

2025-2026

Parent Handbook



The White Barn Children's Centre



(860) 315-7619

8 Robbins Rd, Thompson CT

thewhitebarncc.com



Dear Families,

Welcome to The White Barn Children’s Centre! We’re thrilled to have you and your child join our community for the upcoming school year. At The White Barn, your child will engage in rich, play-based experiences designed to spark curiosity and foster development across all areas—social, emotional, physical, and cognitive.

Through discovery, sensory exploration, movement, creative expression, and friendships, your child will thrive. What makes our Centre unique is the way we use the natural world as an essential part of every day. Nature is more than our setting—it is our co-teacher. Please take some time to carefully read through the Parent Handbook, which outlines important information about our program, policies, and daily routines. Keeping this guide accessible will help you feel prepared and connected as the school year unfolds.

Throughout the year, we’ll share updates and newsletters, and we ask that you read them so you don’t miss important information. Also, please let us know right away if your contact or emergency information changes so we can keep our records up to date.

We’re looking forward to a year full of joyful learning and meaningful connections. Thank you for trusting us with your child and for sharing your family with our White Barn community. If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please don’t hesitate to reach out.

Warmly,

Danielle Wallace

Director

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Mission & Educational Philosophy





Mission Statement

At the White Barn, we provide children ages 3 to 5 with high-quality, nature-inspired education rooted in the Reggio Emilia approach. Each day invites joyful, hands-on exploration in diverse outdoor settings—forests, sand areas, grassy fields, and climbing spaces—where children are free to wonder, discover, and create. Nature is both our classroom and our teacher, guiding learning through seasonal rhythms, emerging curiosities, and the ever-changing beauty of the world around us.

We believe in nurturing the whole child—mind, body, and spirit—through meaningful experiences that foster resilience, social connection, mindfulness, and environmental care. **Our mission is to inspire a lifelong love for learning and nature, helping each child grow with confidence, empathy, and a deep sense of belonging to the earth and their community.**

Educational Philosophy

We believe children are capable, curious, and full of potential. Guided by the Reggio Emilia philosophy, we see the child as an active participant in their own learning, with nature serving as both inspiration and teacher. Learning unfolds organically through play, inquiry, and meaningful experiences rooted in the rhythms of the natural world.

Our educators act as co-learners and observers, designing emergent curriculum that reflects each child's interests, developmental needs, and the seasonal wonders around us.

We view our outdoor environment as a living classroom—ever-changing and rich with opportunities to explore, reflect, and grow. Whether climbing over rocks, noticing a trail of ants, or gathering leaves in the wind, children engage in learning that fosters creativity, collaboration, and a sense of connection to the land.

Our philosophy honors the whole child, nurturing their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development through hands-on, relationship-based experiences that cultivate wonder, empathy, and stewardship.





Financial Policy, Tuition & Fees



Financial Policy

The White Barn is committed to providing high-quality early childhood education and care. By enrolling your child, you agree to the financial terms outlined in this policy. Tuition is charged weekly and is due regardless of your child's attendance. This includes payment during holidays, illness-related absences, scheduled closures, family vacations, and emergency weather or utility closings.

We reserve the right to review and adjust tuition annually. Tuition increases are necessary to keep up with rising costs such as supplies, rent, insurance, utilities, and to maintain the safe, nurturing, and enriching environment we provide for your children. In addition to covering teacher wages, tuition supports the care and upkeep of our building and grounds, the purchase of new curriculum materials and classroom enhancements, and our continued efforts to improve the learning experience for every child in our care. We believe that a reliable, nurturing, and well-supported teacher is at the heart of every great classroom. Our ability to attract and retain such educators is directly tied to the strength of our financial partnership with families.

Families receiving Care 4 Kids are responsible for paying tuition until their certificate is approved. If Care 4 Kids does not cover the full cost of tuition, the family is responsible for paying the remaining balance. All Care 4 Kids paperwork must be completed and submitted by the guardian. Re-determination paperwork must be submitted a minimum of 30 days before the due date. Families receiving Care for Kids assistance will receive monthly tuition invoices rather than weekly for any amount remaining.

Repeated late payments will not be tolerated. The Director reserves the right to deny entrance to the program if funds are outstanding and no reasonable effort has been made to rectify the balance owed.

We appreciate your understanding and partnership in helping us maintain a sustainable program that values both the children we serve and the people who care for them. Please reach out to the Center Director with any questions about tuition, payment schedules, or financial assistance.

Procure Billing

All tuition payments are processed through Procure, our childcare billing and classroom management system. Auto billing is required for all families and is set to draw payment every Tuesday, on the invoiced due date (As of 5/1/2025 we are no longer offering monthly payments for new families. Current families who pay monthly are grandfathered in and may continue to pay monthly if they so choose).

Parents must enter their ACH account information into the Procure system prior to the first day of their child's attendance. It is the family's responsibility to ensure that billing information is accurate and up to date. Any issues with billing or account setup should be brought to the attention of the Center Director before your child begins care.

Tuition Payments

Full tuition is expected during all closures, including holidays, professional development days, winter break, and weather or emergency-related closures. Tuition will not be refunded for daily absences, holidays, professional development days, winter break or inclement weather closures.

Tuition Rates (Per Child) effective 3/1/25

Days of Care	Weekly Tuition (drawn on Tuesday)
5 DAYS	\$295
3 DAYS	\$220
2 DAYS	\$175

Families with more than one child will receive a 10% discount on the second child's tuition.

Fees

Annual Supply & Registration	\$100*
Bounced Payment Fee	\$10
Late Payment Fee	\$25**
Late Pick Up Fee	\$25 (for the first 15 minutes, \$2 per minute thereafter)

*Annual Supply & Registration Fee is drawn on August 1st for current families, and upon enrollment for new families (August 1st thereafter). If the first Supply & Registration Fee is paid upon enrollment in June or July, the August 1st fee will be fulfilled for that calendar year.

Tuition Schedule 2026-2027

New tuition rates will take effect on September 1, 2026. Families will be notified of any changes no later than June 1, 2026. Historically, tuition increases between 3-6% annually to account for rising operating costs.

Care 4 Kids

The White Barn accepts Care 4 Kids, a state-funded program that helps eligible Connecticut families afford quality childcare.

Important Notes for Families:

- **It is the guardian's responsibility to complete** and manage all Care 4 Kids paperwork.
- **Redetermination forms must be submitted** at least **30 days before the due date** to avoid disruption in coverage.
- **Parents are responsible for paying tuition** until Care 4 Kids approval is in place.
- **Parents must cover any balance** not paid by Care 4 Kids.

What is Care 4 Kids?

Care 4 Kids is a partnership between the State of Connecticut, families, and licensed childcare providers that helps cover a portion of childcare costs for eligible families.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Families must: Live in Connecticut
- Be employed or enrolled in an approved training/education program
- Meet income guidelines based on family size
- Children must: Live in Connecticut
- Be under age 13 (or under 19 if they have special needs)

Benefits of Care 4 Kids:

- Financial assistance toward the cost of licensed childcare
- Annual eligibility review (reduced need to report changes)
- Job search certificate (3-month coverage if employment is lost)

How to Apply:

- Apply online or download an application at www.ctcare4kids.com
- Submit income documents (pay stubs, etc.)
- Complete a Parent-Provider Agreement (PPA) with Linda's House
- Once approved, you'll receive a Child Care Certificate that authorizes payment



General Policies & Procedures



Eligibility

The White Barn accepts children from ages 3 to 5. The White Barn does not discriminate against any child based on race, creed, National origin, sex, disability or affiliation.

Hours of Operation

The White Barn is open from 8:00 AM to 4:45 PM. Students must be picked up between 4:00 and 4:30 PM. If necessary, a 4:45PM late pick-up option is available, but it must be approved in advance by the Center Director. **Please note that we close promptly at 4:45 PM.**

Attendance

Regular attendance is essential for a child's social, emotional, and academic development. Establishing a consistent routine helps children build a sense of structure and responsibility while making the most of their preschool experience.

Arrivals

A consistent morning routine helps children ease into their day and supports a calm classroom environment. Standard **arrival time is between 8:00 and 8:45 a.m.** Early drop-off between 7:45 and 8:00 a.m. is available with advance approval from the Center Director, as space is limited.

Please be mindful that early arrivals can interrupt teacher prep time, and late arrivals can disrupt the class once it's in motion. If you're running late, let us know through ProCare. If your child's class is already outside or away from the building, you can use the walkie-talkie at the front steps to let us know you've arrived, and we'll share where to meet the group.

- Children must always be walked in and greeted by a staff member—please do not allow your child to enter the building or walk down to the orchard alone.
- Let us know through ProCare if your child will be arriving late so we can prepare accordingly.

Sign In/Out & Parking Lot Safety

We use the ProCare app for daily sign-in and sign-out. A barcode is posted on the front fence for quick access. Signing in and out each day is required and helps us ensure the safety of every child in our care.

Safety during transitions is everyone’s responsibility. Please move slowly and carefully in the parking lot, and always stay with your child.

- Hold your child’s hand during drop-off and pick-up and never leave them unattended in your vehicle.
- Please be mindful of other families in the pick up line. If you need more time to buckle in your child, please park so that the pick-up line can continue moving smoothly.
- You may be asked to show ID more than once—thank you for helping us keep the school community safe.

Dismissal & Late Pick Up

Dismissal takes place between 4:00 and 4:30 p.m. Late pick-up (between 4:30 and 4:45 p.m.) is permitted with advance notice. Please message us through ProCare if you need to arrange an early pick-up or anticipate arriving after 4:30 p.m.

We do our best to protect rest time (12:00–2:00 p.m.) as a quiet, restorative part of the day. If early dismissal is necessary during this window, we ask for advance notice so we can plan a smooth transition.

- Repeated late pick-ups may result in additional fees or affect continued enrollment.
- If someone other than a regular caregiver is picking up, please ensure they are listed on your child’s authorized pick-up list and have proper ID.

Accidents & Injuries

All accidents or injuries that occur while children are in our care will be documented in an **Accident Report** sent to families through the ProCare app.

An **Accident Report** is created for injuries that leave a mark. A **Incident Report** is create for unwanted behaviors that cause physical harm or leave a mark. An **Illness Report** is created when a child is sent home sick.

- For minor injuries, parents will be notified via ProCare.
- For more serious injuries, emergency services will be contacted and the child will be transported to the nearest medical facility. Parents/guardians and emergency contacts will be notified immediately.

Please ensure that your child's records are kept up to date, including:

- Parent/guardian phone numbers (cell and work)
- Emergency contact numbers
- Your child's physician and hospital of choice

Our staff carry fully stocked first aid kits and emergency whistles whenever outside of the building and are trained in emergency procedures, First Aid, CPR, and Medication Administration.

Ambulance

In the event of a medical emergency:

- Staff will provide immediate first aid and notify parents or emergency contacts.
- If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, the physician listed in your child's enrollment paperwork or a local hospital will be authorized to provide necessary care.
- If transport is required, your child and their medical records will be transferred via ambulance to the appropriate facility.

Families are responsible for any ambulance or medical fees incurred.

Building Safety

The safety of our students and staff is a top priority. Our team conducts regular drills, including:

- **Fire drills**
- **Shelter-in-place drills**
- **Evacuation drills**

In the event of severe weather, it is often safest for children and families to remain where they are. The White Barn has designated **safe indoor areas** and an **off-site evacuation location**, if needed.

Center Guests

We regularly arrange for special guests to visit the center to provide enriching experiences for our students. The White Barn has an open-door policy. Parents are welcome to visit or observe their child's classroom at any time. If a special guest falls on a day that your child is not normally at school, they are welcome to attend with a parent or guardian.

Custody Disputes

In the case of a custody dispute, The White Barn does not make determinations about legal or physical custody. Instead, we follow the documentation provided by the enrolling parent or guardian. **Custodial parents must provide legal custody documents**, which will be kept in the child's file.

Gifts & Celebrations

Our goal is to celebrate each child on their birthday by honoring their life experiences and interest rather than by celebrating with food. The birthday child will be involved in planning a school activity they would enjoy doing with their friends. Before each child's birthday we will contact parents to gather stories and a few photos that can be shared with the class.

Gifts for Staff:

The White Barn policy states that staff members cannot accept personal gifts or tips. If you or your child would like to show appreciation to a teacher, we welcome:

- **Handmade cards, drawings, or crafts** from your child
- **Books** for the classroom
- **Bird seed** for our feeders
- **Amazon gift cards** or other classroom-related donations

These gestures are always deeply appreciated and help enrich our program in meaningful ways!



School Closings & Communication



Family Communication

At The White Barn, we believe open and honest communication between families and staff is essential to supporting each child's growth and success. Our goal is to work as a team to meet each student's needs with care and consistency.

We use the **ProCare app** to communicate throughout the day, including:

- Reminders and announcements
- Photos and activity updates
- Accident reports and personal messages
- Curriculum notes

In addition:

- Monthly newsletters are emailed to all families with center-wide updates.
- Classroom teachers do their best to provide a daily recap at pick-up to share highlights of your child's day.
- Milestone checklists from the CDC are sent home periodically to help track developmental progress. If any concerns arise, your child's teaching team and the Center Director will schedule a meeting to discuss next steps and support options.

Behavioral issues will be addressed privately and never discussed in front of children. If there is a concern, your child's teacher will reach out to you directly. For general communication, you may:

- Speak with your child's teacher at drop-off or pick-up
- Send a message through ProCare
- Call the office at (860) 315-7619
- Email the Director at [**danielle.wallace@thewhitebarncc.com**](mailto:danielle.wallace@thewhitebarncc.com)

You can also follow The White Barn Children's Centre on Facebook, where we post weekly photos and updates about classroom activities and special events.

Respectful Communication & Code of Conduct

At The White Barn, we are committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all children, families, and staff. **Just as we hold our educators and team members to high standards of professionalism, kindness, and integrity, we also expect the same from the families in our care community.**

We believe that strong, respectful partnerships between families and educators are essential to a child's success. To that end, we ask that all family members communicate with staff in a manner that is courteous, constructive, and aligned with our center's values.

Code of Conduct for Families:

- Communicate with staff and administrators in a respectful, calm, and professional manner—even during times of stress or disagreement.
- Trust that our educators are acting in the best interest of your child, and work collaboratively to resolve any concerns that arise.
- Refrain from using aggressive, threatening, or demeaning language or behavior in person, over the phone, or in written communication (including email, messaging apps, or social media).
- Respect the diversity of our staff, children, and families, including differences in background, culture, identity, and perspective.
- Follow the appropriate channels for voicing concerns, beginning with your child's lead teacher or the director.

We do not tolerate disrespectful or hostile behavior toward our staff. If it is determined by the Director that the relationship between a family and the school is no longer a good fit due to ongoing conflict, breakdown in communication, or behavior that compromises the wellbeing of our staff or school community— we reserve the right to release a child from the program. This may be done with or without 30 days' notice, depending on the circumstances.

We thank you for being our partners in creating a nurturing and respectful learning environment for all!

School Closings

Full tuition is expected during all closures, including holidays, professional development days, winter break, and weather or emergency-related closures.

Holidays & Breaks

The White Barn is closed in observance of the following holidays:

- Indigenous People's Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Break
- **Winter Break* (closed from 12/24/25 through 1/1/26; reopening on 1/2/26)**
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day

Professional Development

The White Barn is closed for one Professional Development Day each year (**August 29th**).

This time is used for:

- CPR/First Aid training
- Curriculum planning
- Team building
- Classroom and space redesign
- Best practices updates

Weather-Related Closures

While we embrace all types of weather as part of our nature-based program, there may be times when travel is unsafe for families or staff. In those cases, we reserve the right to delay or close the center on a case-by-case basis. Families will be notified of weather-related closures via Procure message.

If a weather emergency arises during the school day, we will follow our Emergency Preparedness Plan to ensure the safety of students and staff.

Unexpected Long Term Closure:

In the event of a long-term closure due to public health emergencies, natural disasters, or other unforeseen circumstances beyond our control, The White Barn may be required to close temporarily. This could include a government-mandated shutdown or a decision made by The White Barn administration in the best interest of our families and staff.

During any extended closure, families will be asked to pay a percentage of their regular tuition in order to hold their child's spot in the program. The tuition percentage will be determined based on several factors, including the anticipated length of closure, whether the closure is mandated by a government agency or initiated by The White Barn, and the financial obligations required to maintain the program's operations during that time.

This policy ensures we can support staff, maintain our facilities, and plan for a smooth reopening while preserving your child's place in the program. Details about tuition expectations will be communicated prior to any temporary closure.



Health & Wellness



Medication Administration

If your child requires medication during school hours, the following guidelines must be followed:

- A **Medication Permission Form** must be completed and signed by the parent or guardian. Forms are available from any staff member.
- All medications must be in the **original container**, with the original prescription label and clear instructions for administration.
- We can only administer medications that have been prescribed by a physician or accompanied by **written instructions and approval from your child's medical provider**.
- Over-the-counter medications cannot be given without a provider-signed form that lists the dosage and exact time to be administered.
- "As needed" medication instructions are not permitted.
- All medications are kept inaccessible to children. Controlled substances are secured in a locked container and tracked daily.
- A written medication log is maintained for each child and kept in their file.

Illness Policy & Return to Program

To help maintain a healthy classroom environment, children must stay home when they are unwell and may be sent home if symptoms arise during the day.

Children must remain home if they are experiencing:

- **A fever of 100.4°F or higher**
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- An undiagnosed rash
- Persistent cough, sneezing, or runny nose
- Sore throat
- Head lice
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis)

While at School:

If a child develops any of the symptoms listed above during the school day:

- A parent or guardian will be contacted immediately.
- The child must be picked up within one hour of notification.
- If a child vomits once or has two episodes of diarrhea, a parent will be called to pick them up.

Return to Program:

- Children must be well enough to fully participate in the daily program before returning.
- We reserve the right to send a child home at arrival if they appear ill or are not able to take part in classroom activities.
- Children must remain home until symptoms are resolved, and they are no longer contagious.

Illness & Return to Program

Diarrhea or Vomiting	24 hours after the last incident.
Fever (100.4 or above)	24 hours after being fever-free without medication. If the 24 hour time period ends after 12pm, please keep your child home until the following school day.
Pink Eye/ Conjunctivitis	24 hours after starting treatment with a doctors verification of treatment.
Strep Throat	24 hours after starting antibiotics, with a doctor's note.
Hand, Foot & Mouth	24 hours after being fever-free without medication and without fluid filled blisters. Blisters must be dry.
Rashes & Infected Skin Spots	With a doctor's note stating the spots or rashes aren't contagious.
Flu or RSV	48 hours after being fever free without medication, must have a doctors note, must consult with Linda's House nurse before returning.
Covid-19	Same protocol as Flu or RSV, as well as following the current CDC and local health department guidelines.

Hospitalization

After any hospitalization, a discharge summary and doctor's note must be submitted, confirming that your child is healthy and able to return to school. The school nurse must approve the return before your child resumes attendance.

If your child is scheduled for a **surgical procedure involving anesthesia**, please inform the school nurse in advance. Because the effects of general anesthesia can linger for up to 24 hours, children must remain home the day after surgery to rest and recover.

Antibiotic Therapy

Children who are prescribed antibiotics must remain home for the **first 24 hours** after beginning treatment, or have received at least three doses before returning. Children may return only if they are feeling well enough to fully participate in daily activities. The White Barn reserves the right to send a child home if symptoms persist or if they are unable to comfortably engage in the routine.

Hand Washing Policy

Handwashing is our first line of defense against illness. Staff and children wash their hands thoroughly at the following times:

- Upon arriving at school
- After toileting or diapering
- Before food preparation or handling
- Before and after eating
- After sneezing, coughing, or blowing noses
- After touching animals
- After contact with bodily fluids
- After cleaning
- Before and after administering medication or providing first aid (when appropriate)
- After returning indoors from outdoor play
- Anytime hands are visibly dirty

We teach and model proper handwashing to help children build lifelong healthy habits.

Immunizations

All children enrolled at The White Barn must be fully immunized unless they have a valid medical exemption. The State of Connecticut no longer accepts religious exemptions.

- Immunization records or medical waivers must be submitted upon enrollment.
- Updated immunization records should be provided within two weeks of any new or required vaccination.

Referrals

If your child needs additional support in any developmental area, the Director or school nurse can assist you in making referrals to:

- **Public school services**
- Other **educational, social, or financial support agencies** as needed

Our teaching team is also happy to offer guidance and suggestions to help support your child's development at home.

Health Forms

All student health forms must be updated annually.

If your child's health forms are missing or out of date, the school nurse will contact you directly. Please notify the Center Director or school nurse of any changes to your child's health status or care needs throughout the year.

Individualized Care Plans

For medically fragile children, the school nurse will develop an Individualized Care Plan in collaboration with the family. This plan will be:

- Reviewed and signed by all relevant staff
- **Updated at least annually**, or whenever there are changes in your child's care needs

Families must notify the school nurse and Center Director of any updates to their child's medical care.

Medical Supplies

Families are responsible for providing any medical equipment or supplies that their child may need during the school day.

The school nurse will meet with the family prior to enrollment to coordinate care and any special accommodations.

Third Party Therapy Sessions

If your child receives therapy services (e.g., speech, occupational, or physical therapy), The White Barn is happy to coordinate with families and therapists to arrange sessions during the school day.

- Please notify the school in advance of any scheduled therapy sessions.
- Parents/guardians will be required to sign a permission form before services begin.
- Therapists must sign in and out upon each visit to the center.

Snacks & Lunch

We are an egg, peanut and tree nut free center.

Please do your best to provide your child with healthy snack options. A few suggestions include fruits, veggies and dip and crackers, meat and cheese. Parents/Guardians are required to provide two snacks and a packed lunch daily. We are mindful about helping children learn about healthy food choices, we encourage whole foods and limited processed foods when possible.

All foods should be prepped and ready to serve (meaning fruits peeled, sliced, etc. if necessary) and placed in containers children are able to manage independently. We do not heat up food



Child Guidance & Safety Expectations



Child Guidance

At The White Barn, we are committed to creating a healthy, safe, and enjoyable learning environment for every child. Just as children need support in learning academic skills, they also need guidance in developing positive social behaviors. Some children require more support than others, and we ask that families remain understanding and collaborative as we help each child grow socially and emotionally.

We use positive guidance techniques rooted in developmentally appropriate strategies. Our goal is not to punish, but to **teach children how to self-regulate, develop empathy, and build respectful relationships**. Teachers use consistent, realistic rules and focus on prevention by reinforcing positive behaviors, offering gentle reminders, redirecting behavior, modeling empathy, and using natural or logical consequences when appropriate. **Our approach encourages self-discipline and internal motivation**, with minimal teacher intervention when possible.

Responding to Disruptive Behavior

At times, children may struggle to manage their behavior in a busy classroom setting.

Disruptive behavior is defined as any behavior that negatively impacts the experience or safety of others. This includes, but is not limited to: hitting, biting, kicking, pushing, throwing objects, spitting, damaging school property, or forcefully taking toys from other children. When disruptive behavior occurs, teachers will:

- Guide the child to **check on the well-being of the other child involved**.
- Engage in a brief discussion focused on **identifying emotions** and **exploring more positive behavior choices**.
- Encourage the child to **take action to show care or apology**, such as offering a hug, drawing a picture, or using another comforting gesture. Verbal apologies are not required but are welcomed if initiated by the child.

Calm Corner

As part of our guidance approach, we use a designated space called the Calm Corner. This is a peaceful and supportive area designed to help children regulate big emotions.

Unlike traditional “time-out” spaces, the Calm Corner is not punitive. Instead, it provides children with a moment to refocus, with a staff member nearby to offer support if needed. This helps children reintegrate into the group calmly and positively.



Ongoing Support & Communication

If a child frequently needs Calm Corner breaks or continues to display disruptive behavior, teachers will reach out to parents to schedule a conference. Together, we'll develop a plan to support the child's needs and outline specific steps and expectations.

If the behavior involves aggression, destruction, or puts others at risk, the child's guardians will be contacted, and the child may need to be picked up immediately. Our staff are trained to manage challenging behaviors and **create individualized support plans** when needed. If, after appropriate interventions, the behavior continues and impacts the safety or learning of others, the Center Director will evaluate whether the child can remain enrolled in the program.

When Further Steps are Needed

We will make every effort to work with families in resolving behavioral concerns. However, in rare cases where a child's behavior remains unsafe or disruptive despite all support strategies, it may be determined that The White Barn is not the right fit for that child's needs. In these situations, families may be asked to withdraw their child from the program in the best interest of the child, the staff, and the broader classroom community.

Physical Contact & Respecting Boundaries

We actively teach children to respect each other's personal space and physical boundaries. All children are encouraged to:

- Be aware of their own bodies in shared spaces.
- Check in with others before engaging in physical touch or play.
- Use clear language like **"please keep your hands to yourself"** or **"I need space"** when setting boundaries.

Physical Play Guidelines:

- Physical play is developmentally appropriate and allowed when safe and respectful.
- Because physical play can sometimes lead to confusion around boundaries, staff are always nearby to support and redirect when needed.
- If physical play becomes **aggressive or unsafe**, it will be stopped immediately.
- Children who continue to cause harm to others after receiving consistent support and reminders may be **dismissed from the program** to maintain a safe environment for all.

Child Abuse Reporting

All staff undergo a thorough background check. The White Barn staff are required to complete training upon hire that defines child abuse and neglect pursuant to Connecticut state law, and outlines the staff member's personal responsibility to report all incidents of child abuse and neglect. All staff are mandated reporters and are required by law to report any suspected physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect of any child. If we suspect abuse, we will contact and make a report within 24 hours to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families.



Daily Schedule & Class Routines



Schedule of the Day

Regular attendance is very important for your child to get the most from preschool. When there are frequent absences, a child may feel uncomfortable as they may not know the songs, activities, or the other children. Friendships are easier when children attend regularly.

We value spontaneity in activity and take advantage of the “teachable moment”. We also know young children benefit from knowing what will happen next. While the location of these events may vary, we will maintain a regular pattern of activities from day to day. The following is an example of a possible classroom schedule.

8:00-8:45	Arrival & Freeplay
8:45-9:00	Opening Group (song, share the news)
9:00-9:15	Morning Snack
9:15-10:00	Small group exploration and Provocation
10:00-11:00	Woodland Trail
11:00-11:30	Morning Meeting (story, calendar/weather, game)
11:45-12:15	Lunch
12:15-2:00	Quiet Time
2:30-3:00	Afternoon snack and story
3:00-3:45	Farm Playground
4:00-4:30	Quiet Activities/Dismissal



Live Animals

The White Barn Children’s Centre incorporates caring for live chickens into its programming. Children will participate in activities including changing bedding in nesting boxes, feeding, changing water, and collecting eggs. Children will only handle the chickens when closely supervised by staff. In addition, sometimes the preschool classrooms will have pets who are used for teaching, building relationships, and supporting children in their growth and development. Please notify the Center Director of any animal or other allergies your child may have, or other concerns you have regarding animals. Please do not bring pets at drop off or pick up time. Pets are not allowed on The White Barn Children’s Centre property unless prior approval has been given.

Rest Time

All children at The White Barn are expected to rest or nap after lunch each day, for a period not exceeding two hours. To help your child feel comfortable during rest time, please provide:

- To help your child feel comfortable during rest time, some families may choose to send a crib sheet. The White Barn does provide each child with a fleece blanket (sent home at the end of school week for laundering).

Rest Time Hours: 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

- Drop-off is not allowed during rest time. If your child has an appointment that ends during this time, they may return after rest time has concluded.
- Early pick-up during rest time should be avoided whenever possible. If necessary, please notify your child's teacher in advance so we can prepare your child with minimal disruption to others.

Toilet Training Policy

Due to the nature of our program we asked that children are potty trained completely before their start date. If you have any special considerations or concerns please discuss with school nurse or director. Toilet trained means the child can recognize their body needs to use the bathroom during play and during sleep, can let an adult know when they need to use the bathroom, and can use the bathroom independently (pulling pants and underwear down, wiping if needed, flushing, pulling underwear and pants up, and washing and drying hands).

In the event of a toileting accident, children will never be punished. Children will be cleaned appropriately by staff and the wet or soiled clothes will be changed. All soiled clothes will be placed in a sealed plastic bag or zippered wet bag stored out of the reach of children and given to the parents at the end of the day. All children will be required to have two sets of clean spare clothes each day. Children who regularly have accidents (more than one accident a day in a two week time) may be removed from our program until they have mastered the skill.

Indoor & Outdoor Play

At The White Barn, we believe play is essential to every child's development. Children will have daily opportunities for both **parallel** and **cooperative play**, indoors and outdoors.

Outdoor Play:

- Outdoor time is built into your child's routine at least twice per day, weather permitting.
- Outdoor play may be canceled if temperatures are too hot or cold, or if air quality is deemed unsafe due to pollution or environmental conditions.
- Please **dress your child in weather-appropriate layers** and **apply sunscreen and bug spray at home** during warmer months.
- Children must wear **closed-toe shoes** each day for safety.

Toys from Home: We ask that children do not bring toys from home, as they often lead to conflict and distraction in the classroom. The White Barn is not responsible for lost or damaged toys. If a child is having difficulty parting with a toy, teachers may support them by briefly allowing the child to show and share the toy with classmates before placing it in their backpack for the rest of the day.

Curriculum & Assessment

The White Barn will use a thoughtful, meaningful and functional curriculum approach to children's learning. We will expand from children's interests, seasonal happenings, and experiences within our environment. Our curriculum overview provides a base for areas of study throughout the year. The White Barn will use the CT ELDS (CT Early Learning & Development Standards), which lays out stages in learning and development for children up to age 5.

Used in conjunction with the CT ELDS, the White Barn uses CT DOTS to:

- gather data about children's skills, abilities and behaviors
- plan additional supports (i.e. curriculum, instruction, family activities, adult support)
- summarize evidence of children's progress

The White Barn is aligned with state of CT processes to streamline an efficient transition to the child's next Preschool/Kindergarten setting. Both the CT ELDS and the CT DOTS allow for us to prioritize children's interest and make observations in children's naturally occurring situations. The CT standards break skills down by age group within these 8 domains of growth and development:

Cognition
Social and emotional development
Physical development and health
Language and literacy
Creative arts
Mathematics
Science
Social studies

We CT Early Learning Standards & Development and CT Documentation and Observation for Teaching System to:

- Plan developmentally appropriate activities for individual children and classrooms
- Monitor each child's development and plan strategies to support their learning
- Communicate with families about a child's development
- Support our own professional development by identifying areas for additional training and coaching

CLOTHING

Children should be dressed in layers to accommodate all weather. Students should have a minimum of two extra outfits that will be stored at school at all times. If a soiled outfit returns home please send your child a clean replacement outfit the next time they attend school.

Items to be kept at school daily:

Spring

- Waterproof rubber boots
- Hiking boots or sneakers
- Jacket or sweatshirt
- Rain jacket w/hood
- Rain pants
- Hat
- Waterproof gloves



Summer

- Close-toed sandals/ shoes
- Sun hat
- Light-weight, long-sleeved shirt for sun protection
- Rain jacket w/hood
- Rain pants

Fall

- Waterproof rubber boots
- Hiking boots or sneakers
- Jacket or sweatshirt
- Rain Jacket w/hood
- Rain pants
- Hat
- Waterproof gloves or mittens



Winter

- Waterproof/insulated snow boots
- Waterproof snow pants
- Waterproof winter coat
- Multiple insulating layers
- Two pairs of waterproof mittens/gloves
- Scarf/neck cover
- Hat/ear covers
- Wool/fleece socks

ALL CLOTHING SHOULD BE LABELED, including boots, mittens, coats, etc. Although staff members will do their best to keep track of clothing, Linda's House is not responsible for lost articles of clothing.

Changes of clothes should include underwear, pants, shirt, socks, and layers appropriate for each season.



Outdoor Play & Nature Based Learning





What are the benefits of **NATURE BASED LEARNING**

As a result of their participation in Linda's House Pediatric Daycare & Preschool, children will:

- Feel comfortable in nature and connected to the land.
- Respect all living things and seek to disturb as little as possible in the natural world.
- Have confidence and motivation to explore, learn and grow.
- Have stronger social skills that prepare them for the learning environment and abilities required in kindergarten, including getting along with peers, being helpful, showing compassion, following directions and cooperating.
- Ask questions and desire to investigate answers.
- Be creative and intellectually curious.
- Become future stewards of our environment.

Research shows children who play in dirt are happier and healthier! A friendly bacteria found in soil has been shown to activate a group of neurons that produce the brain chemical serotonin, enhancing feelings of wellbeing. These earth elements allow children to explore the world using their senses, express themselves creatively and just have fun.

Preschool students may come home dirty from Linda's House. We recommend that you allow yourself time to change and clean up before planning an activity after school. Wear clothes that can (and will) get muddy. We will splash in puddles, make mud pies in the mud kitchen, climb through mud pits, and dig in the sand. Although we will clean up as much as possible before going home, you may want to have a change of clothes in the car. ³⁷

PLAY BASED LEARNING

Young children have a vital need to play, play is their “work” and there are many benefits gained through that play. Our play based learning environment invites children to construct knowledge through their explorations. We carefully plan our environment and our activities to allow children to use all their senses to gather and process information. We do not use worksheets, coloring pages, flash cards or “cookie cutter” art projects. We are able to help children prepare cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically for kindergarten through play.

- Play contributes to cognitive and physical development.
- Play teaches vital social and emotional skills that are linked with success in school and life.
- Play allows children to problem solve and reason.
- Play keeps the body and mind active.
- Play allows children to use all their senses to learn about the world, which forms solid connections in young minds.
- Play allows children to experiment and explore in a safe environment.
- Play gives children opportunities to make choices.
- Play allows children to learn and teach at the same time.
- Play helps children to sort and classify ideas.
- Play allows children to self-regulate.



Outdoor Play Expectations

At The White Barn, we believe outdoor play is essential to healthy development. Allowing children to engage in moderate risk helps them build body awareness, strengthen their senses, and develop confidence through real-world challenges. Activities like **climbing, balancing, and running on uneven ground** support not only physical growth, but also emotional resilience.

We recognize that outdoor play comes with potential risks, and we take safety seriously. Our staff are trained to guide children in setting personal boundaries and understanding their environment. The outdoor space is regularly assessed, and adjustments are made as needed to maintain a safe and engaging setting.

To ensure safety, staff always carry walkie-talkies, first aid kits, and cell phones during outdoor play.

Climbing guidelines: Children are encouraged to climb and explore at their own pace. They are guided to stay aware of their surroundings, maintain safe distances from others, and assess their own readiness for new physical challenges. Teachers do not lift children or assist with climbing, as we believe children will only attempt what their bodies are developmentally ready for. This promotes independence and helps children build trust in their own abilities.



Ticks

As a nature-based program, we will spend large portions of the day outdoors. We recommend you check your child for ticks every day when you return home.

Before school: Apply insect repellent to your child prior to the start of school. Always follow product instructions. Apply this product to your child, avoiding the hands, eyes, and mouth.

Upon return home: Check your child's clothing for ticks. Check all parts of your child's body, including under the arms, in and around ears, inside belly button, back of knees, in and around hair, between the legs and toes, and around the waist. Placing clothes in the dryer on high heat for at least 10 minutes will kill ticks. Conduct a full body check and bathe soon after returning home. Showering within two hours of being outdoors has been shown to reduce the risk of getting tick borne illnesses. If you find a tick, use tweezers or a tick key to remove the tick by pulling the head directly up from the skin. For more information about the proper way to remove ticks, visit https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html

Climbing

Children are allowed and encouraged to climb. We guide children to be aware of their surroundings, the placement of their body, their proximity to others, and any potential risks they may be approaching. Teachers do not lift or assist children with climbing. We trust that children will take on challenges their bodies are developmentally ready for.

Throwing

Throwing natural objects (like pinecones, leaves, or sticks) is permitted when done with awareness and purpose. Children must throw away from others and check their surroundings before doing so. Throwing becomes unsafe when others are nearby or if the object is too heavy or sharp.

Sticks

Children are allowed to play with sticks! Stick play fosters creativity and motor skills—but we set clear boundaries:

- Sticks must be no longer than twice the child's arm length.
- Larger branches may only be dragged (with one end touching the ground) or carried with a partner or team.
- Sticks may not be used as weapons, pretend guns, or carried while running.
- Children must remain aware of their surroundings when playing with sticks.

Flora and Fauna

Children are expected to care for and respect all living things. We teach children not to cause intentional harm, even if they feel afraid. We encourage quiet observation over physical interaction, especially when a plant or creature is unfamiliar. While we do our best to avoid contact with potentially irritating plants or insects, minor skin irritation is sometimes unavoidable. Teachers guide children in checking their skin and conduct tick checks daily during warmer months.

Wandering

Children must remain within sight of a teacher at all times. We regularly remind children:

"I need to see you, and you need to see me. If you get lost, hug a tree."

Our outdoor space is designed with safety in mind. Staff conduct silent head counts every 10 minutes and verbal checks before and after transitions. Teachers carry walkie-talkies for consistent communication and wear emergency whistles to alert children when they must immediately return. If a child repeatedly wanders after reminders, they may be removed from the program for safety reasons.

Yelling & Screaming

We encourage children to use their outdoor voices and enjoy yelling during play. However, screaming is not allowed, as it can be confused with an emergency. Children are reminded: "Screaming is for emergencies only."

Physical Contact

Children are expected to respect each other's personal space. We teach them that every person has the right to decide who can touch them or come close. Before touching others, children are encouraged to check in and use respectful words such as:

- "Please don't touch me."
- "I need space."

Physical Play

Physical play, like wrestling or playful chasing, is developmentally appropriate and often joyful. However, it can also lead to confusion or escalate quickly.

We guide children in understanding boundaries and keeping play safe. If physical play becomes aggressive or one-sided, it is no longer considered safe. Children who regularly cause harm, despite reminders and support, may be removed from the program for safety concerns.