



School Age Child Care

Family Handbook

Revised August 2023

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.

Educational Philosophy:

We believe each and every child has the potential to bring something unique and special to the world. We provide quality early childhood experiences to help develop and foster children's potential by believing in them as capable individuals. We assist children in discovering who they are, so they can express their own opinions, nurture their own ideas and develop a life-long love of learning. We are particularly committed to engaging children in learning through play to embrace the natural joy of childhood. We acknowledge that all children grow and develop at different rates and respond uniquely to different types of learning experiences. Together, staff and families agree to honor our center as an equitable environment where people learn to respect, accept, and embrace the differences between us, as the core of what makes the future we are shaping so fascinating.

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 100 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:

2 PM – 6 PM Monday through Friday, 7 AM – 6 PM Summer and School Breaks

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 [Office of Children and Family Services | Home | Office of Children and Family Services \(ny.gov\)](#) Electronic access to the regulations can be found at [414-SACC.pdf \(ny.gov\)](#)

Holidays My Place will be closed to families the following days so staff can attend professional development trainings and enjoy time to themselves and with family to celebrate holidays.

Martin Luther King Day
Good Friday (Closed for cleaning)
Memorial Day
Juneteenth
Independence Day
Labor Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving Holiday (Thursday and Friday)
Christmas Holiday (Eve and Day)
New Year's (Day)

Weather-related closing or delay:

We make every effort to keep our after-school program open to provide consistency for families, and especially children. On rare occasions winter

weather is so severe that travel is unsafe for our staff and families, or in the event that a state of emergency is declared, and travel is prohibited, we will close the after-school program for the day. This decision is not taken lightly and will be made prior to 6:30 am.

In other rare instances, if school is canceled due to inclement weather, we are closed. If school is closed early, there will be no after school care. If after school activities are canceled, we would make the decision to hold the program based on if a State of Emergency has been issued or not. All of this will be communicated on Procure and also sent as an SMS Alert via text message to the phone numbers listed as primary contacts in Procure. A post will also be put on our My Place Facebook page.

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 program to allow families to get an idea of what to expect. During the tour, families will view the cafeteria/ or 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 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 opening in a classroom, families will be contacted by a director and a day will be determined for care to start. 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 childcare 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.

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.

Capacity:

- School-age located at Watkins Glen Elementary School: 60 children maximum

Each group is also staffed in accordance to state licensing mandates. The minimum ratios that the SACC program adheres to are:

- Children enrolled in Elementary School
 - 1 staff: 7 children for 3-year-olds, Max Group 18
 - 1 staff: 8 children for 4-year-olds, Max Group 18
 - 1 staff: 10 children for K+, Max Group 20

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.

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

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 Procure app. 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 via the email you provide.

Daily Communication:

Program staff uses Procure 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 administration. 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 center communication. If you have questions or concerns please contact a member of the leadership team.

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. At times there may be a delay in documenting activities or returning messages as direct supervision and engagement of children will always take priority.

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. 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 of staffing changes.

Parent Responsibilities:

1. Complete and keep current all required enrollment documentation and requirements.

- 2. Keep the program 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.**
- 3. Inform the staff of any concerns or changes regarding your child since your child was last at the Center.**
- 4. Notify the Center if your child currently has, or has been exposed to, a contagious illness. Follow all initiatives put in place during a public health crisis as stated in our Pandemic Response Plan.**
- 6. 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 in a timely manner.**
- 7. Provide any specific or special instructions for the day in writing or through Procure and give them to the staff who is in charge of your child.**
- 8. 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, listed as a authorized pick up person for your child in Procure, and ensure that the person has a valid photo identification. If the child in program is over 5 years old, per our OCFS Licensor, we may allow the child to identify the person picking up in addition to the parent sending written permission, or a Procure message.**
- 9. Please have photograph identification available, as you and others may be asked to present it at 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.**
- 10. Practice caution while in the parking lot. Drive slowly and cautiously when entering/exiting the lot. Have children remain with you at all times. For the safety of your children, please do not leave any children unattended in the car. NYS law prohibits children being left alone in a car without adult supervision.**
- 11. Vehicles must be turned off when unattended for the safety of the children and Center.**
- 12. Bring items needed for your child to the Center. Replenish the items as needed.**
- 13. Label personal items to help the staff keep track of your child's things.**
- 14. Take bottles and/or soiled clothing home at the end of the day.**

15. Pay tuition for the childcare services as agreed.

Adult Conduct Expectations

"To Provide A Safe, Comfortable And Healthy Environment For Children And Adults"

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. To support our mission the following list of expectations, include, 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 of 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.
- Use 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.

Tuition:

Tuition is charged on a weekly OR monthly basis according to your child's enrollment agreement not attendance. 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/month 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 Procure app.
 - 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 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 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 school-related closing, we will make every effort to do so the week of the closure.

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:

*****Hours of operation and late fees:

My Place does not offer extended care. Our program is open from 2:15-6:00 pm. Parents who arrive late, after 6:00 pm, 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. If this policy is violated three times within 6 months, My Place has the right to terminate your enrollment.

Withdrawing from the School Age Program:

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:

We provide care, enrichment activities and academic support for School-Age students when school is not in session. We prioritize Social and Emotional Learning, Healthy Physical Activities, Healthy Snacks and Academic Support in a playful environment. 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.

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 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 Public Library . Our secondary meeting location is Holy Cow market on 15th Street and Franklin Street. 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.

Outings and Outdoor Play:

Per OCFS regulations, the SACC Program 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 program 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.

[Child Care Weather Watch \(c-uphd.org\)](http://c-uphd.org)

Staff are trained to use good judgment in evaluating how long to have children out in hot or cold weather. Staff pay 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.

The program is proud to include outings to the lake, fire station, park, 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 after school program provides afternoon snack for all children. Our menus are approved by a registered dietician and meet the USDA requirements for a well-balanced diet. 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 the cafeteria and in our ProCare app. Please make sure you notify your child's teacher of any food allergies. For all allergies, we will have you complete an individual allergy plan.

On full program days, we provide the children with a nutritious breakfast, in addition to an afternoon snack. We ask that your child packs lunch on full days. We will have extra lunch supplies on hand if your child doesn't pack one or needs one.

Outside Food and Beverage

Children who have a medical dietary restriction need to provide the center with documentation from their health care provider on the OCFS for provided.

Children have unlimited access to water throughout the day. Parents are encouraged to provide a water bottle for their child's backpack. 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 in food from home, your teacher will ask that your choices be comparable with our center menu. We will also encourage children not to share their food from home, due to allergies and other dietary restrictions.

Drop off and Pick Up Procedures:

For students enrolled at Watkins Glen Elementary School: At the end of the school day, children will be dismissed to the auditorium. My Place staff will sign children into the program on the Procure app and assume supervision of the child.

For students enrolled in another school: Parents are responsible to transport their child to program and sign them in to care using the Procure app.

On full days, 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 and done so by our ProCare app. 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.

When picking up, it is the parent's responsibility to make sure that their child is signed out of the program and so by our ProCare app. Parents can authorize others to pick up their child. This authorization must be made in writing. The program cannot release children to persons not authorized for pick up. It is expected that individuals authorized to pick up children will show valid photo identification prior to being allowed to take children from the program. Children over 5 years old can identify people to be released to, with parental consent in writing. In cases of custodial disputes, the program must have a copy of any paperwork that outlines court ordered custody agreements.

It is your responsibility to supervise your child when you are dropping off or picking up. 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.

Accidents and Injuries:

Bumps and bruises are a big part of childhood. In our program, 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 input into Procure 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 program 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 physically guiding 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:

Some My Place staff has been trained to administer medication to children as prescribed by a physician. If a child becomes ill and needs medication, it is the responsibility of the parent to come and administer it. Please refer to our health care plan for further information.

All My Place staff are able to administer over the counter, 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's 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
 - Under the arm (Axillary or Armpit) temperature: 99° F (37.2° C) or higher
- 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
- 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
- Multiple episodes of unexplained diarrhea
- 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 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 he/she is in care and that Center staff will make every effort to reach me/us should any accident or illness arise.

I acknowledge that I/we can access the Parent Handbook at www.myplace-aplc.com. My/Our signature(s) constitutes my/our understanding of and agreement to abide by the policies described in the Handbook.

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Noel Wheaton, Assistant 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. Use of the photo could be used in center related promotional materials and social media posts.

Child's Name: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

YES _____ NO _____

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