, we expect you to back up the center rules (see pg.) If not, your child will be reminded that their behavior is inappropriate and we will take action to correct it if needed. Please be in control of your child at this time.

We prefer no drop offs or pick-ups during the designated daily quiet time, but if necessary, PLEASE be as quiet and brief as possible. Children who arrive during the quiet time will be expected to remain quiet (they may play or read quietly) until quiet time is over so that other children are not disrupted from their naps.

Drop off or pick-up times are not good times to discuss problems or issues. Little ears and minds hear and understand everything. Topics that concern day to day events or light hearted discussions are acceptable.

For consistency please have your child at the Center by 9:00 a.m. daily. If your child has a doctor's appointment please let your child's teacher know what time they will be arriving so they can prepare the day. It is very distracting to the classroom when children arrive in the middle of a schedule.

For the safety of our children, no child will be allowed to leave with anyone other than the parent or guardian unless indicated on the Alternate Pick-Up List, or with oral/written permission from the parent/guardian. Anyone unfamiliar to us will be required to show identification. Please make sure the alternate pick-up individuals are aware of this requirement.

Sick Policy

All children entering the center must have an updated immunization record. If a child is ill, in any way, it is our policy to notify the parent immediately to make arrangements for the child to be picked up within one hour of notification.

If a child has any of the symptoms listed below they will not be permitted to attend the center until 24 hours after the last incident OR until 24 full hours after full medical treatment as begun as prescribed by a physician.

- Fever of 100 or above
- Skin rash other than common diaper rash or prickly heat. Child will not be allowed back at the center until a medical exam has indicated it is not a communicable disease. Written documentation from a physician is required.
- Diarrhea – Increased number and water content of stools that cannot be contained within the diaper or underwear.
- Vomiting two or more times within the same day.
- Any parasitic infestation (lice, scabies, etc.)
- Pink eye
- Chicken pox – Until all blisters have dried and formed scabs, usually approximately 6 days from the onset of the rash.
- Any other communicable disease such as tuberculosis, etc.

If the child reaches a point when he/she requires constant attention, will not play, cries continuously or wants to be held constantly, you will be contacted to arrange for the pickup of the child. This distraction affects our ability to provide quality care for the other children in the group. We are that when deciding when your child should come back to the center, please give consideration to the health of the other children and staff members. NOTE: If you have to give your child any medication to relieve any of the above mentioned symptoms before bringing them to the center, please keep them home.

When your child is sent home from the center for any one of the following reasons, you will receive a doctor's referral form. This form must be completed and signed by the physician prior to the return of your child. A note on the physician's prescription letterhead is also acceptable.

Payment

- Payment is due every Monday, no later than 5:00pm. If payment is not received, the child (ren) may not attend until payment is received. This payment is due regardless of attendance. There will be a \$20 late fee.
- Tuition rates rise 5% annually to cover increases in operating expenses, improvements to the Center and continuing education for the staff.
- All returned checks will carry a \$30 late fee that must be paid prior to your child returning to the Center.
- Center spots can be reserved, if available. A two week, non-refundable deposit is required. The deposit will cover the first and last week of care.
- A 10% discount will be provided for any family with two or more children enrolled full time. *(Does not apply to subsidy families or in combination with any other discounts)*
- A 10% discount will be provided for any parent/guardian that is active in any branch of the United States Military, including any members of the Reserves, National Guard and Coast Guard units.
- A two week written notice must be provided when a child leaves the Center. Notice must be signed and dated by the parent or guardian. If such notice is not provided, the usual fee will be charged.
- 5 days per year will be given for vacation time at no charge as long as your child is not in attendance. The year begins when your child starts at the Center, not the calendar year. A week notice of such vacation is requested, if possible. **Vacation time may not be used during the Christmas break.** Regular tuition rates will apply to vacations and closings.

Fee Schedule

- Infant – 3 years: \$199.50/week
- 3-5 years: \$189/week
- Kindergarten +
\$78.75/week (school year)
\$147/week (School vacation)
\$15.75/day extra days off
- Drop in rate: \$5/hr when space is available

Medications

No child will be given any medication, prescription or over the counter, unless written permission is given by the parent. Prescription medication shall have: the child's name, name of medication, Doctor's name, pharmacy name, prescription number, date and directions for administering. The medication must be in the original container as dispensed by the pharmacy. Administer of the medication will be logged on a medication administration record. Written permission for external preparation is attached.

Items provided by parents

Infants: Formula, baby food, diapers, baby wipes, diaper ointment, fitted crib sheet, blanket and extra clothing. Bottles need to come to the Center already prepared, we are not able to mix dry formula or reuse the same bottle.

Toddlers: Lunches, diapers, baby wipes, blankets and extra clothing.

Preschool: Lunches, blankets, extra clothing.

Summer Extras: Swimmers, towels and sunscreen.

Winter Extras: Ski Pants, mittens, boots, (please dress your children appropriately according to the weather. We are required to take the children outside daily)

All items MUST be marked with the child's name. We are not responsible for lost items.

Blankets MUST be taken home every Friday to be washed.

The Center shall have, on file, an Admission form and an updated immunization record for each child.

Toilet Training

When your child is ready to start toilet training, we ask that you start introducing it at home. We will follow through and encourage your child while in our care. Please keep in mind that the activity level here can distract your child from responding to the urge to use the potty, more so than at home. We will encourage your child to use the potty but never force them to. We ask that you send your child in user friendly clothing as much as possible. This will be a time of learning to pull their pants up and down. Try to avoid tight clothing, pants with zippers or snaps, and overalls as much as you can in the initial phase of potty training. We ask that you supply your child with 5 complete changes of clothing, including socks and an extra set of shoes.

Naps

All children are required a rest time of 30 minutes. We will provide a safe, quiet place for your child to rest. Children that do not sleep are still required to rest and will have a quiet activity available that does not disturb other sleeping children.

After school children will have a silent reading time if they are in care for a full day.

Weather

In the event of inclement weather, a closing or delay is announced on the following stations and websites: **WCAX**, **WOKO**, the **CHLC Facebook** (<http://www.facebook.com/creativehandsvt>)

Fundraisers

From time to time the Center may do fundraisers to raise money for large items. We hope for your support during our fundraisers. Fundraisers are a positive way to show community and family support for early childhood education.

Biting

Biting is common among young children and occasionally it happens while the child is at the Center. It can occur for many reasons, such as: teething, cause & effect, attention, irritation, stress, frustration and independence. We know this can be frustrating to both parties involved.

When a child bites we will do our best to properly treat it. This entails, the biter helping comfort the injured child, this can be done by holding the ice pack. This often helps teach the biter that biting hurts and is not acceptable. We will talk to both children and help them use their words. An accident report will be filled out and sent home.

If a child seems to be showing a pattern of biting, proper steps will be taken. This will be on a case by case basis, and may include but not limited to: shadowing, separating at problem times, and teethers.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of our program. Many field trips will be local and taken on foot and or strollers used. Parents will be asked to sign a blanket permission slip for walking field trips upon enrollment. For other field trips, specific permission forms will be used for the trip.

Parent involvement

You are not able to be with your child (ren) the entire time he/she is in our care. There will be times and ways that you can get involved in your child's childcare and preschool education. You are welcomed and encouraged to participate in any or all of these, some examples are:

- Chaperoning field trips.
- Lending objects for units of study.
- Coming in and talking about your job, when asked.
- Helping your child prepare for show and tell.
- Simply planning a time to come read your favorite childhood story to the class.

Naturally you are welcome to drop in and visit or observe anytime the center is open.

Parent/Teacher conferences will be held twice a year, this is a great time to discuss your child's development.

Concerns

We as a staff will make mistakes; create misunderstandings, and occasionally miscommunication. When mistakes occur we want you to tell us. As a staff it is our goal to offer your family a high quality program. In order to reach this goal we need your input, suggestions, questions and concerns.

When you have a concern, please remember to talk to your child's teacher directly if you are comfortable with that. Teachers prefer is you talk to them directly, however, they do understand if you would rather address your concerns with the Director or Assistant Director. This can be done anonymously unless it becomes a pattern.

Parents night out

A monthly movie night will be offered to all the families of the Center. This will be an evening that the parents can bring their children back to the center and drop them off. The children will enjoy pizza and a movie while the parents can enjoy some alone time without the worry of finding a babysitter. We will have a sign-up sheet a week prior to the movie night so that we can ensure the appropriate amount of staff is at the Center. The monthly movie will be posted on the bulletin board.

Miscellaneous

- Infant room is a shoe free environment. Infants spend much of the time exploring on the floor so we try to keep this area as clean as possible.
- Please call if your child will be out for the day.
- Items such as uncut hotdogs, uncut grapes, carrot coins, peanuts, hard candy, gum etc., that may cause choking will not be served to children under the age of 3 ** all food should be cut into bit sized pieces and easily digestible.
- No small items such as money, pop heads or marbles should be sent to daycare.
- A copy of the state regulations is available at anytime.
- All children are to have their hands washed when entering the Center each day.
- All children's records are strictly confidential and no information will be given without permission from the parents.
- No smoking is allowed in or near the Center.
- Fire drills will be monthly and always written on the Parent Board in your child's room. These are unannounced.
- Media use – Movies will be limited to 1 hour per week.