



Family Handbook

Child Care Center Program

Revised June 2026

My Place: A Play and Learning Center

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Welcome to My Place

Established February 2012 to serve families throughout Schuyler County, My Place, A Play and Learning Center is a not-for-profit organization that provides high quality care and education for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school age children (ages 6 weeks to 12 years).

Mission Statement

To be the pillar of child care in Schuyler County by providing children and families with quality care and educational experiences. Vision: To provide a sustainable model of care that promotes family and community partnerships, and quality childhood learning experiences through play.

Educational Philosophy

We believe every child has the potential to bring something unique and special to the world. My Place provides high-quality early childhood experiences that help children see themselves as capable individuals, express their ideas, build confidence, and develop a lifelong love of learning. We are committed to learning through play and honoring the natural joy of childhood. We recognize that children grow, develop, and respond to learning experiences in different ways. Together, staff and families help create an equitable environment where children and adults learn to respect, accept, and value differences.

Values

Play Welcoming Environment Nurturing Relationships inside and outside of the organization Accessibility Continuous Learning Promote a culture of diversity and inclusion Goals: Providing a sustainable model of care Contribute to local economy Promote a culture of learning through play

Center-Wide Expectations: Kind Hearts, Safe Bodies, Helping Hands

At My Place, our Pyramid Model expectations give children, staff, and families shared language across classrooms, playgrounds, common areas, and community spaces.

Kind Hearts means we use kind words, caring actions, and empathy. Children are learning to include others, notice feelings, ask for help, respect differences, and use words to express needs and solve problems.

Safe Bodies means we keep ourselves, our friends, and our spaces safe. Children are learning to keep hands, feet, and bodies safe; listen when someone says stop or needs space; care for their bodies through hygiene, rest, food, water, and asking for help; use calming strategies; and move safely throughout the center.

Helping Hands means we care for My Place, our materials, and each other. Children are learning to clean up after play, meals, and activities; use toys, books, furniture, nature, and playground materials with care; take turns, share, wait, help friends, and leave spaces better than they found them.

Staff support these expectations by modeling kindness, teaching emotional regulation and safe choices, giving children developmentally appropriate choices, and helping every child participate in routines. Our motto is: Kind Hearts. Safe Bodies. Helping Hands.

Who We Serve

My Place serves approximately 60 children, from six weeks to five years of age. We are open to the public and give priority placement to:

- Siblings of children currently enrolled
- Children of our staff
- Children in the Foster Care System

Hours of Operation

Center: Monday through Friday 7:00 AM – 5:30 PM

New York State Licensing

My Place follows all regulations as listed in the New York State Department of Social Services (DSS) Day Care Regulations. A copy of these regulations can be found in each classroom and at the front desk, or you may request a copy from the Center Director. Parents have the right to report any licensing regulation violation to the Regional Licensing Division of DSS (585-238-8531) or to a NYS “warm line” for parents at 800-732-5207. They will investigate the claim and take action if warranted. Their website is <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/daycare>. Electronic access to the regulations can be found at https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/daycare_regulations.asp

Capacity

The number of children enrolled is based upon state licensing for classroom sizes. The Center has five classrooms. The maximum number of children in each group is:

- Infant: 8 infants
- Waddler/Continuity of Care: 8 children
- Toddler 1 - 7 children
- Toddler 2 - 12 children
- Preschool: 18 children

Each classroom is also staffed in accordance with state licensing mandates. The minimum ratios that the center adheres to are:

- Infants; 6 weeks- 18 months -1 staff: 4 children
- Waddler; 12 months – 24 months – 1 staff: 4 children
- Toddler; 18 months- 36 months – 1 staff: 5 children
- Preschool; 3–5-year-old – 1 staff: 7 children

Our Staff

When considering a new employee, each candidate goes through an extensive hiring process which includes an interview by the director, a working interview in the classrooms, reference checks, a health screening, a child abuse screening, and a criminal record check. During the first six months of employment each employee is expected to complete 15 hours of training.

All teachers have education and training in Early Childhood.

We require that our Lead Teachers have at minimum either an associate degree or Child Development Credentials or a plan of study approved by the Executive Director and OCFS (Office of Children and Family Services) licensor. For our Assistants, we require at least a High School Diploma/GED and prefer additional course work or experience working with children. Teacher Aides are required to have a High School Diploma/GED. Teacher Aides typically have a home classroom but move around based on the needs of the children.

All staff must complete a minimum of 30 hours of training every two years. Staff must establish professional development goals.

Holidays

My Place will be closed to families the following days so staff can attend professional development training and enjoy time to themselves and with family to celebrate holidays. Martin Luther King Day Good Friday Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day Grand Prix Day Veteran’s Day Thanksgiving Holiday (Thursday and Friday) Christmas Holiday (Eve and Day) New Year’s (Day)

Weather-Related Closings, Delays, and Daily Monitoring

My Place makes every effort to remain open when enough staff can safely arrive and provide proper supervision. Closings and delays are rare, but child and staff safety will guide all decisions.

Closings or delays will be shared through ProCare, SMS push message, and the My Place Facebook page.

The opening supervisor also checks the weather daily using the Weather Channel App. The daily posting near the clock-in/out tablet includes the date, current conditions, RealFeel temperature, advisories or alerts, and the outdoor play decision: Outside, Shortened Outside Time, or Inside Only. RealFeel is used because it accounts for wind, humidity, sun exposure, and how the temperature actually feels to the body.

Enrollment

My Place, A Play and Learning Center, will be open to all children regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, or disability. My Place does offer families the option of part-time enrollment on the limited basis of availability and does not guarantee continued part-time enrollment. Part time is considered less than 5 days a week, we do not offer partial day rate. If a child's classroom develops a wait list for full enrollment, the Director will work with families and do the best to accommodate.

Typically, enrollment will begin with a tour of the Center to allow families to get an idea of what to expect from the program. During the tour, families will view the classroom and be given information about our daily operations.

To enroll, parents are responsible for completing an application for enrollment plus a non-refundable enrollment fee: \$25 for the first child/\$40 per family, as well as, emergency contact cards, and medical clearance and current immunizations that state that the child is healthy enough to attend the program.

Once enrollment forms are received and there is an appropriate age opening in a classroom, families will be contacted by a director, and an appointment will be scheduled to meet the child's teacher. During this meeting, families will get the opportunity to meet the staff, learn what to expect from the room and what personal items will be necessary to provide for their child. Enrollment is secured when the Director affirms classroom availability and payment of deposit by family.

Special Enrollment Considerations

Changes in a family's life, due to maternity leaves, temporary job lay-offs or extended illness are stressful enough without having child care added to your stress. Maintaining consistency is important to young children during times of change at home. To assist families through these life disruptions, My Place allows a family to temporarily reduce enrollment to part-time (minimum 2 days per week) without the risk of losing the child's full-time position during these periods of unusual need. Families who have been enrolled full-time for at least six weeks prior to the change may reduce their schedule to part-time for up to eight weeks before the full-time slot is forfeited. If you are unable to return to full-time care after the temporary part-time period ends, you may go on the waiting list for

priority placement for the next full-time availability. Continued part-time enrollment cannot be assumed and will only be available if there is not a waiting list. Families may avail themselves of this privilege only under unusual circumstances and once per year upon application with the Director.

Childcare Transition Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a smooth and supportive transition for children as they move from one classroom to the next within our child care center. We are intentional in choosing the best opportunity for transition, considering the child's readiness, developmental milestones, and family input. Our goal is to create a positive experience as children progress from infant and toddler classrooms into preschool and eventually transition to Pre-K in the school districts while still being supported through after-school care.

Scope

This policy applies to all families, children, and staff involved in the transition process.

Transition Process

1. **Family Communication:** Families will be invited to meet with teachers and administrators to discuss their child's transition, expectations, and any concerns.
2. **Developmental Readiness:** Transitions are based on a combination of age, developmental progress, and space availability in the next classroom. We prioritize each child's emotional and social readiness to ensure a smooth transition.
3. **Short Visits:** Children will have opportunities for short visits to their new classroom to become familiar with the environment, teachers, and classmates before the official transition.
4. **Warm Welcome:** When a child moves into their new classroom, teachers

will provide a warm and supportive welcome to help them feel safe and comfortable.

5. **Collaboration with Families:** Families will receive information about their child's new classroom, including curriculum, daily routines, and teacher introductions.
6. **Ongoing Support:** Teachers and staff will closely observe and support children during their transition period, addressing any challenges and ensuring a positive experience.
7. **Transition to Pre-K and Beyond:** As children transition to Pre-K within the school district, we will work with families to provide guidance and resources. For those continuing in after-school care, we will ensure consistency and familiarity in their routine.

Review and Compliance

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it aligns with best practices in early childhood education and supports the needs of children and families. Staff will receive training on effective transition strategies to maintain a positive experience for all children. For any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please contact the facility administrator or program director.

Confidentiality of Records

All information pertaining to families, children and staff is kept confidential. Your child's educational and health records are kept in locked files. We do not release any information from our files without parental written consent.

ProCare Software

My Place utilizes ProCare Software for tracking, billing, attendance, and immunization records. Parents are encouraged to utilize the online account access and payment option via ProCare app. To access the ProCare system, parents must have an email address in use with billing. Daily communication will take place on our ProCare application downloadable at Google Play Store and Apple Store. You will receive a code to authenticate your account via email and text to that you provide.

ProCare Family Policy

At My Place, A Play and Learning Center, we use ProCare as our primary tool for communication, updates, and documentation of your child's day. ProCare allows

families to stay informed about their child's activities, meals, rest times, and important center announcements. To ensure a safe, respectful, and professional experience for all families and staff, we ask that parents and guardians adhere to the following ProCare policies:

Confidentiality & Photo Sharing

- Throughout the day, staff may upload classroom photos that highlight group activities and learning experiences. Some families do not grant permission for their child's photo to be shared outside of My Place.
- Screenshots, downloads, or sharing of any photos from ProCare outside of the app (including on social media, text messages, or emails) is strictly prohibited.
- If families are found to be sharing photos without permission, they may lose access to photo updates in the app.

Updates & Staff Responsibilities

- Staff will update ProCare as they are able to step away from classroom duties and when they are not actively counted in ratio.
- The safety and supervision of children is our top priority. While we value communication, our staff's primary responsibility is being fully engaged with the children in their care.
- Families should understand that ProCare updates may not always be in real-time and may be delayed until staff have an appropriate moment to

document activities.

Messaging Expectations

- ProCare messaging is a tool for non-urgent communication. Messages will be checked and responded to when staff are available.
- For immediate concerns, such as a change in pick-up arrangements or an urgent message regarding your child, please call the center directly.
- Staff are expected to maintain professional boundaries and will not respond to personal messages outside of center hours.

Respecting Our Policies

- ProCare is a valuable resource for staying connected with your child's daily experience, but it is not a substitute for direct communication with staff and administration.
- Families are encouraged to discuss any concerns or questions regarding their child's day during drop-off, pick-up, or scheduled conferences rather than relying solely on app updates. By using ProCare, families agree to respect these policies to maintain the privacy, safety, and professionalism of My Place. If you have any questions about this policy, please speak with the Program Director.

Daily Communication

Classroom staff use ProCare to document the numerous activities children engage in throughout the day. The messaging feature is our primary means of communication and can be seen by all classroom staff. Sensitive communication should be emailed directly to the classroom teacher or director. Phone calls are welcome but can be distracting in the classroom and in-depth conversations will often need to be returned at an agreed time with the family or caregivers.

Administration encourages professional boundaries in all teaching staff. Calls and texts to staff's personal phones or through social media are discouraged to discuss classroom concerns or general communication about the center. If you have questions or concerns, please contact a member of the leadership team.

Parent and Staff Communication

To maintain our partnership with parents, we encourage open communication with parents daily. Classroom staff will record in ProCare details what the child ate, how long they slept, and the activities that they participated in throughout their day. You can also message staff on the app to share information during the day. At times there may be a delay in documenting activities or returning messages as direct supervision and engagement of children will always take priority.

For immediate concerns, you may call the center to reach your child's teacher. Please dial the extension you would like to reach: Preschool 102 Toddler 103 Tiny Tots 104 Waddlers 105 Infants 106 Program Director 100 Executive Director 101

We look to parents to share information with staff about the happenings of the child outside of the Center and to keep staff informed about changes the child may be experiencing. Information that parents share will be documented for communication purposes with the classroom team. Our goal is to meet with families twice a year to discuss developmental milestones and individual learning goals. At any time, parents or teachers wish to discuss the child's development in a more formal and detailed atmosphere. Other than in unforeseen emergencies, parents will be given two weeks' notice in writing about staffing changes.

Family involvement is strongly encouraged at My Place. We welcome your suggestions and input in meeting the needs of the classroom. We provide several opportunities throughout the year for families to engage with the classroom, however you are encouraged to reach out to the classroom teacher for other opportunities to spend time in the classroom with stories, crafts or cooking activities.

Please send a ProCare message or call the Center by 8:30 AM if your child will be late or absent. This is essential to our meal counts and staffing patterns. Staff Internal Communication Through Microsoft Teams: Microsoft Teams is the

primary platform for internal staff communication. Staff are expected to check Teams daily for announcements, scheduling notes, classroom updates, and other information needed for safe and consistent program operations.

Staff are expected to acknowledge posts when requested by reacting or commenting so leadership knows the message was received. Teams must be used professionally and respectfully. Family communication will continue to take place through ProCare, phone, email, or in-person conversation as appropriate.

Parent Responsibilities

8. Complete and keep current all required enrollment documentation and requirements. Any time your child receives any immunization please provide an updated immunization record to the director.
9. Keep the Center informed of any changes relating to information provided on original enrollment forms, such as address and phone number change, custody and order of restraints, emergency contacts, and other.
10. Inform the staff of any concerns or changes regarding your child since your child was last at the Center. This information will be documented for staff only.
11. Notify the Center if your child currently has, or has been exposed to, a contagious illness. Please follow our Health Care and Sick Child policy in this handbook. and keep your child home when they are showing signs of a contagious illness.
12. If contacted by the Center to pick up your child regarding possible contagious illness or rash, fever, and secondary symptoms, or other, make arrangements for your child to be picked up within an hour.
13. Provide any specific or special instructions for the day in writing or through ProCare and give them to the staff who oversee your child.
14. Inform the classroom staff when a person other than parent/guardian, or regular person, is picking up your child. Please make sure that the person picking up your child is listed on the emergency contact form, provide us with written permission for pickup, and ensure that the person has photo identification.
15. Please have photo identification available, as you and others may be asked to present it at the time of pick up. This is done when a staff member is not familiar with the person picking up to assure the safety of your child.
16. Practice caution while in the parking lot. Drive slowly and cautiously when entering/exiting the lot. Have children always remain with you. For the safety of your children, please do not leave any children unattended in the car. NYS law prohibits children from being left alone in a car without adult supervision.
17. Vehicles must be turned off when unattended for the safety of the children and Center.
18. Bring items needed for your child to the Center. Replenish the items as needed.
19. Label personal items to help the staff keep track of your child's things.
20. Take bottles and/or soiled clothing home at the end of the day.
21. Pay tuition for the child care services as agreed.

Parent Code of Conduct

We seek to create an environment that promotes positive role-modeling for children. This responsibility lies with the parents just as much as it does with the staff. Parents will not be permitted on the premises and services may be terminated if they:

- Curse or use language that is considered inappropriate regardless of if there is a child present

- Become verbally or physically aggressive toward staff, children, or other parents
- Threaten any staff, students, or other parents.

Adult Conduct Expectations

“To Provide a Safe, Comfortable and Healthy Environment for Children and Adults” At My Place, our reputation for quality of service and integrity has been carefully built over many years of work with our community. We are recognized as much for our image as we are for our service. As a parent/visitor, we ask for your responsibility in making sure our sites are a safe, comfortable, and healthy environment for children and adults. Your conduct while at program sites, on property, or during program activities as well as representing the agency reflects My Place and may place an adult or child in danger. You should show consideration and respect for everyone with whom you have contact with. To support our mission the following list of expectations includes, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adults must follow center procedures and policies.
- Threatening, intimidating, harassing staff, volunteers, consultants, other parents/guardians, or children will not be tolerated.
- Physical or verbal punishment for a child will not be tolerated.
- Physical violence or displays of anger will not be tolerated.
- Swearing, arguing, shouting or verbal fighting will not be tolerated.
- Inappropriate or excessive displays of affection will not be tolerated.
- Theft or unapproved possession of program property, the property of staff, volunteers, consultants, or other parents/guardians and children will not be tolerated.
- Print or share online, or otherwise agency passwords or entry codes will not be tolerated.
- Using photos or videos from agency events/programming on social networking sites will not be tolerated.
- Discussing with others any confidential client and or agency information will not be tolerated.
- Using social media to bully, harass, or intimidate staff, volunteers, or consultants will not be tolerated.
- Possession or use of a weapon will not be tolerated.
- Possession or under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be tolerated.

We have a responsibility to all our families to provide a safe environment. Any situation that threatens anyone in the center will be reported to the authorities. Depending on the severity of the case, families will receive one written warning before they are dismissed from our program. If you feel this information is incorrect you may email a complaint to info@myplace-aplc.org. Tobacco Use and Third-Hand Smoke Policy: My Place maintains a tobacco-free and nicotine-free environment in accordance with New York State OCFS childcare regulations. Smoking, vaping, and the use of tobacco or nicotine products are prohibited on My Place premises at all times, including indoor areas, outdoor play spaces, entrances, exits, and parking areas. This applies to employees, volunteers, substitutes, parents/guardians, and visitors.

My Place also works to reduce children’s exposure to third-hand smoke, which is the residue left on clothing, hair, skin, and personal belongings after smoking or vaping. Staff must report to work free from strong smoke odor. Staff who smoke or vape outside of work, or during an approved break off premises, must take reasonable steps before returning to children, such as washing hands and changing clothing when necessary.

If a strong smoke odor is present, the program may require a staff member to change clothing before resuming contact with children. Failure to follow this policy may result in corrective action consistent with My Place personnel policies and OCFS health and safety requirements.

Tuition

Tuition is charged on a weekly basis (including when My Place is closed for holidays, staff training, unexpected closings, or weather closings). Fees are determined according to My Place's sliding fee scale and are given to families at the time of enrollment. Financial data must be provided annually to base tuition rates on a sliding fee scale. One week's tuition is required as a non-refundable deposit to secure your slot for care. We reserve the right to change tuition fees at any time with a minimum of six weeks' notice.

- Tuition is to be paid before the week begins
- Tuition can be paid on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis in advance
- Tuition will be accepted in cash, check, cashier's check, money order, or through an ACH payment to Chemung Canal via the ProCare app.
 - o Checks returned to the Center for insufficient funds will be assessed a \$40.00 service fee.
 - o A pattern of receiving bad checks may require that all future payments be made by the other means identified above.
- Tuition is based on enrollment, not attendance and is due in instances of absences, holidays, vacations, staff training, unexpected or weather closings.
- Payments overdue by 30 days will be assessed a late payment fee of 16% annually, 1.33% monthly.
- Childcare services will be discontinued for any payments 60 days or more overdue.
- If a financial problem arises, please contact the Program Director to work out a solution before payments are missed. My Place will make efforts to offer payment plans or other means to continue service.
- Part time parents only: If your child's classroom has the availability to offer to a make-up day for a center-related closing, we will make every effort to do so the week of the closure. We cannot make up days due to family vacations or illnesses.

Tuition Assistance

Tuition assistance may be available for families who are income eligible. For information on eligibility for subsidized child care assistance, contact the Department of Social Services in the county in which you reside. For more information: Chemung County: Chemung County Childcare Connection: (607) 737-5411 Steuben County: Child Care Aware: (607) 776-2126 Schuyler County: Department of Social Services (607) 535-8303 Yates County Department of Social Services (315)-536-5183 My Place Policy: Hours of Operation and Late Pickup Fees Hours of Operation:

- Operating Hours: My Place is open from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday.
- Early Arrival: Parents arriving before 7:00 AM will not be permitted entry into the building.
- Exit Requirement: All children and families must have exited the building by 5:30 PM.

Late Pickup Fees

- Late Pickup Fee Structure:
 - A fee of \$5.00 per child will be assessed for the first 5 minutes after 5:30 PM. □ An additional fee of \$1.00 per minute will apply for each minute beyond the initial 5 minutes.
- Fee Enforcement: Late pickup fees will be charged directly to the parent's account and are due upon receipt of the fee notice. Late fees will NOT be paid by Childcare Assistance Programs.

Unattended Child Protocol

- Emergency Contacts: If a child is not picked up by 5:30 PM, staff will begin

contacting those listed on the child's blue card.

- Timeframe for Contact: If we do not connect with anyone via phone or ProCare message by 5:45 PM, law enforcement will be called to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.

Repeated Violations

- If the late pickup policy is violated three times within a 6-month period, My Place reserves the right to terminate your child's enrollment.

Withdrawing from the Center

If a family decides to withdraw its child from the Center, a minimum of two weeks written notice is required. If a child is withdrawn without adequate notice, two weeks tuition beyond the date that we received notification will be required. Clients leaving the program owing money will be promptly turned over to a collection agency.

Programming

My Place provides an environment that nurtures social-emotional connections with staff and peers. We make health and safety in combination with playful learning our top priority throughout the day. Gross motor activity is incorporated in your child's routine every day. Each classroom participates in oral care, handwashing, and diaper changing or toileting. We utilize a curriculum that promotes literacy and developmentally appropriate practices. We partner with parents to make your child's experience at My Place a well-equipped launching pad for formal education in our school systems.

Gross Motor Development

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote the healthy development of gross motor development. We begin with infants by incorporating safe and supervised tummy time activities into daily routines. Tummy time helps strengthen muscles, prevent flat spots on the head (positional plagiocephaly), and encourage motor skill development. Additionally, all children in our care are provided with teacher-led and independent opportunities to move their bodies freely as part of our focus on healthy development.

Guidelines for Tummy Time

- **Supervision:** Tummy time will always be conducted under the direct supervision of a qualified caregiver or staff member.
- **Age-Appropriate Practices:** Tummy time will begin as early as possible, ideally from birth, for short durations (3-5 minutes) and gradually increase as the infant grows.
- **Frequency:** Infants will engage in tummy time several times per day, with a goal of reaching at least 30 minutes cumulatively by 3 months of age.
- **Safe Environment:** Tummy time will take place on a clean, flat, and firm surface, free from hazards. Soft bedding, pillows, or other suffocation risks will not be used.
- **Engagement:** Caregivers will interact with infants during tummy time using toys, mirrors, and verbal encouragement to make the activity engaging and enjoyable.
- **Alternative Positions:** If an infant shows discomfort, caregivers will modify the position (e.g., placing the infant on a caregiver's chest or across the lap) while maintaining supervision.
- **Movement Opportunities:** In addition to tummy time, all children in our care will have both teacher-led and independent opportunities to move their bodies freely throughout the day to support their physical development and overall well-being.

Review and Compliance

This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed to align with best practices and recommendations from pediatric health organizations. Caregivers and staff will

receive periodic training to ensure compliance and understanding of exercise to overall development and obesity prevention.

Implementing the Pyramid Model for Social-Emotional Development

At My Place, we are committed to supporting each child's social-emotional growth and well-being. To foster positive interactions, emotional regulation, and supportive relationships, we use the Pyramid Model, a framework for building social and emotional skills in young children. Here's what this means for your child: Overview of the Pyramid Model: The Pyramid Model is a research-based framework designed to promote social-emotional development, prevent challenging behaviors, and address issues if they arise. It has four levels of support:

- **Nurturing and Responsive Relationships** – At the foundation, we prioritize positive relationships with children, families, and staff. We believe in creating an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and supported.

- **High-Quality Supportive Environments** – Our classrooms are set up to encourage positive interactions and independence. We use visual aids, routine charts, and a “feelings board” to help children express their emotions and learn self-regulation.
- **Targeted Social-Emotional Supports** – Teachers at My Place provide guidance and specific instruction on social skills like sharing, taking turns, and managing big feelings. Our activities encourage children to understand and label their emotions, recognize emotions in others, and use words to express their needs.
- **Intensive Intervention** – For children needing extra support, we collaborate with families to develop personalized behavior support plans, ensuring each child’s needs are met in a way that respects their individuality.

Family Partnership and Involvement: We recognize that families play a vital role in supporting social-emotional development. To make the most of the Pyramid Model, we encourage family involvement through open communication, shared strategies, and resources that can reinforce these skills at home. We provide guidance and materials to help you understand and implement similar practices with your child in familiar environments. **Addressing Challenging Behaviors:** Our approach to managing challenging behaviors is proactive and compassionate. Instead of focusing on punishment, we focus on understanding the root of behaviors, setting clear expectations, and redirecting children gently. If challenging behaviors persist, we work with families to create individualized plans that offer extra support in a positive, consistent manner. **Benefits of the Pyramid Model:** The Pyramid Model provides children with the tools they need to build resilience, confidence, and empathy. By developing these skills, children learn to form friendships, resolve conflicts, and handle emotional challenges—a foundation for lifelong success. We are excited to partner with you in implementing the Pyramid Model, ensuring that every child at My Place receives the emotional and social support they need to thrive. We are committed to fostering a safe and nurturing environment where every child can thrive. We understand that all children are unique, and occasional challenging behaviors are a natural part of development. When behaviors arise that pose a risk to children, staff, or the overall environment, we take a collaborative approach to address them. Our team will work closely with families to identify strategies that can support the child in developing positive behaviors. This may include:

- Positive support plan with solutions that can be beneficial at home as well.
- Reducing time spent in the program.
- Transition to an alternate source of child care.

In some cases, we may find that center-based care does not align with a child's individual needs or comfort level. In these instances, we will partner with families to develop a thoughtful transition plan to a more suitable setting where the child can flourish. Our goal is always to work together with families to ensure the best possible outcome for each child, maintaining their well-being as our highest priority. **Screening Policy and Procedure** All children enrolled at My Place will be screened using the Ages and Stages (ASQ) developmental screening within 45 days of enrollment. This screening will assess key developmental milestones and help identify areas requiring additional support. Children will continue to be assessed on their birthday and half-birthday throughout their time at the center to track their progress and development. Additionally, children will be screened using the Ages and Stages Social Emotional Development (ASQ: SE) tool in both the spring and fall of each year to evaluate their social and emotional well-being.

Screening Process

- Screenings will be conducted by trained staff members and performed in the child’s native language.
- Results will be shared with families in a timely manner.
- Screening results will be utilized to set individual learning goals for each child.
- All screening data will be stored securely and confidentially in accordance with privacy policies.

Follow-up for Developmental Concerns

If a child continues to show low performance in a developmental area, the following steps will be taken:

- The concern will be discussed with the family in a supportive and informative manner.
 - Families will be provided with information on the early intervention process and resources for additional support.
 - My Place staff will collaborate with the family to explore appropriate interventions and ensure the child receives the necessary developmental support. This screening policy is designed to promote early identification and intervention, supporting each child's unique developmental journey at My Place.
- Outdoor Play, Weather Monitoring, and Local Outings: Per OCFS regulations, My Place provides supervised outdoor play daily except during inclement or unsafe weather. Children should arrive dressed for the weather. If a child is too ill to go outside, they are likely too ill to participate comfortably in the full program day.

Daily Weather Check Procedure

The opening supervisor checks the weather daily using the Weather Channel App and posts the date, current conditions, RealFeel temperature, advisories or alerts, and the outdoor play decision near the clock-in/out tablet. Decisions may be Outside, Shortened Outside Time, or Inside Only. The Program Director, Center Director, or Executive Director may adjust the decision at any time based on changing weather, air quality, advisories, staffing, child safety, or program needs.

Outdoor Play Temperature Guidelines

Children under 1 year old may go outside when the RealFeel temperature is 15°F-90°F. Outdoor time for infants should be shortened and closely monitored.

Children ages 1 and older may go outside when the RealFeel temperature is 10°F-95°F unless unsafe conditions or advisories are present. Staff must monitor children closely and provide weather-appropriate clothing, hydration, shade, sunscreen when authorized, and breaks as needed.

School-age children may be outside above 95°F RealFeel only when additional safety precautions are in place, such as sunscreen with parent/guardian authorization, shade, frequent water breaks, water play or another cooling activity, shortened outdoor time, and close monitoring for signs of overheating. If these precautions cannot be provided, children must remain indoors or participate in safe indoor gross motor activities.

Weather Advisory Guidelines

Outdoor play may be limited, shortened, or canceled during heat advisories or warnings, wind chill advisories or warnings, winter weather advisories or warnings, thunderstorms or lightning, heavy rain, hail, unsafe wind, poor air quality alerts, or any other condition that creates a health or safety risk. When thunder or lightning is present, children must come indoors immediately and remain indoors until conditions are safe.

My Place uses the Child Care Weather Watch chart as a guide. Green means outdoor play is permitted with regular monitoring. Yellow/Caution means outdoor play may occur with extra caution, shortened time, close observation, and added protections. Red/Danger means most children should not play outdoors, and indoor gross motor activities must be provided instead.

Staff monitor children for signs of being too hot or too cold, including fussiness, red or pale skin, shivering, sweating, lethargy, dizziness, or complaints of discomfort. Children have access to water during warm weather and after active play. Sunscreen is used according to written authorization and product directions. Shade is used whenever possible.

Indoor Gross Motor Alternative

When children cannot safely go outside, classrooms provide safe indoor gross motor activities such as music and movement, obstacle courses, yoga, dancing, movement games, or other active play that supports physical development.

Local Outings and Walking Trips

My Place includes outings to neighborhood locations such as the bank, lake, fire station, park, and library as part of our curriculum. These trips support language development, sensory-motor development, community awareness, and children's understanding of the world around them.

At enrollment, families are asked to sign a permission slip (blue card) for local walking trips. Children may not participate without a signed blue card. If permission is not granted, the child may stay behind as a guest in another classroom if space is available or may need to remain home if space is not available.

Meals at My Place

My Place prepares breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack for all children. Our menus are approved by a registered dietician and meet the USDA requirements

for a well-balanced diet. Meals are offered to children in a family-style setting. Children, who are old enough, practice serving themselves and passing food. Mealtimes are times when staff and children can sit together and have conversations about their day. Staff sit and eat with the children to model healthy eating habits and proper table manners. Menus are posted in each classroom and in our ProCare app. Please make sure you notify your child's teacher of any food allergies. Because of allergies, we do not provide any food containing nuts or nut oils, and we prohibit those foods from being brought into My Place. Parents of infants must discuss with their physician and complete appropriate paperwork reflecting your preferences for how feeding will be handled. If your child's doctor asks that the child begin solid foods before 6 months of age, the USDA requires that we have a written doctor's order on file.

Allergies

My Place is a Nut Free center, absolutely no outside food containing nuts should be brought into our building. All My Place staff are trained in preventing, identifying, and treating anaphylaxis. If your child does have any allergies, you will be required to fill out OCFS-6029 forms for an individual health care plan prior to your enrollment start date.

Outside Food and Beverage

Any outside food or beverage needs prior approval from a lead teacher before coming into the center. Breakfast is served at 9 AM, please do not arrive with food. Children who have a medical dietary restriction need to provide the center with documentation from their health care provider on the OCFS form provided. All food needs to be peanut-free. Children have unlimited access to water throughout the day. Parents are encouraged to provide a water bottle for their child's cubby. The center cannot use food/beverage as a form of discipline or reward. Although we make every effort to partner with families, we have found it difficult to accommodate outside food and beverage in the classroom. It often causes unnecessary conflict between parents/children/staff. Our menu provides a variety of healthy choices. If you bring food from home, your teacher will ask that your choices be comparable with our center menu.

Infant Feeding

All families will complete a feeding schedule which supports feeding on demand or staying on a designated schedule. Infant meals and snacks will be appropriate for the infant's individual nutrition requirements and developmental stage as determined by written instructions obtained from the child's family or primary health care provider. Center formula and jar food are also provided. Please check with the infant room teacher on specifics.

Breastfeeding

Our center is a recognized breastfeeding site and provides an atmosphere that welcomes breastfeeding families. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to visit and feed their child during the day. Our center has a private nursing room for those wishing to visit during the workday to breastfeed, pump, or bottle-feed. Each classroom has access to refrigeration to support a supply of breast milk at the center. Please let us know how to best support you in your breastfeeding needs.

Sleeping Arrangements

During the course of the day, opportunities for rest will be provided for all aged children. Parents will complete "Safe Sleeping Practices" at the time of enrollment, transition, or any time the need arises. This arrangement informs the parents of safe sleeping practices that our center will adhere to, sleeping supplies, and where in the center their child will be sleeping/resting. Children who do not sleep are able to quietly rest for 30 minutes in their supervised personal space and then are offered a quiet activity for play. No child is ever forced to sleep. Any child who arrives asleep will need to be woken up prior to the parent leaving the center. An infant arriving asleep in a car seat needs to be removed from the seat and handed to their teacher by the parent.

Evacuation Drills

Evacuation drills are conducted monthly. The time of drill is varied so that we have experience evacuating under all possible circumstances. All drills are unannounced. If you are ever at My Place during an evacuation drill, please stay

with your child and evacuate as directed by the classroom staff. This will eliminate confusion and ensure a safe evacuation. Twice per year we conduct shelter in place drills as required by OCFS. Parents will be notified in advance of these drills. These drills help us prepare for events that would prohibit us from leaving the center. Our emergency plan and evacuation diagrams are reviewed with parents and staff annually and at enrollment/new hire. In the event of full evacuation our primary meeting location is Watkins Glen Fire Station. Our secondary meeting location is Jefferson Village Apartments for the Center and Holy Cow on the corner of 15th and Decatur for our School Age Program at Watkins Glen Elementary School. Parents will be contacted by the Director or designated classroom staff if immediate pick-up is required. This communication will come through ProCare with a SMS push notification primarily, then phone call if no response is received.

Pets

We allow animals in the classrooms if they are in good health and are not dangerous nor pose any threat. They must be up to date on all recommended shots and have no evidence of disease. A record of immunizations must be made available. Pets can belong to the room or visiting. If the animal requires a license, a license must be provided. For classrooms to have a pet of their own or for an animal to visit, all parents must give written permission and not children or staff should have allergies to the animal. After permission has been granted, parents will be notified in advance with an estimated time that the animal visits. Animals should serve a purpose. This includes teaching the children how to respect animals, the proper way to interact with animals, that pets are not toys and have feelings, and to always ask a pet owner before approaching an animal. Reptiles and amphibians are not permitted at child care centers per OCFS regulations.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

At drop-off, parents/guardians must sign their child into ProCare after the child has been safely transferred to My Place staff. Families should alert staff when they arrive and share any updates that may affect the child's day.

At pick-up, parents/guardians or authorized pick-up people must sign the child out in ProCare once the child has been released back into their care. Children will only be released to individuals listed as authorized pick-up people or to individuals authorized in writing by the parent/guardian. Photo identification may be required. In custody situations, My Place must have a copy of current court-ordered custody documentation on file.

Families are welcome to enter the classroom during drop-off and pick-up to support a calm transition. For safety, families must knock and wait for a teacher to greet them before entering. This allows staff to maintain awareness of who is entering the room and continue supervising all children.

If a parent/guardian or authorized pick-up person remains in the classroom for more than 15 minutes, they must sign in as a visitor according to My Place visitor procedures.

Parents/guardians and authorized pick-up people are responsible for supervising their child and any accompanying siblings during drop-off and pick-up. Children and siblings must stay with the adult at all times and may not run ahead into classrooms, hallways, or the parking lot.

Our goal is a safe, welcoming, and respectful transition where children feel secure, families feel included, and staff can maintain supervision and awareness.

Accidents, Injuries, and Incident Reporting

Bumps and bruises can be part of childhood. My Place works to reduce risk through active supervision, safe environments, and developmentally appropriate activities.

When an accident, injury, bite, elopement, or incident requiring first aid or parent notification occurs, staff first care for the child, provide first aid as needed, and notify the parent/guardian according to the situation. Staff then complete clear, accurate, confidential documentation.

Incident reports are completed for the injured child. For biting incidents, reports are completed for both the child who was bitten and the child who bit. Ongoing behavior concerns or patterns without injury are not documented on injury-based incident reports. Those concerns may be tracked through Behavior Incident Reports (BIRS) after a family meeting and used to support behavior planning.

Incident reports must be factual, objective, detailed, and completed the same day. Reports include the time and location, what happened, the injury type, the size and location of the injury, first aid provided and by whom, witnesses, follow-up actions, and the time and method of parent notification. To protect confidentiality, staff do not name other children in reports. Staff use language such as “another child,” “a peer,” or “a friend.”

Parents/guardians are notified immediately for head injuries, bites, facial injuries, injuries requiring medical follow-up, and any serious or concerning incident. For serious injuries, staff notify the Supervisor/NIC and Program Director and complete both the standard incident report and serious injury report. Serious injury documentation includes treatment provided, monitoring, medical follow-up, and required signatures.

A clear photo will be taken of visible head injuries or injuries involving blood or broken skin. Photos may be shared with the family through ProCare and with Directors through Teams for accuracy, family communication, and compliance documentation. Visible injuries are also documented in the same-day health check and on follow-up days if the injury remains visible.

Staff complete a safety reflection that notes what contributed to the incident, where staff were positioned, and what may help prevent a similar incident. This reflection is safety-focused and not blame-based. Leadership reviews incident documentation for patterns, supervision needs, environmental changes, and licensing requirements. Some incidents must be reported to OCFS licensing, and families may receive follow-up from licensing depending on the incident.

Child's Behavior

While some incidents are considered developmentally appropriate for the child's age, repeated incidents such as physical aggression against children and/or staff, willful destruction of property, spitting, kicking, hitting, biting, punching, and

running away from staff put children and staff safety at risk. In the event that a child's behavior is ongoing, excessive, or causing harm to themselves or others a behavior plan will be set up between the parents and staff. A behavior plan includes a parent/teacher conference, documented incidents of child's behavior, next steps for classroom safety, family support and follow up intervention.

In managing disruptive behavior one or more of the following techniques may be utilized: redirecting the child's attention to another activity, examination of the classroom for environmental adjustments, addressing child's needs for rest, food, emotional or physical care, and providing the child with a supervised quiet area in the classroom where they can calm down or rest. Corporal punishment is not allowed under any circumstances. Physical intervention is permitted, which includes the act of using bodily contact as a short-term immediate response to prevent children from injuring themselves or others. This can include picking up child and moving them away from danger or conflict, holding the child's hands or gently touching the body to direct their movement, rocking a child to soothe them, and blocking a child's path when they are about to injure themselves or destroy property. Occasionally a child will need to be removed from the classroom so as not to disrupt the classroom and spend some one-on-one time with a teacher or administrator. This would be reported in ProCare and only used when other methods have failed.

Medications

If a child becomes ill and needs medication, it is the responsibility of the parent to come and administer it. A relative administering medication to the child must be at least 18 years of age. Medication cannot be stored at My Place and will need to be brought in for each use by the parent. All My Place staff can administer over the counter non-medicated items such as lotions, sunscreen, triple antibiotic ointment, diaper rash cream, and lip balm, all over the counter medication needs to be labeled with the child's full name and requires written parent permission. Please see classroom teacher for this non- medication consent form. No medication should be stored in a diaper bag or backpack for transportation between caregivers. If you need to transport medication, please speak to the director.

Health Care and Sick Children

Any child with any of the following must be excluded from the Center:

- A suspected or diagnosed communicable disease as defined by the New

York State Department of Health until evaluated and approved for inclusion by a health care provider to participate in the program.

- A fever is defined as the following by the American Academy of Pediatrics

as: o Ear or Temporal Artery (TA) temperature: 100.4 F° (38.0° C) or higher o Oral or Pacifier temperature: 100° F (37.8° C) or higher o Under the arm (Axillary or Armpit) temperature: 99° F (37.2° C) or higher o Limitation: Ear (Tympanic Membrane) temperatures are not reliable before 6 months of age

- A child six months or older with a fever which is accompanied by a behavior change, stiff neck, rash, unusual irritability, poor feeding, vomiting or excessive crying

- Head lice: The Center has a “Nit Free” policy. This means that a child cannot return until they are completely free of all nits

- Less than four months of age – forceful vomiting more than once
- Neck pain when the child’s head is moved or touched
- A stiff neck or severe headache and looking extremely sick
- A seizure for the first time
- Vomiting not associated with crying/coughing/gag
- Acting unusually confused
- Unequal pupils (black centers of the eyes)
- A blood-red or purple rash made up of pinhead-sized spots or bruises that are not associated with injury

- A rash of hives or welts that appears and spreads quickly
- Breathing so fast or hard that the child cannot play, talk, cry or drink
- A severe stomachache that causes the child to double up and scream
- A stomachache without vomiting or diarrhea after a recent injury, blow to the abdomen or hard fall

- Stools that are black or have blood mixed through them
- Stools that cannot be contained by a diaper or pull up
- Not urinating at least once in 8 hours, dry mouth, no tears, or sunken eyes
- Continuous clear drainage from the nose after a hard blow to the head
- Open blisters caused by Hand, Foot, and Mouth virus
- Not able to participate in daily routines

Children may return to care under the following conditions:

- Are symptom free and fever free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours and can participate in regular classroom activities. OR

- With a note from a licensed health care provider giving permission to return to care

Children can return 24 hours after they have begun medication if diagnosed with:

- Conjunctivitis
- Impetigo
- Scabies
- Ringworm
- Strep Throat

Pest Policies and Procedures

This policy helps My Place respond to pests or possible pest exposure, including fleas, lice, scabies, and bed bugs. The presence of pests is not a sign of poor hygiene and will be handled respectfully and confidentially.

Our goals are to protect the health of children and staff, reduce the risk of transmission, and prevent interruptions to program operations.

Arrival and Daily Health Checks: As part of daily health checks, staff observe children for signs of pests, bites, or other health concerns. Families should knock on the classroom door at arrival and wait for a staff member before entering.

Confidentiality: Pest concerns are handled discreetly. Children's names are not used in center-wide communication, and children will not be treated in an exclusionary or identifying manner.

Repeated or Unresolved Cases: If an infestation is not treated effectively, My Place may require the child to remain out of care until the family provides documentation of treatment, a doctor's note, or evidence of extermination when appropriate. If a child has repeated pest infestations more than twice in one month, the leadership team may consider termination of care. This decision will be communicated by the Executive Director verbally and in writing.

Scabies:

Scabies are small mites that live on humans and can cause itching, often worse at night. If scabies is suspected, staff will notify the Director, discreetly separate the child and belongings, notify the family, and arrange pick-up. Clothing and bedding must be laundered in hot water or sealed in plastic bags for four days. The child may return the day after treatment is given as outlined by a licensed healthcare professional.

Lice:

Lice live in human hair and spread through close contact. If nits are present, the child must be picked up from care. If no nits are present, the child may remain in care. The child may return after treatment when the scalp is nit-free.

Bed Bugs:

Bed bugs are not transmitted person-to-person and do not jump or fly. If bed bugs or bites are suspected, staff will notify the Director, discreetly separate the child and belongings, place affected belongings in sealed plastic bags, provide clean clothing when available, and notify the family. Children are not excluded solely because of bed bug bites or live bugs. For 24 hours after discovery, the child may be redirected away from dress-up clothing, headgear, blankets, or stuffed animals.

Fleas:

Fleas are generally transmitted from animals to surfaces and then to people. If fleas are suspected, staff will notify the Director, discreetly separate affected belongings in a sealed plastic bag, provide clean clothing when available, notify the family, and clean the classroom using usual protocols with extra attention to rugs, cots, and other fabric surfaces. Children are not excluded for fleas except in repeated cases as described above.

Family Partnership Policy

Purpose

At My Place, we believe that strong partnerships with families are essential to supporting children's growth and development. We are committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where families have access to valuable resources, guidance, and community connections.

Scope

This policy applies to all families, staff, and leadership team members at My Place.

Commitment to Family Partnerships

- **Community Resources:** Our lobby features a display of community resources, providing families with access to local programs, support services, and seasonal family-friendly events.
- **Personalized Assistance:** Our leadership team is available to help families find specific information or services that meet their unique needs.
- **Open Communication:** We encourage ongoing dialogue between families and staff to support children's development and well-being.
- **Engagement Opportunities:** We provide opportunities for families to participate in events, workshops, and activities that strengthen family connections and enhance the child care experience.
- **Responsive Support:** As family needs evolve, we remain dedicated to adapting our support and providing relevant resources.

Review and Compliance

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to reflect our commitment to family partnerships and meets the needs of our community. For any questions or assistance, please contact the leadership team at My Place. Additional guidance will be provided as needed during times of national health crisis. This information will be published on our website www.myplace-aplc.org and emailed to families.

Parent Handbook Acknowledgment

I/we, the undersigned, agree to enroll my/our child, _____, at My Place. I/we understand that My Place assumes responsibility for my/our child's well-being during the hours they are in care and that Center staff will make every effort to reach me/us should any accident or illness arise.

I/we acknowledge that the Parent Handbook is available at www.myplace-aplc.org. My/Our signature(s) indicate that I/we understand and agree to follow the policies described in the Handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Noel Wheaton, Center Program Director: _____ **Date:** _____

Photo Permission

I/WE grant permission for my child to have his/her photograph taken if the photographer is approved by the director. Photos may be used in center-related promotional materials and social media posts.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Photo permission: YES _____ NO _____

If NO, do you grant the classroom teacher permission to use photos for class projects displayed only within the center?
YES _____ NO _____

I/WE grant permission for center staff to email me/us at the following address:

Email Address: _____