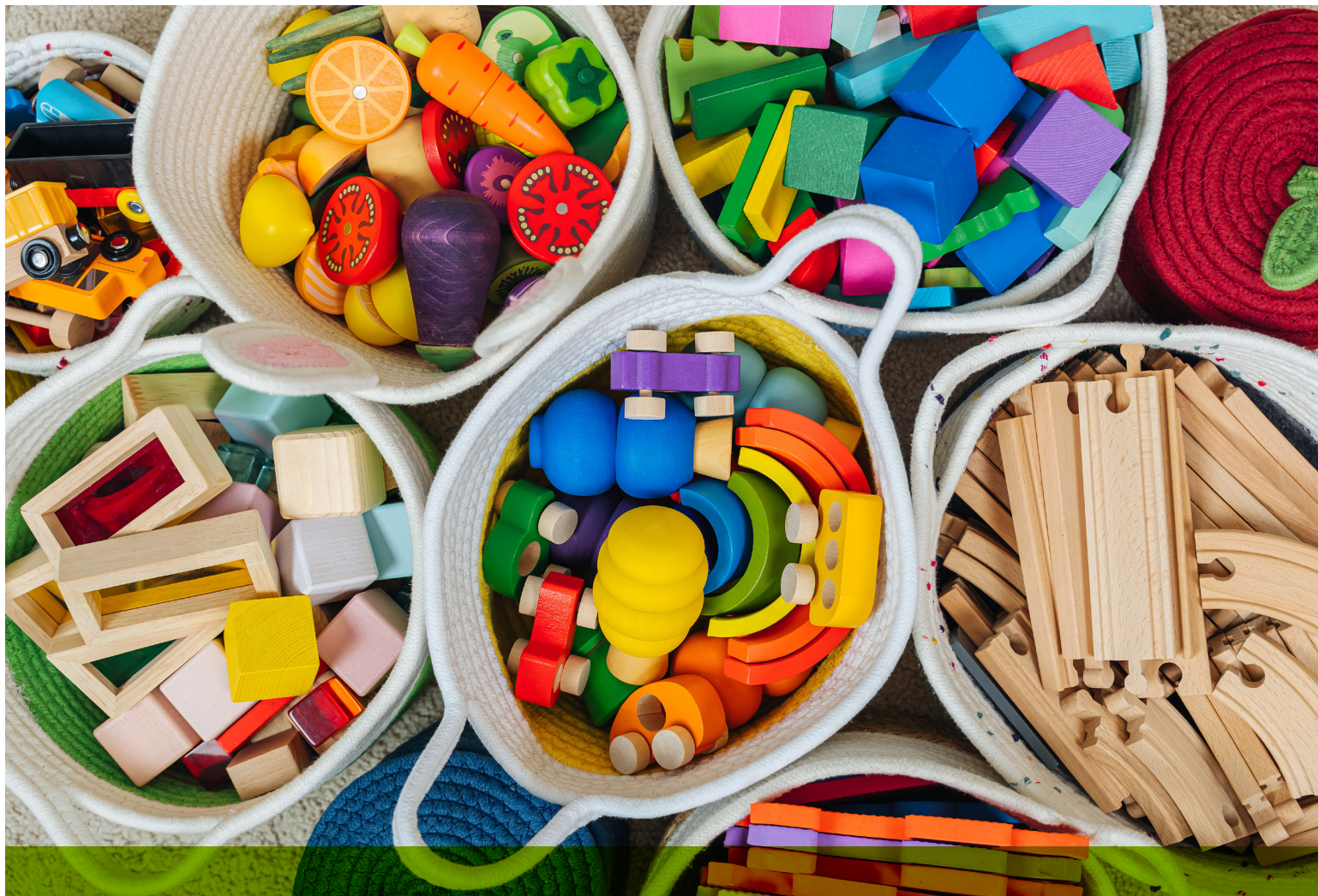




Hope West Des Moines  
CHILDREN'S CENTER

**ENROLLMENT HANDBOOK**



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# WELCOME TO **HOPE WEST DES MOINES CHILDREN'S CENTER**

We're so glad to have you and your family as a part of our program and for the exciting year ahead! The information in this booklet correlates with the Department of Human Services Licensing Regulations and serves to provide families with helpful information about our philosophy, procedures and policies. Please read through it carefully and let us know if you have any questions – no question is too small, so do not be afraid to ask!

It is our goal to provide your child(ren) with a safe, happy and age-appropriate environment in a Christ-centered way. God made your child(ren) ready to learn, and at Hope West Des Moines Children's Center, we provide an enriched environment that nourishes each child's development. Every day is carefully structured to provide children with a balanced routine for learning, growing and enjoying their days. Short, focused group activities mixed with individual playtime, small group interactions and rest periods, all while maintaining a Christian focus, keeps everyone smiling, playing and learning!

Welcome to Hope West Des Moines Children's Center! We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

## **CONNIE KELLER**

Children's Center Director

## **JODY HUFFORD**

Early Childhood Team Leader

## MISSION

The mission of Lutheran Church of Hope is to “Reach out to the world around us and share the everlasting love of Jesus Christ!” The Children’s Center exists to continue that mission by providing all of God’s children a developmentally age-appropriate curriculum while maintaining a nurturing and values-centered Christian environment.

## OPEN-DOOR POLICY

Hope West Des Moines Children’s Center has an open-door policy. As parents and caregivers, you are free to visit or check on your child(ren) throughout the day. However, we do ask that you coordinate with your child’s teacher to ensure it will not disrupt your child’s disposition or their learning time.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Hope West Des Moines Children’s Center loves working with all of God’s children regardless of race, religion, creed, color, background or disability. That being said, the Hope West Des Moines Children’s Center is a ministry of Lutheran Church of Hope and, therefore, we are unapologetically Christian-based. The care we provide and the lessons we teach are based on God’s principles and holy word.

## ENROLLMENT POLICY

Prior to attendance, all enrollment paperwork needs to be completed and updated yearly.

- Financial Agreement Form
- Annual Enrollment
- Child Health Exam Record
- Current Copies of Immunization Records
- Children's Center Information Form

## FIRST DAY SUPPLIES

Below is a list of items to be provided for each child beginning on the first day of their care. Please label everything with your child(ren)'s name and we will place the items in their cubby (see page 14 for more information on infant feeding). You will be notified when supplies are getting low.

- For infants, formula or breast milk.
- For infants, all baby food.
- For children not yet potty-trained, all diapers/pull-ups and wipes.
- Two changes of seasonal-appropriate clothing – including socks and underwear.
- Any security objects your child may need to rest with. A blanket, pillow or sleepy toy is allowed for children who are sleeping on a cot. Children sleeping in a crib may be put to sleep in a provided sleep sack.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

Hope West Des Moines Children's Center is open **Monday – Friday, 7:30 am – 5:30 pm.**

## LATE PICK-UP FEES/AFTER-HOURS DEPARTURE

Children remaining after the center is closed will be charged a \$25 per child late fee for every minute past 5:30 pm. Late fees will be added to the current billing cycle.

## FINANCIAL AGREEMENT

You will be given a financial agreement at the time of enrollment. All rates are specified on that form (including the second child discount, if applicable). All payments are deducted from your bank account via ACH every week. For staff members of Lutheran Church of Hope, payments are deducted via your payroll check bi-weekly. Your family rates will change when your child changes rooms, excluding our infant rooms (6 weeks to age 2).

## RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Children are allowed to leave the center with only those who are listed on your child's annual enrollment form. For the safety of all children, when a person other than the child's parent(s) picks them up, they are required to provide an ID before the child is released to them. This person will only be required to show their ID the first day they pick up the child (if they are picking up for consecutive days). **If there is a person who cannot pick up your child, it must be documented on your enrollment form.** If your child's regular pick-up person is unable to pick them up, a written note or email letting the director know who will be picking up your child is required.

If there is no documentation of who is picking up the child, they will not be allowed to leave the center.



## **CURRICULUM & POLICIES**

At Hope West Des Moines Children's Center, a developmentally appropriate curriculum has been carefully planned to provide the children with skills they will need for preschool and their early elementary years. Each classroom uses the Creative Curriculum approach, focusing on development in the following four areas:

1. **Social & Emotional**
2. **Physical**
3. **Cognitive**
4. **Language**

Each classroom is carefully set up to include not only age-appropriate toys, books and equipment, but also activities and routines that promote growth and development.

All teachers are responsible for interacting with children in their classrooms and observing and documenting their development. It is our job as their care providers to make sure each child has numerous successful experiences every day to foster a positive self-concept and to ensure a lifelong love of learning!

# ROLLI POLLI ROOM | 6 WEEKS – MOBILE INFANT

Below you will find the six major guidelines that will help you prepare for your child's experience in this room.

## I. NUTRITION

- All feeding is on demand and based on the family's information.
- Please supply labeled bottles with first and last name and ready to feed. We will warm them up as needed, but they must be prepped and ready.
- Storage of extra breast milk is provided in our center freezer. However, all containers must be dated and labeled with first and last names.
- If your infant is eating baby food, you must bring enough for a two-day supply each week. All food supplied must be labeled with the infant's first and last name.
- Pacifiers must be labeled with their first name. It is recommended one stay at the center.
- Bibs and all eating utensils will be provided.
- When children begin to eat from the menu, all foods must first be tried at home. Parents will highlight the center menu when they are ready to eat the center food.

## II. SLEEP

- The center will follow all state guidelines for safe sleep.
- If parents use a sleep sack for their infant, they must provide their own. The sleep sack must be labeled with first and last name. This will be washed at the center daily.
- Swaddle sacks are not permitted.
- Infants are always placed on their backs to sleep.
- If infants arrive in a car seat sleeping, they will be transitioned to a crib.
- All sleep schedules are on demand or as scheduled provided by the parents.

## III. DIAPERING

- All infants will be changed every two hours unless needed earlier.
- Parents provide diapers, wipes and ointment. All materials must be labeled with first and last name.
- Parents must provide at least two changes of clothes, including socks.

## IV. CURRICULUM

- Individualized lesson plans are based off the Creative Curriculum.
- Lesson plans will be reassessed monthly.
- Each teacher plans and cares for up to four infants each, with each teacher being the primary caregiver to the same infants each day.
- Lesson plans are posted on the parent board in the classroom and posted on Brightwheel.

## V. COMMUNICATION

- Whiteboards are used in the classroom for teacher and parent daily communication.
- Daily care information is posted in a timely manner on Brightwheel.
- Monthly newsletters are posted on Brightwheel.
- Infants will always be dropped off and picked up in their room due to their age. However, if this should ever need to be changed, a sign will be posted.

## VI. TRANSITION

- Infants must be mobile (crawling or walking).
- They must be able to feed themselves with fingers.
- Transitioning to one afternoon nap.
- Transitioning to a sippy cup.
- Able to sit up and sit at a toddler-sized table.

# TINY TURTLE ROOM | APPROXIMATELY 6 MONTHS – 1 YEAR

Below you will find the six major guidelines that will help you prepare for your child's experience in this room.

## I. NUTRITION

- All bottle feeding is on demand, based upon family info.
- Please supply labeled bottles with first and last name and ready to feed. We will warm them up as needed, but they must be prepped and ready.
- Storage of extra breast milk is provided in our center freeze. However, all containers must be dated and labeled with first and last names.
- When children eat from the menu, all foods must be tried first at home. Parents will highlight the weekly menu with foods allowed for their children.
- All children will feed themselves. Assistance is always given if needed.
- Children will be able to sit at a toddler-sized table.
- Bibs and sippy cups are provided by center.
- Small toddler utensils will be introduced.
- At age 1 the child may transition to whole milk.
- A morning snack is provided at 9:00 am, lunch at 11:30 am and an afternoon snack at 2:45 pm.

## II. SLEEP

- The center will follow all state guidelines for safe guidelines.
- If parents use a sleep sack for their infant, they must provide their own. The sleep sack must be labeled with first and last name. This will be washed at the center daily.
- If infants arrive in a car seat asleep, they will be transitioned to a crib.
- All sleep schedules are on demand and are transitioned to one afternoon nap.

## III. DIAPERING

- All infants will be changed every two hours unless needed earlier.
- Parents provide diapers, wipes and ointment. All materials must be labeled with first and last name.
- Parents must provide at least two changes of clothes, including socks.

## IV. CURRICULUM

- Individualized lesson plans based off the Creative Curriculum.
- Lesson plans will be reassessed every two weeks.
- Each teacher plans and cares for up to four infants each, being the primary care giver to the same children each day.
- Lesson plans are posted on the parent board in the classroom and posted on Brightwheel.

## V. COMMUNICATION

- Whiteboards are used in the classroom for teacher and parent daily communication.
- Daily care information is posted in a timely manner on Brightwheel.
- Monthly newsletters are posted on Brightwheel.
- Drop-off and pick-up notes will be posted on the classroom door.

## VI. TRANSITION

- Children will eat completely from the menu.
- Children will be able to use small utensils and sippy cups.
- Children will have transitioned to whole milk.
- Children will have one afternoon nap per day.
- Walking steadily with shoes.
- Will be ready to sleep on toddler cot.
- Pacifiers needed for rest time only.



## LITTLE LAMB ROOM | APPROXIMATELY AGES 1-2

Below you will find the six major guidelines that will help you prepare for your child's experience in this room.

### I. NUTRITION

- All children will be provided food items from the menu.
- All children will begin utilizing child-sized utensils.
- All children will drink whole milk in sippy cups provided by the center.
- Bibs will be provided for each child.
- A morning snack is served at 9:00 am, lunch at 11:45 am and an afternoon snack at 3:00 pm.

### II. SLEEP

- Children will sleep on toddler cots.
- One afternoon nap per day from 12:30-2:30 pm.
- Blankets or security items may be brought from home to sleep with. **No pillows.**

### III. DIAPERING

- Children will be changed every two hours unless needed before that.
- Parents will provide labeled diapers, wipes and ointment.
- Parents will provide two changes of seasonal clothes.

### IV. CURRICULUM

- Creative Curriculum weekly plans will be posted on the parent board.
- Weekly lesson plans will be posted on Brightwheel.
- Self-help skills will be taught.
- Large motor activities will be in the gym or classroom.

### V. COMMUNICATION

- Daily care information will be posted in a timely manner on Brightwheel.
- Monthly newsletters will be posted on Brightwheel.
- Drop-off and pick-up notes will be posted on the door daily.

### VI. TRANSITION

The fourth week of August, if the child has turned 2 or will be 2 by Sept. 15, he/she will transition to the Playful Penguin Room.

# PLAYFUL PENGUIN ROOM | 2-YEAR OLDS

Below you will find the six major guidelines that will help you prepare for your child's experience in this room.

## I. NUTRITION

- All children will be provided food items from the menu.
- All children will begin utilizing adult-sized utensils.
- All children will use child-sized cups.
- A morning snack is served at 9:00 am, lunch at 11:45 am and an afternoon snack at 3:00 pm.

## II. SLEEP

- Children will sleep on toddler cots.
- Nap time will be from 1:00-3:00 pm daily.
- Blankets and security items are permitted. **No pillows.**

## III. DIAPERING AND BATHROOM HABITS

- Children will be changed every two hours, unless needed sooner.
- Parents will provide labeled diapers, wipes and ointment if needed.
- Parents will provide one change of seasonal clothing.
- Potty training will begin in this room. Parents will work with the teachers on this milestone.

## IV. CURRICULUM

- Creative Curriculum weekly plans will be posted on the parent board and posted on Brightwheel.
- Gross motor activities will be available to children both in the gym and the playground.
- Continuation of self-help skills will be taught.

## V. COMMUNICATION

- Daily care information will be posted in a timely manner on Brightwheel.
- Monthly newsletters will be posted on Brightwheel.
- Weekly lesson plans will be posted on Brightwheel.
- Drop-off and pick-up notes will be posted on the classroom door.

## VI. TRANSITION

- Children will move to the 3-year-old classroom the fourth week of August.
- Children must be 3 by Sept. 15.
- Children must be completely potty trained in order to move.

## 3-YEAR-OLD CLASSROOM

Below you will find the six major guidelines that will help you prepare for your child's experience in this room.

### I. NUTRITION

- All children will be provided food items from the menu.
- A morning snack will be served at 9:00 am, lunch at 11:45 am and an afternoon snack at 3:00 pm.

### II. SLEEP

- Blankets and security items may be brought from home.
- Nap time is from 1:00-3:00 pm daily.
- Some children may be transitioning out of a nap; therefore, if a child is awake for more than 20 minutes, quiet activities will be provided for the remainder of nap time.

### III. BATHROOM HABITS

- Children are fully potty-trained.
- Children must use the restroom before coming to the classroom each day.
- Children will be offered multiple bathroom breaks throughout the day.
- Parents must provide one change of seasonal clothing.

### IV. CURRICULUM

- During the preschool year on Tuesday and Thursday mornings the children will receive preschool program curriculum. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday they will receive enrichment activities.
- In the summer, teachers will plan themes and lessons to go with each theme.
- All lesson plans will be posted on the parent board in the classroom.
- Gross motor activities will take place in the gym or on the playground.

### V. COMMUNICATION

- Weekly updates will be posted on Brightwheel.
- Drop-off and pick-up information will be posted on the classroom door.

### VI. TRANSITION

- The fourth week of August, children will move to Pre-K (4-year-old classroom).
- They will transition out of nap time.

# 4-YEAR-OLD (PRE-K) CLASSROOM

Below you will find the six major guidelines that will help you prepare for your child's experience in this room.

## I. NUTRITION

- All children will be provided food items from the menu.
- A morning snack will be served at 9:00 am, lunch at 11:30 am and afternoon snack at 3:00 pm.

## II. SLEEP

- All children will have a 20-minute rest time following lunch. If needed, a time of transitioning from afternoon naps to rest time will be provided during the fall.
- No supplies are needed for this time.
- The children find a quiet place in the room, the lights are dimmed and they have books during this time.

## III. BATHROOM HABITS

- Children must use the restroom before coming to the classroom each day.
- Children will be offered multiple bathroom breaks throughout the day.
- Parents must provide one change of seasonal clothing.

## IV. CURRICULUM

- During the preschool year, children will receive preschool program curriculum. Any time they are not in preschool they will receive enrichment activities.
- In the summer, teachers will plan themes and lessons to go with each theme.
- All lesson plans will be posted on the parent board in the classroom.
- Gross motor activities will take place in the gym or on the playground.

## V. COMMUNICATION

- Weekly updates will be posted on Brightwheel.
- Drop-off and pick-up information will be posted on the classroom door.

## VI. TRANSITION

- The first week of June the children will stay with their group for summer programming and/or they will have the opportunity to attend Hope's school-age summer camps at Hope Waukee.
- After the summer programming is complete in August, children will transition out of the center and they will attend Hope's Transitional Kindergarten program or Kindergarten.

## ON-SITE FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an integral part of the Creative Curriculum. Field trips will include bringing in local experts such as police and fire departments, dentists, doctors, zoo experts, and others.

## OUTDOOR/GROSS MOTOR PLAYTIME



Our center's playgrounds have been developed to enhance your child's learning experience. Your child will be enjoying outside play at least twice daily (weather permitting). Children will be involved in daily activities such as climbing, running, and sand and water play. Physical activities are also planned daily. In the event of inclement weather, or other reasons children cannot go outside to play, the gym or other large motor rooms will be utilized within Lutheran Church of Hope. The playground was designed for children age 2 and up. Children under the age of 2 may still go outside, but are not permitted on the playground.

When outside weather conditions require it, sunscreen will be applied to the children.

## PARENT COMMUNICATION/CONFIDENTIALITY

Hope West Des Moines Children's Center uses Brightwheel as a confidential communication tool. You will receive information explaining how to access and operate this app. Parent communication and maintaining confidentiality are critical components of the Hope West Des Moines Children's Center. All sensitive discussions about your child will be done in private, and private information will never be shared with another parent who attends the center. If there are any concerns or questions regarding a policy or the developmental needs of your child, please communicate those to your child's teacher by setting up a conference time or speaking to them at drop-off or pick-up time. They will do their best to help resolve your questions or concerns; however, there are times when they may not have the answer. Please feel free to contact the director to set up a time to meet. Our teachers are not allowed to use their cell phones during work hours and therefore will be unable to receive phone calls or text messages from parents. If you are needing to get a hold of your child's teacher, please call the director and she will relay the message.

## CONFERENCES

Conferences are conducted twice per year (in the fall and spring) for children age 2 and younger. The 3- and 4-year-old Pre-K rooms will have one conference in the spring. Times will be set with the classroom teachers and on the yearly calendar.

## MEALS AND SNACKS

Meals and snacks are planned according to state licensing regulations and follow federal food guidelines for nutritionally healthy meals. There will be a morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack provided daily. A menu will be posted in each room and on Brightwheel. If your child has special dietary needs, please communicate this at the time of enrollment. A signed doctor's note is required stating the issue and any necessary accommodations that need to be made.

### **The following applies to infant feeding:**

- Formula or breast milk will be provided by parents. Please label all bottle parts. Bottles must be pre-made.
- All Infants will be held when given their bottle. Bottles will never be propped for any age child.
- Infants will not be fed from baby food jars in order to avoid contamination and the breakdown of food from saliva. All food will be transferred into a bowl. Leftover, prepared or canned food may not be re-stored in the refrigerator. Your supply of new baby food will be stored at the center in your child's cubby. All food must be labeled with the child's name and date.

### **Infants eating table food:**

- Meals will be served on plates filled by staff.
- Food will be cut into small pieces.
- Bibs are provided for each infant and toddler.

## CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Please be sure your child is dressed appropriately to attend the center every day and participate in daily activities. Please send your children in appropriate shoes for walking (sandals without heel straps, including flip-flops, are not allowed for safety reasons). Extra clothing should be labeled.

## NAPPING

Each child will be provided with a cot or crib for sleeping. Each cot or crib mattress will be covered with a sheet. If your child is in the infant room, we ask that you please provide a sleep sack for your child. If your child is in the other rooms, they may bring a blanket from home. All sleep sacks and crib sheets are washed daily. Cot sheets are washed weekly.

During naptime, at least one staff shall be present in every room where children are resting. In the Rolli Polli, Little Lambs and Tiny Turtles rooms, ratios will be maintained during rest time. Teachers will use naptime for lesson planning, portfolios, bulletin boards, and break times.



## SPECIAL DAYS

You are welcome to bring a special store-bought item (i.e., cookies, cupcakes, cake, etc.) or non-food items to celebrate your child's birthday, or any special day for your child. For the safety of all children, no homemade, as well as no peanut or tree nut products, are allowed in any of the center rooms.

## TOYS

Please leave all toys at home unless it is a nap toy or special soft toy for nap time. We provide many different toys for the children and we would not want their toy to get lost or broken.

## DIAPERING/POTTY TRAINING

Diapering procedures for all of the children follow the state regulation guidelines on diapering. If you have any questions, please refer to the chart near the diaper changing station in your child's room. Diapers are checked every hour and changed immediately if soiled. If your child has begun the potty-training process, we will do everything we can to ensure we follow the procedures you are doing at home. Clothing should be easy to manage to encourage self-help skills. Buckles, belts, overalls and suspenders when in a hurry to use the bathroom may create a problem. We also require that each potty-training child have six changes of clothing, training pants or pull-ups. Please see the questions below to help discover if your child is ready to begin the potty-training process:

### **Is your child ready to be potty-trained? Check those that apply to your child.**

- Follows simple directions.
- Remains dry for at least two hours at a time during the day.
- Dry after naptime.
- Regular and predictable bowel movements (some may have bowel movements everyday and some may have them less frequently).
- Walks to and from the bathroom, pulls down own pants, and pulls them up again.
- Seems uncomfortable with soiled or wet diapers.
- Seems interested in the toilet.
- Has asked to wear grown-up underwear.

If the child has most of the skills marked, you can assume the child is ready to start potty-training. Potty-training may best be accomplished by starting at home first and then at childcare. If the child does not have most of the skills marked, wait a few weeks or months and refer to the checklist again. Potty-training is much easier if the child is truly ready to master this skill.

## WELL CHILD CHECKS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

Each child enrolled in the center must have a current physical and an up-to-date immunization record on the first day of attendance. The state Health Department requires that all children enrolled in a licensed childcare center be immunized against Diphtheria, Tetanus, Hib, Influenza type B, Polio, Measles, Rubella, Vercelli (Chicken Pox), and Hepatitis. Important things to note about the report and exam:

- The physical exam must be no more than 12 months prior to the first day of attendance.
- Report must include past health history and status of present health conditions.
- Report must be signed by a licensed physician or a designee in a clinic supervised by a licensed physician.
- The report should be submitted annually thereafter.

## SICK POLICY

It is the intent that every child who attends Hope West Des Moines Children's Center is happy and healthy. Sick children pose a risk to other children in the center. We understand that colds and allergies are inevitable, but we follow the guidelines established for us by the state to help ensure the environment is a safe and healthy one. Children must remain home and/or will be sent home for the following reasons:

- Any illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
- A need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- An acute change in behavior: lethargy, lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing or a quickly spreading rash.
- Fever with behavior change or other signs and symptoms in a child older than two months (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea).
- For infants younger than 2 months of age, a fever with or without a behavior change or other signs and symptoms.
- A child with a temperature elevated above normal is not necessarily an indication of a significant health problem.
  - For an infant or child older than two months, a fever is a temperature that is above 101 degrees F [38.3 degrees C] by any method.
  - For infants younger than two months of age, a fever is a temperature above 100.4 degrees F [38 degrees C] by any method.
  - Temperature readings do not require adjustment for the location where the temperature is taken.

### COVID-19 Policy

#### Exclude

- If >2 years and able to wear a mask correctly and consistently, exclude for five days from positive test (if no symptoms) or symptom onset.
- If <2 years of age, unable to wear a mask, choose not to wear a mask, have moderate or severe COVID-19 illness, or are immunocompromised, exclude for 10 days.

#### Return to Child Care

- On day 6 if fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and if symptoms have improved. Per CDC guidance, should wear mask from days 6-10. OR if you have access to antigen tests, you should consider using them. With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, you may remove your mask sooner than day 10.
- On day 11 if fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and if symptoms have improved.

*For more information, please click here.*

## MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In the event of an incident that requires outside medical treatment, Hope West Des Moines Children's Center will either call an ambulance (911) or immediately contact the parent to pick up the child to take them to the emergency room at the preferred hospital listed on the child's enrollment form.

In the event that the parent cannot be reached, the contact person will be called. For this reason, any new phone numbers must be provided to the center if a change happens.

If no one can be reached and medical treatment needs to be authorized, Hope West Des Moines Children's Center will authorize treatment as per enrollment form.

If an ambulance is needed, the director will go with the child to the emergency room until the parent is able to meet at the hospital. The child's file (health history and medical consent) will go to the emergency department with the child and director.

All costs incurred from the treatment of injury or illnesses are the parent's responsibility.

## DENTAL EMERGENCIES

In the event of a dental emergency Hope West Des Moines Children's Center will apply first aid procedures and contact the parent so the child can be taken to their dentist. In the event parents cannot be reached, the emergency person will be contacted.

## MEDICATIONS

In accordance with Iowa laws, Hope West Des Moines Children's Center requires that all medication brought to the center must bear a current prescription label. No medication will be given to a child without a signed permission form from the parent or guardian. This form is on file at the center. The authorized person dispensing the medication will sign the form and put the date, time and initials verifying the dose given. All medicine is kept in the director's office. Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen and over-the-counter drugs will not be administered without a note from the physician.

## MULTI-CHILD DISCOUNT

If multiple children are enrolled in the center, there is a 5% discount for the oldest child enrolled.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of an emergency (fire, tornado, flood, etc.) during center hours, the children will follow the emergency procedure protocol posted on the walls of their individual classrooms. The following emergencies can or would cause the center to close early: water main break, electricity outage, no heating/cooling, etc. National emergencies would be dealt with based on the situation and threat to our community. A lockdown policy is in place in the event an intruder enters the building. It is for these reasons that all families must have an emergency number listed for each child in our care.

## INCIDENT REPORTS

Incidents resulting in injury to a child will be reported on the day of the incident in writing to the parent. A parent or legal guardian is required to sign the incident report and will be provided with a copy.

## BEHAVIOR POLICY

The Hope West Des Moines Children's Center behavior policy is one that is supportive, caring and respectful. We believe in a three-tiered approach. First, we will build a relationship with your child. Secondly, we will provide an environment that is set up for their success and lastly, we will provide social/emotional teaching and guidance. We use redirection and provide cooling off times as needed. When a child does not respond favorably to this approach, we will develop a plan alongside the parents that will help the child succeed. We reserve the right to ask a family to find other care options if, after all these steps have been followed, the child is unable to participate cooperatively and safely.

## BITING POLICY

In all childcare centers, periodic outbreaks of biting occur among infants, toddlers and sometimes older children. This is an unavoidable consequence of grouping young children together. When it happens, it can be scary and very frustrating for children, parents and teachers. Understanding the reason for biting is the first step to changing a child's behavior. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, simple sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration, and stress, to name a few. Biting is not to be blamed on children, the parents or their teachers. When biting breaks out, a high-quality childcare program immediately takes action and looks at the environment and the ways to help change the behavior.

It is important that the caregivers remain calm and in control of their emotions when biting occurs. Staff should not show anger or frustration toward the child. The teacher should calmly respond to the child, letting them know that biting is not OK. In addition, the following steps will be taken:

1. The teacher will remove the child who bit from the situation and focus on caring for the child that was bitten.
2. Encourage the child who bit to help take care of the child who was bitten (hold ice pack, comfort the child).
3. The caregiver will talk to the child who bit (if able to communicate) about different strategies that the child can use next time (give them appropriate words, if able) instead of biting.

It is important to explore the reasons for biting when it occurs. Teachers need to work with parents to gather information about the child's behavior and begin observations to determine the reasons for biting. Examples of some triggers are communication deficits, transitions, hunger, lack of sleep, need for oral stimulation or teething pain. Once triggers are identified, staff can work on prevention strategies, replacement skills and environmental changes.

## **TERMINATION OF SERVICES**

A written notice must be given for any of the following:

1. Termination of services by either party. A two-week notice is required.
2. Non-payment of center fees.
3. Any serious behaviors that do not improve after speaking with the parents and putting together a plan of action.

## **CHILDREN'S CENTER HOLIDAY CLOSURES**

The center will be closed for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Easter Monday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. If the holiday falls on a weekend, the center will be closed the Friday before or the Monday after.

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCES**

Yearly professional development for our staff may require the center to open late or close early on a very limited basis.

## **WEATHER POLICY**

During inclement weather, Hope West Des Moines Children's Center will make every effort to maintain normal child care hours. In the case that two or more surrounding school districts close due to inclement weather, excluding closing for severe cold temperatures, the center will close as well. Families will be notified via Brightwheel the night before or very early the same day. If severe weather occurs while the center is open, the center will remain open until all children are picked up.



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[hopewdm.org](http://hopewdm.org)