



# Parent Handbook

Child Care Center Program

Revised March 2021

**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 childcare 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.

**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

**Who We Serve:**

My Place serves approximately 60 children, from six weeks to twelve 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:**

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207 E 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Watkins Glen, New York 14891  
(607) 535-8908

Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM

Monday through Friday 7:00 AM – 5:30 PM (see below for extended care options)

**Holidays My Place will be closed on:**

Good Friday (Closed for cleaning)  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving Holiday (Thursday and Friday)  
Christmas Holiday (Eve and Day)  
New Year's (Day)  
Staff Development Day (3 per year)

**Weather-related closing or delay:**

In the event of a closing or delay we will communicate through ProCare app, email and My Place Facebook page.

**Please 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.**

**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 care on the limited basis of availability and does not guarantee continued part time enrollment. 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 as a whole. During the tour, families will view the classroom and be given information about our daily operations.

In order 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 that states that the child is healthy enough to attend the program.



Once enrollment forms are received and there is an appropriate opening in a classroom, families will be contacted by the 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 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.

### **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 1: 6 children
- Waddler/Continuity of Care: 12 children
- Toddler: 12 children
- Pre-school: 18 children
- School-age: 15 Children

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

- Infant- 18 months -1 staff : 4 children
- 18 months- 36 months – 1 staff: 5 children
- 3-4 year olds – 1 staff: 7 children
- Over 5- 1 staff: 10 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 schooling in Early Childhood. We require that our Lead Teachers have at minimum either an Associate's Degree or Child Development Credentials. For our Assistants, we require at least a High School Diploma and prefer additional course work or experience working with children.

### Tuition:

Tuition is charged on a weekly basis (including when My Place is closed for holidays, staff trainings, 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 in 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
- Tuition will be accepted in cash, check, cashier's check, money order, electronic deposit via Chemung Canal Trust Company or online via [www.myprocare.com](http://www.myprocare.com).
  - Checks returned to the Center for insufficient funds will be assessed a \$40.00 service fee.
  - 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 trainings, unexpected or weather closings.
- Payments overdue by 30 days will be assessed a late payment fee of 16% annually, 1.33% monthly.
- Child care services will be discontinued for any payments 60 days or more overdue.
- If a financial problem arises, please see the Assistant 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.

**Procure Software:** My Place utilizes Procure Software for tracking billing, attendance and immunization records. Parents are encouraged to utilize the online account access and payment option via [www.myprocure.com](http://www.myprocure.com). To access the Procure 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.

#### **Tuition Assistance:**

Tuition assistance may be available for families who are income eligible. For information on eligibility for subsidized childcare 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

#### **Extended Care and Late Fees:**

Parents who arrive late after 5:30pm for regular program will be assessed a late fee. This fee will be \$5.00 per child for the first 5 minutes and \$1.00 every minute after.

#### **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.



### **Confidentiality of Records:**

All information pertaining to 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.

### **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](https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/daycare_regulations.asp)

### **Evacuation Drills:**

Evacuation drills are conducted on a monthly basis. 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, 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 evacuation our primary meeting location is Jefferson Village Apartments. Our secondary meeting location is Watkins Glen Fire Station. Parents will be contacted by the Director or designated classroom staff if immediate pick-up is required. This communication will come through ProCare and email primarily, then phone call if no response is received.

### **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 kindergarten.

### **Outings and Outdoor Play:**

Per OCFS regulations, the Center is required to provide periods of supervised outdoor play for all children daily except during inclement weather. Children need to be dressed accordingly. Please understand that if a child is too ill to go outside, he/she is probably not well enough to be at the Center and would be more comfortable at home. Only in the event of inclement weather do we omit this essential element of our daily routine.

The program follows linked guidelines which define excessive heat and cold for children in care.

<https://www.ok.gov/health2/documents/weatherwatchforchildren2.pdf>

Staff are trained to use good judgment in evaluating how long to have children out in hot or cold weather. Staff pays close attention to children's skin tone, activity level and body language. To protect children from the sun's direct rays, scheduled time outside may vary to early morning or late afternoon.

The Center is proud to include outings to the bank, waterfalls, library and other neighborhood establishments as part of our curriculum. These everyday trips for children are much like the one they take with their families. Being in the community fosters language development, expands sensory motor development, helps children become familiarized with different people and activities, and helps them to patch together an understanding of how the world around them functions and how they are a part of it.

At time of enrollment, you are asked to sign a permission slip (blue card) for these local walking trips. Your child will not be able to participate without a signed blue card. If permission is not granted, your child will need to stay behind as a guest in another classroom if space is available or be kept 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. Meal times are times when staff and children can sit together and have conversations about their day. Staff sits and eats with the children to model healthy eating habits and proper table manners.

Menus are posted in each classroom. 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.

### **Outside Food and Beverage**

Any outside food or beverage needs prior approval from a lead teacher before coming into the center. Children whom have a medical dietary restriction need to provide the center with documentation from their health care provider. 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 are bringing in food from home, your teacher will ask that your choices be comparable with our center menu.

### **Infant Feeding:**

Our center provides an atmosphere that welcomes breastfeeding families. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to visit and feed their child during the day. Each classroom has access to refrigeration to support a supply of breast milk at the center. Parents will complete a feeding schedule which supports feeding on demand or staying on a designated schedule. Please let us know how to best support you in your breast feeding needs. Center formula and jar food is also provided. Please check with the infant room teacher on specifics.

### **Sleeping Arrangements:**

During the course of the day, opportunities for rest will be provided for all aged children. Parents will complete a "Safe Sleeping Practices" at time of enrollment, transition, or any time the need arises. This arrangement informs the parent of sleeping supplies and where in the center their child will be sleeping/resting.

Children whom 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.

An infant arriving asleep to the center in a car seat needs to be removed from the seat and handed to their teacher by the parent.

#### **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. In order 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 each time an 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:**

When dropping off your child at the beginning of their day, it is the parent's responsibility to make sure that their child is signed into the program. During drop off it is expected that parents will alert staff to their arrival and any changes to the normal routine the child may be experiencing.

Parents can authorize others to pick up their child. This authorization must be made in writing. The Center will not release children to persons not authorized for pick up. It is expected that individuals authorized to pick up children will show valid identification prior to being allowed to take children from the Center. In cases of custodial disputes, the Center must have a copy of any paper work that outlines court ordered custody agreements.



It is your responsibility to supervise your child when you are dropping off or picking up. In order to avoid children becoming lost or injured please be sure that your child and his or her siblings stay with you at all times and that they do not run ahead into another part of the building or into the parking lot unattended.

### **Parent and Staff Communication:**

In order to maintain our partnership with parents, we encourage open communication with parents on a daily basis. Information is recorded in ProCare that details what the child ate, how long they slept, and the activities that they participated in throughout their day. You can also message staff in the app to share information during the day.

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. Conferences can also be set up at any time if 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 a two weeks' notice in writing of staffing changes.

### **Parent Code of Conduct:**

We seek to create an environment at the Center that promotes positive role-modeling for the 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 if there is a child present
- Become verbally or physically aggressive toward staff, children, or other parents
- Threaten any staff, student or other parent

We have a responsibility to all of our families to provide a safe environment. Any situation that threatens anyone in the center will be reported to the authorities.

### **Accidents and Injuries:**

Bumps and bruises are a big part of childhood. In our Center, our first line of defense against accidents and injuries is staff supervision. We structure our days to offer developmentally appropriate activities that allow the children to build new skills in an environment that minimizes the risks of accidents.

Unfortunately, despite all the effort we put forth, accidents and injuries will more than likely occur. Our procedure for responding to accidents and injuries is to first, provide first-aid and care to the injured child. Secondly, parents will be notified by a staff person who witnessed the incident. A report will be written by the staff member before the parent arrives for pick up, further detailing the accident along with what happened leading up to the event, what staff were doing at the time, and any changes in environment that can be made to hopefully prevent the same thing from happening again. Parents will be asked to review the report and offer any comments or suggestions for staff. This report will be turned into the Director and monitored along with others, for specific patterns that can be fixed and avoided.

### **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, 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 supports 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.

### **Medications:**

The My Place staff is not trained to administer medication to children. 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.



My Place staff are able to administer over non-medicated items such as lotions, sunscreen, triple antibiotic ointment, diaper rash cream, and lip balm. All of over the counter medication needs to be labeled with the child full name and requires written parent permission. Please see classroom teacher for this nonmedication consent form.

### **Health Care and Sick Children:**

Any child who has 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:
  - Ear or Temporal Artery (TA) temperature: 100.4 F° (38.0° C) or higher
  - Oral or Pacifier temperature: 100° F (37.8° C) or higher
  - Under the arm (Axillary or Armpit) temperature: 99° F (37.2° C) or higher
  - 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 very 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

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 care

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

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](http://www.myplace-aplc.org) and emailed to families.