



CHILD CARE
C E N T E R
 Building Their Tomorrow's Today

Parent Handbook

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FOREWORD

Parents,

On behalf of Wee Pals Board of Directors and staff, we would like to thank you for choosing Wee Pals Child Care Center as your child care provider. We understand that choosing a childcare center can be a daunting process. We pride ourselves in creating a loving, nurturing, and safe environment for your child(ren) while in our care and to make the transition to our center as easy and inviting as possible.

Research shows that 80% of our adult brain volume is developed by age three, with synapse development forming at a faster rate during this time than any other time in our lives. This is why child care centers have such a huge importance in the development of a child's brain and body. With such a large role to fill, you can trust that Wee Pals will provide the best care and education for your family.

We are proud to offer the following elements to our program

- Pre-school based curriculum with 123 and SMART (getting bodies and brains ready to learn)
- Christian focus with prayers before meals, songs and stories
- Ongoing communication with families through Brightwheel, our childcare software
- Parent teacher conferences twice each year
- Conscious Discipline, a social and emotional classroom management program

To continue to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all of our families, we ask that you take your time reading through these next pages of policies and procedures. Please do not hesitate to contact the directors if you have questions. We want to ensure that your child is receiving the best care possible.

Warmest regards,

Wee Pals Child Care Center staff and directors

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission, as a non-profit corporation, is to provide high-quality child care focusing on child development through a stimulating environment, age-appropriate activities, and opportunities for children to learn about themselves, others, God and the world around them.

In accomplishing our mission, we seek to:

- Encourage children to develop respect for themselves, God and for others
- Provide affectionate and approving care
- Use consistent and positive discipline which encourages children to learn constructive behavior
- Provide a learning environment in which children can succeed in their developmental goals
- Continually train staff to understand early child development and to model appropriate behavior
- Work in partnership with all families

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of Wee Pals is based on the idea that children continuously learn by acting upon, and interacting with the world around them. The process of learning occurs naturally and within a nurturing and stimulating environment. We provide a program specifically based on individual needs and developmental levels.

Wee Pals does not discriminate regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, age, religion, and physical or cognitive ability.

HISTORY AND ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY

Wee Pals Childcare and Preschool center was the first center-based child care in Steele County. Founded in 1970, Wee Pals was originally licensed for 20 children ages 3-5 and operated out of the basement of a church. By 1975, the center's license grew to 50 children ages 3-5 and moved into Grandall Hall in the former State School Building on the West Hills campus. In 1985, the center moved to Merrill Hall, our current site and expanded its services to toddlers and school age children. The center added infant care in 1989. Wee Pals is licensed for 105 children, however the target capacity is 84 children to ensure every child receives the care they need.

Wee Pals is known for its rich history of providing quality childcare and preschool programs for families in Steele County. Our preschool is incorporated into our daily schedules, making it convenient for working families. The preschool curriculum focuses on developmental skills for each age group, starting at birth and progressing to kindergarten readiness. Public school teachers comment that children leaving Wee Pals for kindergarten are well prepared.

Wee Pals is committed to strengthening children and families. We partner with other organizations in the community to create strong early childhood initiatives.

LICENSING

Wee Pals Child Care Center, Inc. is licensed under Chapter 9503 Rule #3 of the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing located at 444 Lafayette Rd- St. Paul, MN 55155-3842. Phone number (651) 296-3971. Our license number is 802654.

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WHO WE SERVE

Wee Pals offers care to children between the ages of six weeks through 12 years of age. Our maximum capacity is 1020 children. Wee Pals has 2 infant rooms (16), 2 toddler rooms (28), 2 preschool rooms (38), and 2 school-aged rooms (30).

NON PROFIT STATUS

Wee Pals is a private, non-profit, childcare program licensed under Rule #3 by the Division of Licensing, Department of Human Services, State of Minnesota (612-296-3971). The business of Wee Pals is the responsibility of a volunteer Board of Directors who employ directors to administer the program. If you are interested in becoming a member of the board please visit with one of the directors.

TAX INFORMATION

Taxpayers wishing to claim the child tax credit or dependent care exclusion through Flexible Savings Account (FSA) should ask the director to prepare for them a statement of fees paid in the tax year. We are a tax-exempt, non-profit entity. Our Federal ID number is 41-0966862.

UTILIZATION OF SPACE

Wee Pals is located in the historic Merrill Building of the West Hills campus. Wee Pals occupies space on all floors:

- Main Floor: Six Program Rooms, Gross Motor Room, and the Office space
- Lower Level: Kitchen and Cafeteria, Infant room and Storage
- Second Floor: School age classrooms
- Outdoors: Playground area in the rear of the building

CONFIDENTIALITY

Please maintain confidentiality of identity when talking with your child’s activities and place of care. We expect families to keep the identity of other children confidential unless they have consent from other families to share information with others. When a request is made of Wee pals for information concerning a child’s family (names and phone numbers for birthday, etc.) this request will be directed to the office and permission will always be sought before giving out any information.

RATIOS

Our teacher to child ratio is equal to or better than the state requirements listed below. We make the attempt to keep a lower ratio in all classes if possible :

	State Requirements	Wee Pals Ideal Ratio
Infant	1:4	1:3
Toddler	1:7	1:5
Preschooler	1:10	1:7
School Age	1:15	1:12

ENROLLMENT

Pre-Admission: before a child starts, a visit may be required to acquaint parents and child with new surroundings and staff. This is a time to discuss any questions or concerns with the directors, and to receive enrollment forms, health care summary request, vaccination record templates and any additional information.

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In order to reserve your child(ren)'s spot at Wee Pals, you must pay in advance for the first week of care and a \$50.00 registration fee, both of which are non-refundable. A spot at Wee Pals is not saved for your child(ren) unless the registration fee and first weeks tuition are paid. If you are a family on county assistance, we require a confirmation from the county that you are approved for care with our center BEFORE care will begin. Regardless of how you will be paying, Wee Pals reserves the right to re-open your spot after one week of no communication after your families agreed upon start date

BEFORE care can start, a completed enrollment packet is required. The packet needs to be turned in to the office staff (office assistant, business director or education director). This enrollment packet includes the following forms: Enrollment Information, Child's Developmental History Sheet, Health Care Summary, Immunization Records and Household Income Statement. The Health Care Summary Sheet is required within the first 30 days of care. We do reserve the right to refuse care if these sheets are not turned in to us in a timely manner. If we notice behavioral/social/emotional/etc. issues during tours or within the first two weeks of care and feel that they are more than our staff can safely accommodate, we do reserve the right to refuse or terminate care at will.

RATES AND PAYMENT POLICIES

Rates for each room are detailed on the Rate Sheet, which can be picked up in the office and is included in the enrollment packet. Rate changes may occur at any time upon a 30-day written notice. Please see the enrollment packet for more details on rates and rate policies.

Payments are due on Monday for the week of care. Wee Pals reserves the right to require that a direct deposit account be set up if we do not receive tuition each week. Wee Pals reserves the right to suspend or terminate care depending on the discretion of the directors and each individual case. Each family is responsible to keep their account up to date. If we notice an account falling behind, we will provide you with a notice. Accounts and billing may be seen any time through Brightwheel. If there are questions regarding billing, please direct your questions towards the directors.

ABSENCE DUE TO ILLNESS OR VACATION

Full tuition will be charged for the first week a child is ill and unable to attend care. Consideration will be given for a reduction in tuition for additional weeks for a prolonged illness. Tuition is required when a family is on vacation unless you have been enrolled full time for one year and qualify for the requirements stated under the Vacation Days section.

VACATION DAYS

Each family who is enrolled full-time and for at least one year are eligible for 5 days of vacation, of which you will not be charged. These 5 days can be used for any reason. These 5 vacation days cannot be "banked", nor can they carry over into the next year. These 5 days of vacation must be used consecutively. Use of vacation days will be up to the discretion of the directors if accounts are not currently up to date.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday – Friday 6:30-5:30.

HOLIDAYS

Wee Pals is closed for the following holidays: January 1st, Good Friday, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the Friday following, Christmas Eve and Day, December 31st and 3 floating holidays for Christmas and New Year's holidays. Tuition is not discounted due to holidays.

RETURNED CHECKS

For every check that is returned with insufficient funds, Wee Pals will charge you a \$30.00 processing fee. This fee is non-negotiable.

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LATE PAYMENT FEES

A \$10.00 late fee will be charged to your account per day if payment is not received by Monday of the week of care. Subsequent payments made will always apply to the current invoice to avoid repeatedly assessing \$10.00 late fees.

LATE PICKUP FEES

Wee Pals is closed at 5:30pm of each business day. We ask that our families have collected their child(ren) and their items and exited the building by 5:30pm. The charges stated in the enrollment packet apply if your family has not exited the building and/or your child(ren) have not been picked up by 5:30pm. Late fees can be charged at any time and are due with tuition the following Monday from the date they are charged to your account.

CHILD CARE TERMINATION/WITHDRAWAL

If you decide to terminate your childcare position with Wee Pals, we do require the minimum of a two-week written notice of which you are required to pay all applicable tuition costs. Please use the “Permanent withdrawal” form available in the office. Costs are still incurred regardless of the reason for termination and whether the children attend or not. Vacation time cannot be used for the last two weeks of care. *Wee Pals Child Care Center is an AT WILL provider and can terminate care for any reason, and at any time.*

GENERAL POLICIES/PROCEDURES

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to and from Wee Pals must be provided or arranged by the parents. Wee Pals will make sure the children get safely on and off the bus at our site. Wee Pals is not responsible for communicating with the school district or busing companies.

DAILY ARRIVAL

Our doors open at 6:30 a.m. Parents are required to undress their child (coat, snow pants, hat, etc), and accompany the child inside and see that they get safely into their appropriate classroom. Parents are expected to sign their children in through Brightwheel.

DAILY DEPARTURE

When you pick up your child(ren), we ask that you make contact with a teacher to let someone know that you are leaving. In general, leaving adequate time to talk to teachers and ask about your child(ren)’s day is encouraged. With exceptions to immediate family members, anyone picking up child(ren) needs to be at least 18 years or older. A pick up list must be kept up to date. This information is accessible at all times to parents through Brightwheel. If someone other than the guardian or parents who filled out the enrollment form are picking up, we require a notice which can be sent through Brightwheel. Upon pick-up, these individuals are required to stop in the office and identify themselves with office personnel before release of the child(ren) is made. Parents are expected to sign their children out on our Brightwheel application.

DAILY AND WEEKLY ATTENDANCE

Be sure to communicate, clearly and regularly your child’s anticipated schedule each week. This can be done via Brightwheel messaging. This information is the basis for staffing, meals and supplies. Any permanent schedule change must be made aware to the directors. You will be charged for the schedule you have selected upon enrollment unless the directors are informed and agree to otherwise. Please see enrollment packet for overage rates on hours.

WHAT TO BRING

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING/FOOTWEAR

The children will go outside nearly every day. Please make sure your child has the appropriate attire for outdoor play. Shoes are mandatory at Wee pals in all rooms. **Children 3 and older will go outside every day when the temperature is above zero (temp and wind chill).** Please bring mittens made of vinyl vs yarn. **PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING FOR OUTSIDE.**

DIAPERS

If your child is in diapers, you will need to provide them. Staff will send a Brightwheel note when you are running low. Families who do not have diapers, will be given Wee Pals diapers and charged \$2 for each diaper used.

BOTTLES

If your child is using a bottle, please bring a few to keep here at Wee Pals or bring them home and back to the center daily. Bottles are washed after every use using licensing regulated cleaning methods.

EXTRA CLOTHING

Please provide more than one complete set of clothes (top, bottom, underwear, socks). Underwear and pants should have multiple pairs. If Wee pals clothing is used, please launder and return within the week.

TOYS FROM HOME

Items such as books, toys, puzzles, etc. are asked to be kept at home, with the exception of a few teachers who provide “share day” on Fridays where these items are allowed. Items such as barrettes, hair ties, clips, brushes, and other accessories may be asked to be kept in lockers based on the teacher’s discretion.

FOOD FROM HOME

We request that parents **do not bring food to the center** unless it is discussed with the directors and your child’s teacher. Special occasions, such as birthdays, treats are allowed but must be store bought to avoid any allergic reactions or dietary needs.

NAP TIME

Children may bring one child size blanket, a small pillow and one small, noise free, soft cuddly stuffed animal for rest time. All items should be clearly labeled. Items are sent home on Friday to be washed and returned to Wee Pals.

SCREEN TIME

The use of movies and screen time will only be permitted for children ages 16 months and up. Screen time will only be used at the director’s discretion. This policy does not include the use of Smart Boards for learning purposes.

STAFF AND PERSONNEL

As a licensed facility, our staff is required to have a certain amount of education and qualifications. Our lead and assistant teachers meet the requirement of post secondary credits, Parent Aware approved training courses, and yearly ongoing training. Our aides are required to have their high school diploma (or be in the process of receiving one), and are required to complete yearly ongoing training. All Wee Pals staff is certified in First Aid and CPR, along with blood borne illnesses and the spread of infectious diseases.

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LOST OR STOLEN ITEMS

Wee Pals is not responsible for personal items. All found items will be placed in the designated lost and found area for one month. After one month, Wee Pals directors will use their discretion as to where to allocate the items.

NUTRITION AT WEE PALS

MEALS AND SNACKS

Wee Pals provides breakfast, lunch, and an am and pm snack in accordance with the Child Adult Food Program. Times for these meals are listed below:

BREAKFAST

7:30-7:45 am. Anyone arriving after 7:45 will not be guaranteed a meal.

AM SNACK

9:00-9:30 am

LUNCH

11:00-11:30 am (varies by classroom) Anyone arriving after 11:15 will not be guaranteed a meal.

PM SNACK

2:00-2:30 pm

Menus are posted weekly on Brightwheel. Wee Pals practices family style serving, meaning that large dishes of food with the respective measuring cups are left on children's tables, where they are encouraged to serve themselves. This helps to enforce independence and a sense of confidence in themselves.

For infants, please discuss your feeding preferences with the lead teachers and consult the directors as needed. Wee Pals encourages mothers to continue breast feeding. Wee Pals can store breast milk or make accommodations for nursing moms to come to Wee Pals and nurse on site. Wee Pals supplies generic infant formula per CACFP guidelines. When babies are ready for solids, we assist in the transition.

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS / ALLERGIES

In the event that a child has a food allergy, an ICCPP form will need to be filled out and signed by a physician or parents depending on the restriction. Parent preferences for dietary restrictions will be followed. A written note is needed for your child's file for a preferred dietary restriction. All allergies and diet restrictions are printed up on a chart that is posted in each classroom and kitchen. All staff members receive yearly training on the center's allergies and how to respond in case of a reaction.

FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP)

Wee Pals is operated in accordance with the US department of agriculture policy, which does not permit discrimination because of race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin. Wee Pal is reimbursed for a percentage of its food costs based on the family size and income data sheets completed by families. This information is kept confidential. In the office. In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) [found online](#) at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

CURRICULUM AT WEE PALS

Wee Pals takes the development of our children very seriously. Best practices are constantly being researched by our management staff to provide the highest level of care for children enrolled. By enrolling your child at Wee Pals, you can be confident that they will be hitting developmental milestones and are being best prepared for their future. Wee Pals uses curriculums like *123 Learn* which covers all developmental areas (physical, cognitive, language & literacy, emotional, and social).

Through strong research in early childhood (Minn. Department of Education 2015) we know that children are capable and competent and that development occurs in predictable patterns. We are aware that children are unique and that many factors influence a child's development as they grow and progress at their own individual pace. We strive to provide a program strong in the following areas to foster school readiness: Approaches to Learning, Language and Literacy, The Arts, Mathematics, Physical and Movement development, Scientific Thinking, Social and Emotional Development and Social Systems

PROGRAM GOALS

- To provide safe, healthy, and nurturing care in an environment conducive to the development of each child.
- To provide a program for the development, implementation and evaluation of each child's cognitive, social, spiritual, language, and motor skills activities.
- To provide an environment for staff and parents to continue to learn about the needs and behavior of individual children.
- To provide a supportive environment for parents.
- Conscious Discipline- Embracing conflict as an opportunity to teach. Creating a school family that cares for one another by keeping everyone safe.
- We incorporate SMART principles in our preschool classrooms.

PARENT AWARE

Wee Pals Child Care Center partners with Parent Aware. Parent Aware is a higher standard of training, education and funding for child care programs. Please visit their website parentaware.org for further information.

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CARE GIVING OBJECTIVES

In order to meet the program’s philosophy and goals, the following care giving objectives have been established:

- Care for each child’s social, emotional, spiritual and cognitive needs.
- Caregiving routines will be consistent so the child can develop trust in the caregiver and the program environment.
- Warmth, affection, and caring will be offered so children will know they are a special individual.
- Every experience a child has will be considered a learning experience.
- Parents will be informed daily of their child’s activities via Brightwheel

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

<p>Pink and Blue</p> <p>Infant Program Ages 6 weeks—16 months Staff/Child Ratio 1 to 4</p>	<p>The early years are all about relationships. Infants crave and develop attachments to special people in their lives. We provide security, and safety to explore. Building trust and loving your child is our primary goal.</p> <p>Our staff provides a nurturing and stimulating environment for babies in our care. We excel at communicating with parents on each baby’s individual needs. Our staff helps each infant to learn by interacting with the world around him/her.</p> <p>Unique offerings to Pink and Blue rooms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sign Language
<p>Yellow and Green</p> <p>Toddler Program Ages:16 months - 36 months Staff/Child Ratio: 1 to 7</p>	<p>This is a transition period for young toddlers. The children are becoming more independent and more social, but they still need a lot of staff attention and individual time. This is also an exciting time where children begin to learn shapes, letters, counting, and more.</p> <p>Unique offerings to Yellow and Green rooms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sign Language for those still learning how to speak -Beginning to go on more outside walks and field trips -Assist with toilet training -Field trips and outings -Assist with toilet training -Begin SMART activities -Teeth brushing once a day
<p>Orange and Red</p> <p>Preschool Program Ages: 36 months - 1st day of Kindergarten Staff/Child Ratio: 1 to 10</p>	<p>In the Preschool Rooms we focus on preparing children for the next chapter in their educational careers—Kindergarten! We split the rooms up by younger preschoolers in Orange Rooms and older preschoolers in Red Room. Those in our Red room will be going to Kindergarten in the fall of the year. Children will work with more advanced materials, learn to understand books, and participate in other activities that leave them well prepared for elementary school the following year.</p> <p>Unique offerings to Orange and Red rooms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Field Trips and outings - Learning more about appropriate social interactions -Teeth brushing once a day

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<p>Indigo and Violet</p> <p>School Age Program Kindergarten – 5th Grade or 12 years Staff/Child Ratio: 1 to 15</p>	<p>The School-Age program operates before and after school, and full days when school is not in session. Our goal is to develop social skills as well as encourage independent play after school. We have fun-filled days during the summer months for the children to develop friendships and encourage growth and independence in their own interest areas that they want to pursue. Team building and support is also an ongoing focus for school agers.</p>
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Below is a sample of a daily schedule from one of our Preschool rooms:

6:30-7:30	Free Play
7:30-8:00	Breakfast
8:00-8:10	Bathroom
8:10-8:25	Books & Puzzles
8:25-8:30	Brush Teeth
8:30-11:00	Preschool Time
8:30-8:35	SMART Warm Up
8:35-8:45	Circle Time
8:45-9:45	Art Centers
9:45-10:00	Snack
10:00-10:30	SMART Course
10:30-11:00	Outside Time
11:00-11:30	Lunch
11:30-11:45	Bathroom
11:45-2:00	Nap/Awake Room
2:00-2:30	Bathroom/Snack
2:30-5:30	Outside/Free Play

DEVELOPMENTAL OBJECTIVES

We desire to prepare children to enter the formal school environment when they head off to kindergarten. Our goal by the time a child is ready for school is to expose him or her to the following skills.

PHYSICAL

- To increase strength, balance and muscular coordination
- Can dress and undress self in appropriate clothing
- Know when they need to use the bathroom
- To provide nutritious food, cleanliness and adequate sleep/relaxation time
- Understand how to play safely with others
- String beads, hold scissors with correct grasp, stay on a line

COGNITIVE

- Discuss shapes, recognition of shapes in their environment
- Number recognition to 20
- Counting 10 objects or more
- Observing patterns, sequencing, measuring and sorting.
- Applying information to problem solving
- Name 8 basic colors

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LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- Letter and sound recognition
- Interest in books
- Understand positional words
- Answers questions about key details in a story or group session
- Recognize and match rhyming
- Match pictures/words with same beginning sounds
- Knows first and last name
- Answers why questions
- Can make letters in their name
- Can draw simple pictures with prompts and support.

EMOTIONAL

- Showing respect and concern for people and things
- Demonstrate appropriate self-control over feelings
- Expressing and showing a positive self image
- Shows control during structured and unstructured play
- Manage routine and non routine transitions with prompt.
- Follow classroom rules and routines

SOCIAL

- To join group activities
- Playing and sharing cooperatively
- Accepting and responding to teachers instructions or questions
- To respect the rights and property of others
- To look at people when we speak to them.
- Carry on a conversation and play with other children without intervention
- Speaking clearly
- Responding to stories through actions or words

APPROACHES WITH LEARNING

- Can independently complete tasks and assist others
- Shows detail or pride in work

CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE

- It is embracing conflict as a teaching opportunity and creating a school family that cares for one another by keeping everyone safe

BEHAVIOR POLICY AT WEE PALS

The word discipline has, as its root meaning, “instruction” or “training”. This meaning, rather than punishment, is the foundation for our approach to guiding children’s behavior. Much of children’s most valuable learning occurs in the course of behavior problem solving. This concept is called Conscious Discipline. The approaches we use vary by age group, but all have the following elements in common:

Adults Model Positive Behavior

We show that we can accept, control and express feelings in direct and non-aggressive ways; we let children know that we are not afraid of their intense emotions and will not punish, threaten or withdraw from them. We will not yell or use the word “naughty” or “bad” when describing a Child’s behavior.

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Teachers design the physical environment to minimize conflict

We provide multiples of toys and materials for groups of children, define classroom and outdoor areas clearly to allow for both active and quiet play, and strive to maintain an appropriately calm level of stimulation.

Teachers maintain age-appropriate expectations for children's behavior

We attempt to minimize unreasonable waiting and transition times, and limit the length of large group and teacher-directed activity times according to children's developmental levels. We give children large blocks of uninterrupted time during which to make their own activity choices.

Adults closely observe and supervise children's activities and interactions

With our high ratios of adults to children and our emphasis on attentive observation, we can often intervene to guide children before situations escalate.

Adults help children verbalize their feelings, frustrations and concerns

The staff will help children describe problems, generate possible solutions, and think through logical consequences of their actions. Even babies will hear their caregivers describing actions, problems, solutions and logical consequences. The adult role is to be a helper in positive problem solving. *We want children to value cooperation and teamwork. We help them to learn peaceful approaches to interacting.*

Wee Pals believes that all behavior comes from a lack of connection/feeling safe. We believe that by creating a strong social connection between children and their peers and teachers, behavior will then be an easier concern to correct.

What we do

- Acknowledging and validating children's emotional distress
- Making children feel SAFE. If a child cannot feel safe to make mistakes, they will never be able to LEARN from those mistakes.
- Understanding that the brain is pattern seeking. This means that children do best under structure and routine, which is why our teachers rely heavily on consistent visuals and routines throughout that day.
- Using breathing activities to help children gain the power to relax their bodies on their own
- Using connection activities/rituals to help build a strong classroom connection. (I love you rituals, songs, greeting routines, etc.)
- Redirection to another positive choice
- Placement of child away from problem situation/area- the child will be expected to comply with staff request and be in control of their bodies before returning to the activity. This exclusion time shall be geared to the age of the child and will be spent with staff or in individual play area away from the conflict
- Validating that the child's emotional distress is real and is hard for them, staying composed as the child's caregiver, and then giving the child 2-3 positive choices to make to improve the situation
- Using logical consequences and following through. Our consequences come from a place of love, not from a place of judgment, this helps children feel safe.

EARLY INTERVENTION AND REFERRALS

Wee Pals works directly with the Owatonna Public Schools and other local professionals such as Fernbrook and the Center for Inclusive Child Care. Wee Pals teachers and staff are trained to notice developmental progress and we welcome open communication between families and staff to ensure that if a referral is needed, your child gets the best care possible.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Wee Pals enrolls children with special needs on a case by case basis. In these situations, a healthcare plan must be on file. If a child currently enrolled in the center develops signs of special needs, our staff will recommend available resources to parents for the diagnosis of the condition. We will work with the parents to implement therapies to the best of our

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abilities. In the unlikely event we can no longer adequately meet the individual needs of the child, the director will set a date for termination of services and will offer the parent information about alternative resources.

Wee Pals works with the Owatonna Early Childhood Special Education program when needs may require more specialized education. The school will work with the child (with parent permission) by conducting free assessments and education if needed.

PERSISTENT UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

This is when a behavior requires an increased amount of staff guidance time. Staff will observe and record the behavior of the child and what the staff response was to redirect this behavior and share this with the director as soon as the behavior is noted and tracked.

When a pattern of behavior persists that endangers self, others or property, or significantly disrupts the program, we will work with a child's family to find solutions, up to and including referral for outside services or exclusion from the Wee Pals program. The Director will be notified before a call is made to parents regarding behavior. The Director and teachers will then work closely with the parent to see if the problem or problems can be resolved through an individualized behavior plan. Wee pals works closely with various programs in our community (Early Childhood Special Education, Fernbrook, Inclusive Child Care, etc) to assist with behavior concerns and encourages parents' active involvement with these services if eligible. If situations are not improving and/or getting worse with time, Wee Pals does reserve the right to terminate care.

Wee Pals also will not provide care to school age children who have been expelled or suspended from school because of behavioral reasons.

SEPARATION FROM THE GROUP

No child may be separated from the group unless the licensed holder has tried less intrusive methods of guiding the child's behavior which have been ineffective and the child's behavior threatens the well being of the child or other children or staff in the center.

A child who requires separation from the group must remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by program staff. When separation is used as a behavior guidance technique, the child's return to the group must be contingent on the child's stopping or bringing under control the behavior that preceded the separation. The child must be returned to the group as soon as the behavior abates or stops. No child under 16 months will be separated as a means of behavior guidance.

FILLING OUT A SEPARATION REPORT

Must include date, time, staff, and what less intrusive methods were used to guide the child's behavior and how the behavior continued to threaten the wellbeing of others in the center. If a child is separated from the group 3 times or more in one day, the child's parent will be notified and notation of the notification shall be indicated on the daily log. If a child is separated five times or more in one week or 8 times in two weeks the Director will set up a meeting with the parents.

Keep in mind that "breaks" may be used in rare situations as a final resort. All breaks are recorded and logged by staff members and parents will be notified of the reasoning as to why the break occurred.

These actions in response to behaviors are NOT tolerated in any capacity:

- No child shall be handled roughly, such as shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, or shaking by staff members
- No child shall be hit in any way, such as slapping or spanking

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- No child shall be humiliated, shamed, or labeled
- A child shall not be punished or caused to feel disgraced for lapses in toileting
- Meals shall not be used as a form of discipline
- No disciplinary action shall be delegated to another child

HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY AT WEE PALS

INSURANCE

Wee Pals carries a \$500,000 per occurrence, \$1,000,000 aggregate comprehensive general liability insurance policy.

LIABILITY

Wee Pals assumes responsibility for the welfare of a child between drop off (check in) and pick up (sign out). Our liability begins when a child is signed in and staff is notified of the child's arrival. Our liability ends when a child is signed out and removed from our staff's care. We will not assume liability during the time they are scheduled into and participating in another activity (including, but not limited to Fern brook activities off campus, preschool, etc.).

ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

If a child sustains a minor injury during the day, parents will receive this information when they pick up their child. All injuries are documented in an incident report via Brightwheel. We will treat all injuries with first aid certified methods. If the injury appears to need medical attention, the parents will be contacted to have their child attended to by a medical professional and/or removed from care for the necessary allotted time. The expense will be the family's responsibility. A written report will be filed with the state whenever emergency medical treatment is required.

In case of an emergency, 911 will be called and parents will be notified and a staff person will accompany the child to the emergency room at the Owatonna hospital. Any expense in getting emergency care will be the family's responsibility.

ILL CHILDREN

We strive to prevent the spread of illness, and parent cooperation with our policies is critical. If a child has a fever, diarrhea or other symptoms of a contagious disease, children are to remain home and a notice must be sent via Brightwheel. If a child is well enough to come to Wee Pals the child should be able to go outside.

If a child should become ill during the day they will be placed in the office in order to be isolated from the other children and allowed to rest quietly until their parents are able to come and pick them up. The parents will be notified of their child's condition and asked to come and pick their child up. If the parents cannot be reached then we will notify the emergency contacts next. If no one is able to be reached then the child will remain in our care and accommodations will be made to keep the child as comfortable as possible and our staff will monitor the child's condition. If conditions warrant, the child's health care source or 911 will be notified.

EXCLUSION OF SICK CHILDREN

If a child becomes sick at the center, the child will be isolated from the other children and parents will be called. Children with the below symptoms will be sent home and/or asked to be kept at home:

REPORTABLE ILLNESS OR CONDITION

as specified in part 4605.7040 (in appendix I) that the Commissioner of Health determines to be contagious and a physician determines has not had sufficient treatment to reduce the health risk to others

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- Chicken pox until the child is no longer infectious or until the lesions are crusted over
- Vomited two or more times that day
- Three abnormally loose stools since admission that day;
- Contagious conjunctivitis or pus draining from the eye;
- Bacterial infection, such as streptococcal or impetigo and has not completed 24 hours of antimicrobial therapy
- Unexplained lethargy
- Lice, ringworm, or scabies that is untreated and contagious to others
- 100-degree axillary or higher temperature before fever-reducing medication is given
- Undiagnosed rash or a rash attributable to a contagious illness or condition
- Significant respiratory distress
- When a child is not able to participate in the childcare program activities with reasonable comfort
- When a child requires more care that the program staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in care

Children must be excluded from Wee Pals until 24 hours after the child has been administered appropriate antibiotics for contagious illnesses, or been fever-free without fever reducing medication, and been vomit/loose stools free for a 24 hour period.

We ask parents to notify us within 24 hours if their child contracts a communicable illness. Our staff will be notified, and the illness will be posted outside of the classroom for parents to see. Wee Pals will notify the Public Health Department within 24 hours should an occurrence of a "reportable disease" take place (Steele County Public Health 444-7650).

HANDWASHING

Wee Pals is committed to minimizing the spread of communicable diseases. Good hand washing techniques are taught and practiced with children and staff. Every child and staff member will wash hands after using the bathroom, after coughing or sneezing, and before eating. With signed permission by the parent, children may be given hand sanitizer after coughing or sneezing.

NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

Parents are required to fill out a separate form that gives permission to administer any non-prescription medication. Wee Pals has a limited amount of age appropriate non-prescription medications on hand. If a non-prescription medication is frequently needed, Wee Pals asks that parents/guardians supply the medication. Wee Pals will strictly adhere to all label instructions. On occasion that a non-prescription medication is given to a child at Wee Pals, the staff member that gave the medication will log the type of medication and dosage given in Brightwheel.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

Wee Pals does administer prescription medications. A signed Medication Authorization / Administration Form from the parent must accompany the medication. The medication information sheet must be brought in, for information regarding possible side-effects and further drug information for staff to resource. Medications must be properly labeled for the child intended and in the original container with the current prescription information clearly printed. Medications that have expired will not be given and any unused portions of medication will be returned to the child's parents or be destroyed as soon as possible. All medications will be kept out of reach of the children. Medications requiring refrigeration will be stored in our refrigerator. Staff will record the date, time and dosage on Brightwheel.

MISSING CHILD

If a child goes missing while in Wee Pals' care, a thorough search of the building and surrounding area will be conducted. If after this search the child is still not located, the police and parents of the child will then be immediately called. Continued search by Wee Pals staff will continue to happen until the situation is resolved.

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PARENTS / GUARDIANS

If a parent is not able to be contacted for any reason or is late picking up and all other contacts have been tried, Wee Pals reserves the right to contact the police.

WINTER WEATHER

In the event of a blizzard and our center needs to change hours of operation, a Brightwheel alert will be sent. This is done with the well-being of each and every family and Wee Pals employee in mind. Since many families and Wee Pals employees live outside of the city limits, we like to take every step possible to ensure everyone's safety. Children will be kept inside until parents arrive.

RELOCATION PLAN

If the Wee Pals; building has to evacuate the facility for any reason we will go to the Park and Recreation Building or the Big Brothers/Big Sisters office across the street from Wee Pals. We will stay in these locations until the center is safe to re-enter or parents pick up their children. An alert via Brightwheel will be sent in the event of relocation.

FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills are practiced once a month and logged in the office. For fire related emergencies all staff are aware of the primary and secondary exits for their respective positions within the building in the case of an actual fire emergency, 911 will be called. The fire alarm in the building is maintained by the city and is always in working order. Wee Pals allows teachers to take their cell phones with them outside and during emergencies in order to maintain safety. Once the children have been evacuated the staff will assemble the children and begin to take a roll count and await further instructions. Any missing children will be reported to the Fire Chief. No one is allowed to re-enter the building until the all clear is given. Fire extinguishers are checked on a regular basis by the city. A full report will be made to DHS (651-296-3971) within 48 hours of a fire that requires the fire department.

TORNADO DRILLS

Tornado drills are practiced and documented every month, April - September. In the event of a tornado, all staff are trained as to the location of the building they are to take their children, and the procedure to follow. Our tornado shelter is located in the basement of our building in the hallway.

CODE RED DRILLS

Code Red drills are practiced twice a year and is Wee Pals procedure for events such as a gunman, hostage situation, dangerous stranger situation, etc. Each classroom has a key in their room, which they would use to lock their doors, turn off the lights, and go to the furthest point away from the windows and door. Each class remains silently in their positions until an all clear notice is given.

PETS

Your child(ren) may encounter pets or animals while enrolled with Wee Pals. We will inform families when we have a pet visiting our center.

EVENTS AT WEE PALS

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Every December the children from Wee Pals put on a Christmas program for parents, relatives, and friends in the Little Theatre's Theatre stage across from our main office.

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PRESCHOOL GRADUATION PROGRAM

One evening every spring Wee Pals holds a preschool graduation for families and friends to attend and hold a small graduation ceremony for preschool graduates going into kindergarten. This is held in the theater across from the main office.

PATRIOTIC PARADE

Around the 4th of July holiday every year, children and staff put on a parade in the lower North parking lot for parents, friends, and family. The children sing patriotic songs, and dress in red, white and blue. This is a fun tradition for families that has been occurring since our first year!

COSTUME PARADE

On or near October 31, children and staff parade in the lower north parking lot for parents, friends and family. The children may also parade through the city administration building, transitional housing, Big Brothers- Big Sisters, and the senior place.

THANKSGIVING FEAST

A Thanksgiving feast is held each year and is eaten during lunch. Teachers will plan activities for the feast such as dress up.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

We plan to make children's birthdays a special time for them. If parents would like to send treats to share, they will be welcome, but not necessary—your child will still have a special day. As noted in our food policy, **any treat brought from home must be bakery prepared or store purchased**. We appreciate as much advance notice as possible when your child will be bringing treats to share.

SWIMMING LESSONS

Every summer, Wee Pals works with the recreation center next door on helping families sign their children up for level one and/or level two swimming lessons. Spots are limited and fill on a first come first serve basis. Wee Pals transports children to and from the lessons, making the process much easier for working families.

SUMMER WATER DAYS

Wee Pals has water days starting in early June. Children will have assigned water days where they will bring a swimsuit and a towel for their water fun outside. Please label your towel and suit.

FIELD TRIPS AND OTHER EVENTS

Field trips and events occur year round at Wee Pals. There is an associated activity fee with these trips. Parental permission will be obtained from each child's parents before the event is to take place, if the field trip is off site. The permission slip will include date of the event, a description of the event, associated costs and suggested items which may be brought. Staff will take attendance sheets, parent contact sheets, any allergy information and related medications, first aid kit and first aid manual on all field trips. At least one person will be trained in First Aid and CPR during these events. Transportation will be provided by the Owatonna Bus Company. All children may go for walks within the West Hills primary area without advance notice.

Below is a list (not limited to these) of field trips/activities

- Pumpkin Patch / Apple Orchard
- Cabela's fishing trip
- Steele County Fair trip
- Therapy dog visits

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- Weekly 4-H for big pals
- Library events all throughout the summer
- Duck feeding at Morehouse Park
- Dairy Queen trips
- KONA Ice truck
- RAD Zoo
- Movies at the movie theater for big pals
- Orphanage museum tour on campus
- Smile Fairy
- Butterfly Lady
- Easter Bunny
- Santa
- Flag Folding

FUNDRAISERS

Wee Pals holds multiple fundraisers throughout the year. Families will be notified of the fundraisers via Brightwheel.

PARENT COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Acknowledging that the most important adults in a child's life are the parents, we will make every effort to keep parents informed about their child's daily experiences, verbally and/or on written reports. We will send home Wee Pals newsletters, and post information on the bulletin boards, on outside doors, and/or outside rooms. Check your child's cubby for any notes and art being sent home. If another language other than English is spoken, Wee Pals will do its best to translate the message into the spoken language or utilize a staff member that speaks the language if possible. Different ways that parent communication happens at Wee Pals is listed below:

- Monthly newsletters sent to parents
- Resources posted/provided around the building
- Daily Reports in infant and young toddler rooms
- Conferences twice a year (Fall and Spring)
- Family pictures posted in rooms
- Offer parents the opportunity to review, critique, assess the program through a yearly parent review
- Opportunities to join your child(ren) for special events, field trips, lunches, birthdays, etc.
- Chance to join the Board of Directors and attend monthly meetings relating to systems of the center

PARENT GUARDIAN VISITATION

Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit any time. Please take into consideration that if you visit in the midst of the day your child may not understand why it's not time to go depending on the age of the child. If separation is hard for your child, you may want to plan according to the needs of the child.

PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Please contact the directors immediately if you believe you have been discriminated against. Your confidence and satisfaction in our service is important to us. Every effort will be made to address and resolve your concerns promptly. If you feel your concerns have not been satisfied, please submit your concerns in writing within three (3) working days to the directors. A meeting of the staff involved, the director and yourself, will be conducted to resolve the concern within a reasonable timeframe.

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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

PRIVACY RIGHTS STATEMENT

Information requested of you is to enable us to meet your child's needs in an informed and personal manner. Information obtained will be kept confidential and shared only with staff working directly with your child or when it is necessary for your child's well-being, or safety, such as when it is requested by the Community Service Department, or the Department of Human Services-State of Minnesota. No release of information to any other outside agency or persons will be made without special permission from you, the parent. Child healthcare summary/immunization records and parent emergency contacts are required for enrollment. All other information is recommended, but is not required for enrollment unless the Director determines that the information is pertinent in order to care for your child. If you need to contact the department of Human Services, the number is (651)431-6500.

MANDATED REPORTING

WHO SHOULD REPORT

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.
- If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

WHERE TO REPORT

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
- All reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed facility should be made to the department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at (651) 296-4123.
- Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county social services agency at 444-7500 or call law enforcement at 911.

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- If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division at (651) 296-3971.

WHAT TO REPORT

- Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and should be attached to this policy.
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.
- An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.