



VILLAGE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

FAMILY GUIDE

2025-26 School Year

WELCOME

Dear Family,

Village Early Childhood Center, previously known as Norwood PreSchool, opened its doors in 2012. We have watched the program grow and flourish, fueled by a strong collaboration with the families, teachers, and children in the program. In June 2022, we celebrated our 10th Anniversary. It has been such a wonderful experience knowing that we have had a positive impact on the lives of the children and families who have walked through our doors over the past decade.

Our goal as a school is to foster the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth of each child—to prepare them not only for Kindergarten, but for all of life’s future endeavors. We strive to offer meaningful experiences through developmentally appropriate activities and interactions for children of all abilities.

Our classrooms focus on the *process* of learning versus the *product* of accomplishments. We want to encourage the natural curiosity and love of learning with which children are born. The quote, “I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand” is at the core of early childhood education. Through hands-on activities and developmentally appropriate practices, children gain knowledge, but most importantly, they gain confidence. They acquire the ability to utilize varied materials, take turns, think independently, problem solve, and make choices.

Our program believes in a strong partnership between family and school. Family involvement is a key component in a child’s success. The old adage of “it takes a village to raise a child” holds true—we believe in order for children to be successful, we as educators must work collaboratively with the families for which we provide care. Parents/Guardians are a child’s first teachers and thereby set forth a child’s foundation in learning. We hope to work collaboratively with you and our community to provide memorable experiences. We thank you for choosing Village Early Childhood Center Education Program for your child.

Respectfully,

Christina Guirland
Owner/Director

Warm Regards,

Kaitly Anecchini
Director Designee

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ABOUT US

Philosophy

In accordance with NAEYC guidelines and practices, Village Early Childhood Center believes children learn through productive play and positive interactions within their environment. By having planned activities and purposeful learning materials, children's development is enhanced. We incorporate meaningful experiences for the children and allow for learning to occur in "their world." Village Early Childhood Center implements developmentally appropriate practices to ensure a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment is established so that the children can develop physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively. It is our goal to foster the children into becoming independent learners and to instill a lifelong love for learning in their hearts. Our program supports the relationship between children, their families, and our staff members. It is designed to provide children with meaningful experiences that encourage growth in all areas of development by involving them in an environment in which they can:

- ❖ Add to their knowledge and to their physical, social, and emotional development by observing and interacting with peers, adults, and materials
- ❖ Expand and develop their literacy and communication skills
- ❖ Increase their knowledge and ability to become involved in and make sense of the world by doing, interacting, exploring and experiencing
- ❖ Increase their skills in problem solving, negotiations, social interactions and independence

Our goals are to help facilitate the development of critical thinkers, creative problem solvers, and self-confident and independent children who will grow up to be caring, happy, and productive citizens.

Mission

The mission of Village Early Childhood Center is to educate students socially and academically by building collaborative relationships with our students, families, and the community. We wish to empower our children with the tools they need to successfully meet the challenges of life and to make positive contributions to their world.

Definition of Program

In this Family Guide and other Village Early Childhood Center documents, "VECC", "Program", "Center", "school", "we", "us", and "our" are used interchangeably to refer to Village Early Childhood Center. "Staff" or "Teacher" are used to refer to any VECC employee counted as part of the staff-to-child ratio. In most cases, VECC Supervisors and Staff operate on behalf of the Program and carry out many Program policies and procedures. However, questions or concerns

involving Enrollment, Scheduling, Tuition and Fees, or other sensitive matters fall under the purview of, and should be addressed with, Program Administrators (i.e. an Owner or Director).

Definition of Family

In this Family Guide and other VECC documents, “family”, “families”, “enrolling family”, “you”, or “your” is used to refer to a parent, legal guardian, sponsor, or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest, and responsibility of the child in our care.

Address and Contact Information

School Mailing Address: **155 Parkway, Harrington Park, NJ 07640**

School Entrance Addresses:

Church side of building: **150 Harriot Avenue, Harrington Park, NJ 07640**
(enter black gate from parking lot, ring doorbell
under blue awning at end of walkway)

Office side of building: **155 Parkway, Harrington Park, NJ 07640**
(ring VECC doorbell at large glass doors)

School Telephone Number: **(201) 767-9909**

School Fax Number: **(201) 767-9919**

School Email: **DiscoverNPS@gmail.com**

Hours of Operation

VECC provides child care services from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM, Monday through Friday, according to the published School Calendar. Families must adhere to the program hours for which their child is registered. Children enrolled in the Full Day Program must be dropped off and picked up between the hours of 6:30am and 6:30pm. Children enrolled in the Extended Half-Day Program must be dropped off and picked up between the hours of 9am and 3pm. Drop-Off/Pick-up outside of registered hours is not a normal Program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. Refer to the Outside of Hours Fees section for more information.

Calendar

A calendar for the academic year is developed and provided to the Families of children enrolled at Village Early Childhood Center. The calendar notates school recesses, early dismissals, and family events. *The Calendar is posted annually but is subject to change. Families will be notified of any changes that occur.*

Admissions & Procedures

Village Early Childhood Center admits children from 6 weeks to 5 years of age, based on availability. Children are admitted without regard to race, culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. The Program does not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided. The Program enrolls children on a month-to-month basis. However, each child need only register once for each school year as long as they maintain enrollment. The school year runs from the first day of school through the last day of school, as outlined on the VECC calendar. When accepted, a child is guaranteed placement at the Program each month of the school year in which they are enrolling, unless enrollment is terminated by the Family or the Program. The Family may elect to terminate their child's enrollment with 30 days' written notice. The Program may elect to terminate a child's enrollment in accordance with the terms and conditions contained in the Enrollment Agreement and this Family Guide.

The following must be remitted prior to a child's first day of attendance each school year:

- ☐ *Enrollment Agreement & Application*
- ☐ *Individual Care Plan*
- ☐ *Most Recent Universal Child Health Record*
- ☐ *Most Recent Immunization Record*
- ☐ *Enrollment Amount (Registration Fee + Deposit)*
- ☐ *First Month's Tuition Payment*

Registration

Registration for the upcoming school year typically occurs in January. If you currently have a child enrolled in the Program, you will be given one month to register that child for the upcoming school year and return all applicable fees, thereby reserving their placement for the following school year. Space permitting, you may register additional children who are not currently enrolled in the Program during this time.

After one month, Registration opens for families who do not have a child currently enrolled in the Program. At that time, any spots for which Registration has not been completed and fees have not been remitted will be offered to non-enrolled families.

Registration Fee & Deposit

A non-refundable \$130 Registration Fee per child, (reduced to \$30 starting with the third child for families with 3 or more siblings enrolled at the same time), is due at the time of Registration for each school year. Additionally, a non-refundable Deposit equal to the amount of the first month's tuition is required per child at the time of Registration. Registration Fee and Deposit should be remitted in one form of payment. The Deposit will be held by the Program without interest and may be commingled with general funds. The Deposit is typically applied to a child's last month enrolled for the registered school year. For example, if a child begins the 2025-2026 school year in

September of 2025, their Deposit will typically be applied to June 2026 tuition. The Program reserves the right to adjust a child's Deposit for changes in schedule that occur mid-year. Such adjustments may be indicated at the Program's discretion on a subsequent invoice.

At the time of Registration for the upcoming school year, a Family may opt to have their child's current Deposit roll over to the upcoming year's Deposit. In that case, the Family will be required to remit a tuition payment for their child's last month enrolled of the current school year. The Family will be responsible for any difference between the current Deposit and the upcoming school year's Deposit.

Inclusion

Village Early Childhood Center believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in childcare. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our Program based on their individual capabilities and needs.

If a child has an identified special need, we encourage that services, including but not limited to speech, play therapy, and/or occupational therapy be provided here in the least restrictive environment.

Non-Discrimination

At Village Early Childhood Center, equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or Parent/Guardian or provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation, special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Family Activities

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of the children in our program. We encourage Parents/Guardians and other family members to be involved in the Program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our Program goals.

Please see a list of Family Activities at the end of this document.

Confidentiality

All employees are required to sign a confidentiality agreement statement, located within the Employee Handbook, while employed at Village Early Childhood Center. Employees shall, to the best of their ability, ensure confidentiality and privacy in matters regarding, but not limited to: history, records, and discussions. Disclosure can be made only under specified conditions or for reasons related to law enforcement or as required by law. The removal of any record is prohibited. Staff members are disallowed from discussing any information regarding children in Village Early Childhood Center with anyone unrelated to the Center unless written consent from a Parent/Legal Guardian is given. Village Early Childhood Center shall follow the guidelines for protected health information as defined by HIPAA (1996). Official written records for each child are kept in locked files and released only to individuals working with the child, as described above, or those for whom a Parent/Guardian signs a written release.

Strengthening Families Protective Factors Survey

This measurement assesses the perceived presence of five protective factors in caregivers of children. The survey is elective and anonymous.

The **Protective Factors Survey (PFS)** is sent out as an online google survey and takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The instrument is divided into two sections, the first is completed by program staff and the second is completed by the program participant. The participant portion of the survey contains a set of questions for capturing demographic information followed by the protective factors section—the 20 core items of the **PFS**. In the demographic section, participants are asked to provide details about their family composition, income, and involvement in services. In the protective factors section, participants respond to a series of statements about their family, using a seven-point frequency or agreement scale. The following protective factors are covered in the survey: Family Functioning/ Resiliency (5 items), Social Support (3 items), Concrete Support (3 items) Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development (5 items), Nurturing and Attachment (4 items).

Family Feedback

Village Early Childhood Center will occasionally distribute surveys to all enrolled families. These surveys are just one way for families to tell us how we are doing. However, we invite candid feedback at all times and we will use it to help us get better at what we do. Program administrators can be contacted via the school phone number or email address.

Staff Qualifications

Our teachers and caregivers are hired in compliance with state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

All staff members are certified in CPR and First Aid. All staff members participate in orientation and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

Family Employment

In an effort to maintain the professional status of our Staff and prevent any potential conflict of interest, families entering into an employment arrangement with Staff (i.e. babysitting) is strongly discouraged. However, should a Family hire any VECC Staff member, it must be outside the Center premises and with the understanding that such arrangements and payment for services are solely between the Family and the Staff member. Such arrangements are not sanctioned by Village Early Childhood Center and the Family agrees to hold Village Early Childhood Center harmless from any such arrangement.

Child to Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. VECC operates in accordance with the following Child to Staff Ratios that are mandated by the State.

| Child Age | State Mandated Child to Staff Ratio |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ≤ 17 months | 4 to 1 |
| 18 to 29 months | 6 to 1 |
| 2.5 to 4 year-olds | 10 to 1 |
| 4 to 5 year-olds | 12 to 1 |

Communication & Family Partnership

Communication concerning a child's growth and progress is important. We encourage Families to develop a relationship with their child's Teachers so that there is an open pathway for communication about their child. VECC strives to meet all of a child's physical, emotional, cognitive, and developmental needs. A sound Family/Teacher relationship helps provide a child with a strong foundation for success.

- ❖ Please notify VECC in writing of any changes in address, phone numbers, emails, and/or pick-up authorization.
- ❖ Please keep the Program informed of any new medical issues.
- ❖ Please alert your child's Teacher of any changes at home, in your child's behavior, or any other information that you believe is pertinent.

Communication Platform: VECC uses the Tadpoles app. Please see the “Tadpoles” section below for more information.

Bulletin Boards: Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Newsletter: Monthly newsletters sent by the Office and individual classrooms provide center news, events, announcements, etc.

Email: Families are encouraged to provide an email address that is checked regularly. The Program uses email communication to send announcements, reminders, event invitations, and general updates.

Family Visits: Family participation in the Program is encouraged. VECC welcomes Families to visit classrooms, volunteer, read stories, or share an area of expertise. The Infant room also welcomes Parents/Guardians to nurse/feed their infant. Any person entering the building for reasons other than dropping off or picking up a child will be required to sign in at the office.

Family Engagement: VECC schedules regular events throughout the year in which Families are invited to participate (e.g. Trunk-or-Treat, Holiday Singalong, Family Planting). Such events are wonderful opportunities for Families to share, learn, and have fun with their children as well as connect with other Families. Families are encouraged to offer suggestions for events.

Parent/Guardian Workshops: Parent/Guardian Workshops may be held virtually or at the School throughout the year. A list of possible discussion topics are located at the back of the handbook. Families are encouraged to suggest topics for future workshops.

Tadpoles Family Communication Platform

Tadpoles is the app-based platform VECC uses for Family/Teacher communication and daily student information.

How to access Tadpoles:

1. Download “Tadpoles Parent” from your app store.
2. Create a username and password.

If you have an existing Gmail account, sign in using that email and password

How Families use Tadpoles:

- “Drop Off Notes” containing information that is *not* time-sensitive may be sent *prior* to your child being checked in by a Staff member each day.
 - Sign-in to the Tadpoles app
 - Click your child’s profile
 - Click “Drop Off Notes”

“Drop Off Notes” cannot be answered by Teachers immediately through the app. A response, if necessary, will show as a “Note” on your child’s Daily Report when they are checked out at the end of the day.

- When your child is checked out of school at the end of the day, their Daily Report will automatically be sent to the Family member’s email attached to the Tadpoles account. Please open the email to view information from the day.

Information Logged in Tadpoles App:

Information logged in Tadpoles is class-specific but may include:

- Curricular information
- Attendance
- Meals (Infants & Sprouts)
- Diaper changes (if applicable)
- Nap time (if applicable)
- If any of your child’s supplies (i.e. diapers, pullups, wipes, extra clothes) are running low
- Short notes/reminders from the Teacher

Things to note about Tadpoles:

- If your Drop Off Note requires immediate attention or response, please contact the office via phone or email instead.
- Newsletters, calendars, and class-wide emails or messages are sent out through the Tadpoles email feature.
- Teachers typically take photos and videos throughout the week, but may not post the day they were taken. The Staff’s main focus throughout the day is engaging and interacting with the children in their care.

Home Language Policy

VECC makes every effort to communicate with children and Families whose primary language is not English. Families are asked to share words in their home language with their child’s Teacher to help make their child feel more comfortable in the classroom. Teachers will attempt to label some of the classroom materials in the home language(s) of the students. Parents/Guardians are also encouraged to share books or other materials in their home language with the class. Non-English speaking Parents/Guardians are encouraged to bring with them someone who can help interpret and translate questions, concerns, and documents.

Open Door Policy

An Open Door Policy does not mean doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, the Center’s external doors are kept locked at all times and visitors must be buzzed in by a Staff member. While Parents/Guardians are encouraged to participate in the Program and are

welcome to visit at any time during regular Program hours, any person entering the building for reasons other than dropping off or picking up a child will be required to sign in at the office.

The Staff will always do their best to speak with Parents/Guardians. However, since Staff are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular Program hours. Please keep conversations with Staff brief during drop-off, pick-up, or classroom visits. If a situation requires longer discussion, kindly arrange for a phone call or meeting with the Staff member.

Publicity

Occasionally, photos of children at the Center will be taken for publicity use within the Center or on the Program's website. On the Enrollment Application, Families are given the opportunity to consent to such photographs of their child being taken and used for publicity. Unless such permission is obtained, VECC will not use the pictures and name of a child for publicity.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

VECC provides a rich learning environment with a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for the specific ages in each classroom. The Program has a flexible daily routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. VECC strongly believes that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on experiences and are facilitated through interest areas in each classroom. The Program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. VECC encourages openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

Curricula & Assessment

Village Early Childhood Center implements the Creative Curriculum®, a research and theory based educational tool that takes into account the whole child. It focuses on the four areas of child development: social-emotional, physical, cognitive, and language. At the core of the Creative Curriculum® lies the belief that all children can learn and benefit from developmentally appropriate practice. By providing meaningful experiences and productive play, VECC stimulates a child's social-emotional, physical, cognitive and language/literacy development. Staff facilitate activities

that create opportunities for children to learn at their own rate and to develop their language skills, literacy skills, math skills, and science skills. Staff provide children with a wide range of opportunities and experiences that engage the whole child and encourage them to develop a life-long love for learning. In alignment with the Creative Curriculum®, Village Early Childhood Center uses Child Assessment Portfolios to track children's progress. This assessment aligns with the Creative Curriculum® objectives and Preschool or Birth-to-Three standards. VECC Staff gather information about a child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so that classroom activities can be modified and adjusted to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to Families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

Developmental Screening

In addition to curriculum-based assessment(s), VECC monitors a child's achievement of developmental milestones, shares observations with Parents/Guardians, and provides resource information as needed for further screenings, evaluations, and early intervention and treatment. The developmental screening process is a collaborative one, involving Parents/Guardians and, in most cases, conducted in conjunction with the child's primary care provider and health, education, and early intervention consultants. Within 30 days of enrollment/re-enrollment each school year, Families are asked to complete and remit the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), which provides reliable, accurate developmental and social emotional screening for children between birth and age 6. Drawing on Parents'/Guardians' expert knowledge, the ASQ has been specifically designed to pinpoint developmental progress and to catch delays in young children, paving the way for meaningful next steps in learning, intervention, or monitoring. Information gained through screenings and assessment is shared with the appropriate Center Staff—typically the Director and classroom Lead and Assistant Teachers—and with Families in a timely manner so that informed decisions can be made by a Family about appropriate programming, guidance, and support, as well as assistive services and referrals. The information is shared with Families in a positive, caring manner with the overall goal of improving the education, care, school success, and quality of life for the child. Teachers will communicate with Families about their child's screenings and assessment while remaining sensitive to the Family's values, culture, identity, and home language.

Referral Policy

Classroom Teachers conduct observations of development and progress using anecdotal notes and portfolios. Observation will be conducted over a period of time. Teachers use the approved screening tool (ASQ) as completed by the Families coupled with classroom observations to complete a report of the child's progress. A copy of this report will be placed in the child's record and may be shared with the child's family. If necessary, referrals to community resources are given to the Family for any identified or needed services. The Program Director will document any referrals to outside

services such as, but not limited to, the Child Study Team or Early Intervention. A Program Administrator will follow up with the family within 3 weeks to ensure they have been able to access the community resources. In the interim, the classroom Teacher will continue to monitor any child with potential needs or learning difficulties. VECC aims to maintain open communication between Staff and the Family throughout this process so that updates on the child's progress both in the classroom and the home environment can easily be shared.

Outdoor Play

Weather permitting, classes conduct 30-45 minutes of supervised outdoor play and/or walking trips around the neighborhood two times a day for all children enrolled in the Full Day Program. Children are accounted for at all times. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the Enrollment Application.

Transitions

A child's transition into childcare should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. The Program will work with Families and their children to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced. In order to help separation anxiety, the Program encourages Family members to follow the "one hug, one kiss, one goodbye" strategy at drop-off.

Transition from Home to Center

Prior to a child's first day, a Family has the option to tour the Center and meet with Teachers, and is encouraged to communicate any anticipated concerns. Families are asked to share the best methods of communication on the Enrollment Application and September Questionnaire in the event a Teacher wishes to reach out during the school day.

Transition Between Classrooms

Children are transitioned to the next class based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and classroom availability. School year transition periods differ by classroom, but typically occur in September and January.

Electronic Media Policy

Village Early Childhood Center provides an activity-focused early learning environment. The Program believes children learn best through active participation, hands-on experiences, interactive conversation, and exploration. The normal daily routine does not include electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD) viewing or computer use, but from time-to-time a class may use a television show without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. All

electronic media is screened prior to use and consists of non-violent and high-quality educational material. The focus is to provide children with a positive experience and increased understanding of the world. Village Early Childhood Center follows the recommendations established by the American Academy of Pediatrics, which has found that too much television viewing has been linked to poor performance in school, overweight children, and the establishment of poor dietary habits. As such, children at Village Early Childhood Center under age two will not have access to television viewing, including, but not limited to: watching videos or DVDs, playing with video games, and all other sources of electronic media.

Electronic media may be offered only as a free choice used to meet a developmental goal, and limited to no more than 60 minutes per week & no more than 30 minutes at a time per child (2 years and older).

Computer use is limited to 15 minute increments per child, except for school-age children who are completing homework, schoolwork, or supervised enrichment activities.

For children age two and older who are in care less than four hours per day, television screen time is limited to 30 minutes per week.

**** Policy derived from: *Shaping NJ, The State Partnership for Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention* www.shapingnj.gov**

Social Media Policy

This Social Media Policy applies to Parents/Guardians, other Family members, volunteers, and visitors at Village Early Childhood Center. Center Staff abide by a Staff Social Media Policy located in their Employee Handbook.

This policy includes, but is not limited to, the following technologies: social networking sites (i.e. Facebook, SnapChat), blogs, discussion forums, collaborative online spaces, media sharing services (i.e. You Tube), micro-blogging (i.e. Twitter), and classroom sharing sites (i.e. Tadpoles).

As part of the duty to safeguard children, it is essential to maintain the privacy and security of all Families associated with the Program. Village Early Childhood Program therefore requires that:

- No photographs taken within the Program setting or at Program special events and outings with the children, are to be posted for public viewing, except those that contain only your own child. Parents/Guardians are advised that they do not have a right to photograph anyone else's child or to upload photos of anyone else's children. (This excludes those photographs taken by staff for use on Tadpoles, the Village Early Childhood Center website, and in other advertising material if family permission is given).

- No public discussions are to be held or comments made on social media platforms using identifying information regarding the Program, its children, Staff, Supervisors and Administrators, or Administrative Business (except appropriate use for marketing and fundraising events) that could be construed to have any impact on the Program's reputation or that would offend any member of the Program or Parent/Guardian associated with the School.

**Any comment deemed to be inappropriate is to be reported to Program Administrators and any action taken will be at the Program's discretion.*

General guidelines for using social media:

- Personal security settings should be managed to ensure that information is only available to those with whom you choose to share information.
- Remember that no information sent over the web is totally secure and as such, if you do not wish the information to be made public, refrain from sending it via social media.

Note: Staff are prohibited from using personal phones, personal email, and personal social media to communicate with Parents/Guardians on matters related to the Program. All Family communication with Program Staff on matters related to the Program is to be done via the designated School email address, phone number, fax number, or Tadpoles platform. All communication is monitored by Program Administrators.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environments they inhabit. VECC utilizes books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach children respect for the world and the diversity of life upon it. The Program's holiday celebrations encourage an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, Families, Staff and community.

Celebrations

Everyone loves to celebrate and VECC is no exception! Families should coordinate with their child's Teachers about bringing in special treats. As a reminder, all celebration items must be store bought and have the ingredients listed on the package. Regulations do not allow food or desserts that have been prepared at home to be shared with other children. Village Early Childhood Center strives to be a nut-free facility. Families should be Allergy Aware when sending in treats and ensure anything sent to School to be shared with others is made in a nut-free facility.

Rest Time Policy

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs on firm mattresses. Staff directly observe infants by sight and sound at all times. Blankets and bumper pads are prohibited for children under the age of 12 months. Swaddling and swaddle-style blankets are disallowed.

The Program provides each child in the Infant room with a crib. Families are asked to send in clean, labeled crib sheets. Crib sheets should be taken home each weekend to be washed.

Preschool children usually need some amount of rest during the day to provide downtime for their bodies to rejuvenate. On average, preschool children (3 to 5 years) sleep 10-12 hours at night in addition to approximately a one-hour nap in the afternoon. Children's nap schedules may vary depending on age or individual needs. Each classroom establishes a naptime routine at the beginning of the school year. All children in Sprouts, Toddlers, Tykes, Pre-K3, and Pre-K4 classes are required to rest on a mat for thirty minutes. Alternate quiet activities are provided for children who have rested or slept for thirty minutes and do not appear to need any additional sleep or rest.

The Program provides each child in the Sprouts, Toddlers, Tykes, Pre-K3, and Pre-K4 rooms with a plastic mat or cot. Families are asked to provide a soft sleep mat that has an attached blanket and pillow and that can be folded or rolled to fit fully in their child's cubby. Sleep mats should be taken home each weekend to be washed.

Sample Sleep Mat:



https://www.amazon.com/davids-kids-Removable-Girls%E4%BC%8CPerfect-Preschool/dp/B0C5LQL34R/ref=sr_1_14_sspa?crid=2E4XEY0OJ9FSX&keywords=sleep%2Bmat&qid=1703879822&srefix=sleep%2Bmat%2B%2Caps%2C87&sr=8-14-spons&sp_csd=d2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9tdGY&th=1

Toilet Training Policy and Procedure

Being toilet trained is a skill that children need in order to develop independence, self-esteem, and the confidence to thrive at school. The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a Family/Teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. VECC is committed to working with Families to make sure that toilet training is carried out in a manner that is consistent with each child's physical and emotional abilities and each Family's concerns.

Toilet training is best accomplished when a child shows the appropriate signs of being ready to toilet train. Each child is different and will show these signs at different stages of development. A child should not be hurried into toilet training before they are ready. Children rushed into training can become upset or distressed, as they are being asked to do things that they are not yet able to control or understand. However, it is equally important to take action and begin training when a child starts showing readiness signs. These signs are a more important indicator of toilet training readiness than a child's age.

Signs your child may be ready to toilet train:

- Your child is staying dry for longer periods of time, often two hours or more.
- Your child recognizes when they are in the process of urinating and defecating.
- Your child can follow simple instructions.
- Your child is able to sit and engage in an activity for several minutes without becoming distracted or becoming irritable.

Finally, and perhaps the most important sign—that your child shows an interest in toilet training. This could look like a child:

- Wanting to stay dry or clean
- Wanting to wear “big kid” underwear
- Showing an interest in what Family members do when they go to the bathroom
- Expressing a wish to use the bathroom like a Family member does

WHEN YOU FEEL YOUR CHILD IS READY FOR TOILET TRAINING

A Family should reach out to their child's Teacher to discuss beginning the toilet training process. We aim to work cooperatively with Families in order for the toilet training process to be consistent for children between the home and school environments. This will aid children in progressing effectively through the training process.

What the Family should do at home:

- Begin teaching at home during a weekend or vacation.
- Use a relaxed manner with the child.

- Use positive reinforcement and consistent practices
- Praise successes on the toilet
- Approach toilet-related accidents calmly

What Staff will do at the Center once the Family begins training:

- Encourage the child to use the toilet
- Assist in training practices and bathroom hygiene
- Use positive reinforcement and consistent practices
- Praise successes on the toilet
- Approach toilet-related accidents calmly

During the toilet training process, a child will be required to wear either pull-ups with pull tabs or trainer pants at the Center until they can ask to use the toilet and control their bladder and bowel movements for a few moments to allow time to access the toilet. Underwear can only be used at the Center once a child has demonstrated this bladder and bowel control and can ask for the toilet appropriately. Before transitioning a child to wearing underwear at school, Staff will discuss with the Family whether or not this milestone has been reached.

Please keep in mind that the activity level at the Center can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the toilet, more so than at home. It is required that Families provide pull-ups and extra changes of clothing. During toilet training a child must be dressed in “user friendly” clothing as much as possible. The best items are shorts and pants with an elastic waist. Soiled clothes will be returned in a plastic bag at the end of the day.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

It is not advisable to begin toilet training when there are major changes in a child’s life or if a child is ill. If the training process has begun and after a couple of weeks there has been no progress made or it is obvious that a child is not ready, it may be advisable to stop the process and retry at a later date.

When the time comes to begin toilet training, if you or your child have any individual requirements, please discuss them with Program Staff and we will try to accommodate your needs. Bear in mind that the Staff need to consider the health, safety, and hygiene needs of all children in their care while toilet training each child. If at any time you have concerns related to toilet training please do not hesitate to have a discussion with Program Staff.

Bathroom Procedures

- When children are using the bathroom facility, Staff will be present in the bathroom and supervise the children by sound and by sight as needed.
- Children are assisted in the bathroom (wiping, ensuring cleanliness) as needed.
- Hands of children and Staff are washed after assisting children in using the bathroom facility and/or after a diaper change.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

Village Early Childhood Center is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all children have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving, help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people and property, and to begin to understand the results of their actions.

Discipline Policy

Village Early Childhood's discipline policy reflects our philosophy of positive guidance with children. We believe discipline means to teach. To be well disciplined is to have learned how to live with reasonable rules the school has set for its students. We use positive disciplinary practices to guide our children.

Positive discipline is the process used to teach children how to behave appropriately and manage their own behavior. Positive discipline respects the rights of the child, the group, and the Teacher. Staff facilitate the child's development of respect for self and others and encourage the child to take responsibility for their own actions. Village Early Childhood Center uses positive guidance and redirection as behavior management practices. Staff encourage the children to make "good choices." The positive discipline methods implemented will be based on the age and developmental needs of the individual child. Staff will guide children in developing impulse control and empathy within their relationships with peers and adults. Through the use of positive discipline, children are taught how to more effectively and appropriately deal with situations and disappointments. If a child is uncooperative, the Teacher will remove the child from the area of conflict. The Teacher will explain why the behavior is unacceptable and redirect the child to a new activity.

Positive reinforcement is a key component in encouraging positive behaviors.

- Prevention is Better than Intervention: Positive teaching techniques produce children who are well-mannered, have self-control, and are pleasant to be around.
- Children Repeat Behavior that is Reinforced: Good teachers reinforce children's appropriate behavior that we want the children to continue rather than their inappropriate behavior.

- Children Do What They Are Taught to Do: Children are imitators; they imitate adults' actions and attitudes. Good teachers make sure they model appropriate actions and attitudes for the children.

Positive Discipline is Not:

- Disciplining a child for failing to eat or sleep or for soiling themselves
- Hitting, shaking, or any other form of corporal punishment
- Using abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment or any other form of emotional punishment of children
- Engaging in or inflicting any form of child abuse and/or neglect
- Withholding food, emotional responses, stimulation, or opportunities for rest or sleep
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for an inappropriately long period of time

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness. Each student at Village Early Childhood Center has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. The Center's usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent, and understandable to the child. VECC maintains a zero tolerance policy for bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to an Administrator.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted as a regular disciplinary practice at VECC. In rare instances to ensure the safety of a child or others, a child may be held gently for as long as is deemed necessary to control a situation.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If the Program deems a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the Parents/Guardians as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. Staff will work together with the Family to evaluate these needs in the context of the Program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need for a Family to find a more suitable setting for their child's care. Examples of such instances include:

- The child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care of the child could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of, the child as determined by medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- There is an undue burden on the Program's resources and finances to provide for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

ENROLLMENT SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION

Termination of Enrollment due to Absenteeism

Students who are absent three consecutive weeks or more during the school year will have their enrollment terminated unless tuition fees are received. If enrollment is terminated in this manner, Village Early Childhood Center cannot guarantee there will be a spot for the child upon return. A Family will have to re-enroll the child with a non-refundable \$130 registration fee. The child will be accepted based on availability of space. (This information can also be found under "Attendance and Withdrawal.")

Expulsion Policy

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons for which a child will have to be expelled from the Program either on a short term or permanent basis. The Program will do everything possible to work with the Family of the child(ren) to prevent an expulsion from the Center. If an expulsion is deemed necessary, the child's Parent/Guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child and/or Family member's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time, decided by Program Administrators, that will allow for the Family to work on the child's behavior or for the Family to come to an agreement with the Center.

The following are reasons a child may be suspended or expelled from the Center:

CAUSES FOR IMMEDIATE EXPULSION

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to themselves or others
- Parent/Guardian threatens physical or intimidating actions toward Staff or other member of VECC
- Parent/Guardian exhibits verbal abuse toward Staff
- Any potentially dangerous behavior by a child or Parent/Guardian

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION

- Failure to pay Tuition and/or fees
- Failure to pay Tuition if child is absent for three or more consecutive weeks
- Habitual lateness in payments
- Failure to complete required forms, including child's immunization records
- Habitual tardiness when picking up child
- Verbal or physical abuse toward Staff

CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION

- Failure for child to adjust to the Program after a reasonable amount of time (Approximately 4 to 6 weeks)
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse toward Staff or other children

Schedule of Expulsion

1. The Parent/Guardian will be informed verbally and in writing both about the child and/or Parent's/Guardian's behavior warranting an expulsion.
2. The Parent/Guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period.
3. The Parent/Guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or family member to return to the center.
4. For non-immediate expulsion, the Program Administrator will provide the Parent/Guardian with an adequate time period to find alternate childcare (approximately one to two-week notice depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety).
5. Failure of the child and/or Parent/Guardian to satisfy the terms of the remedial plan may result in permanent expulsion from the Center.

Actions That Will Not Lead to Expulsion

A child will not be expelled for the following reasons. If a child's Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding the Center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the Center

- Questioned the Center regarding policies and procedures

A child will not be expelled without giving the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) sufficient time to make other childcare arrangements, unless doing so places risk to the child's, other children's, or a Program member's safety.

Proactive Actions to Prevent Expulsion

- Staff will:
 - Try to redirect child from negative behavior
 - Reassess classroom environment, appropriate activities, and supervision
 - Always use positive methods and language while disciplining children
 - Praise appropriate behaviors
 - Consistently apply consequences for rules
 - Document and maintain in confidentiality child's disruptive behavior
- Child will:
 - Be given verbal warnings
 - Be given time to regain control
- *The Program Administrators, classroom Staff, and Parent/Guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.*
- *The Parent/Guardian will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior.*
- *If applicable, recommendations of Early Intervention Services will be given.*
- *If applicable, recommendations of evaluation by local school district Child Study Team will be given.*

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition

Each month's tuition is payable in advance and is due on or before the 25th of the prior month, excluding September tuition which will be due on August 1st. Full payment is due regardless of absence due to illness, vacation, school holiday closings, professional in-service days, inclement weather, or emergency closings. If the date of tuition payment falls on a weekend or during school closure, please submit payment prior. Please see below for Tuition Payment Schedule.

Tuition Payment Schedule

August 1st (September tuition)
 September 25th (October Tuition)
 October 25th (November Tuition)
 November 25th (December Tuition)
 December 25th (January Tuition)

January 25th(February Tuition)
February 25th (March Tuition)
March 25th (April Tuition)
April 25th (May Tuition)
May 25th (June Tuition) *Deposit typically applied

Sibling Discount

VECC offers a 10% Sibling Discount. For Families who have two or more siblings enrolled at VECC at the same time, there is a 10% reduction in tuition for the sibling(s) with the lower monthly tuition rate(s). The full rate of tuition must be paid for one sibling with the highest monthly tuition rate. The Sibling Discount does not apply to any fees (e.g. the Registration Fee).

Tuition Changes

Tuition and/or fees are subject to change at the Program's discretion. Typical tuition increases occur annually. Any unforeseen increases to tuition and/or fees based on costs incurred by the Program will be accompanied by 60 days' written notice.

Late Payment Fees

Tuition and/or fees are considered delinquent on the fifth calendar day following the due date. A \$10/day late fee will be assessed until full payment is received. Although payments may be split between Parents/Guardians or supported by a subsidy, you are still responsible for timely payment of full tuition and fees. If your child's account has been delinquent for more than 30 days, your child may not be admitted into the building until the balance is paid in full or a payment arrangement has been agreed upon with Program Administration. Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply to unpaid balances.

Returned Checks or NSF ACH

A \$50 fee will be assessed if your payment is returned due to insufficient funds. In the instance this occurs more than once, VECC may require you to pay by another method.

Outside of Hours Fees

Drop-off/Pick-up outside of registered hours is not a normal Program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. If an Extended Half-Day student is dropped off or picked up outside of their registered hours and does not have prior written agreement with Program Administration, a \$10/15minutes (per child) fee will be assessed (until 6:30pm). After 6:30pm, a \$20/15minutes (per child) fee will be assessed, starting at 6:35pm, for any child who has not been picked up. Outside of Hours Fees will be invoiced.

Special Activity Fees

Your child may have the opportunity to participate in a special program, activity, or field trip.

This may result in an additional fee before the day of the event. A signed permission slip and remitted fee (if applicable) will be required for your child to participate in such events.

Costs of Collection

If we refer your account for collection, you will pay all costs of collection incurred by the Program including, but not limited to, attorneys' fees.

ATTENDANCE AND WITHDRAWAL

Absenteeism Policy

Regular attendance in the program is very important for children to become comfortable with a regular and consistent schedule. If your child is going to be absent or arrive after their scheduled time, please alert the school. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

If your child will be absent on a regularly scheduled day, ***mark them absent in the Tadpoles App by 8:00 am and include a note regarding the reason for your child's absence (stomach bug, dentist appointment, visiting grandma, on vacation, etc.).***

If the school is not informed of your child's absence, a phone call home may be made. If a child is absent for three or more consecutive days, Village Early Childhood Center will make every effort to contact the family.

If your child is absent because they have been diagnosed with a communicable disease, it is extremely important that you notify the Program immediately so that proper notification can be given to other Program families who may be affected.

Termination of Enrollment due to Absenteeism

Students who are absent three consecutive weeks or more during the school year will have their enrollment terminated unless tuition fees are received. If enrollment is terminated in this manner, Village Early Childhood Center cannot guarantee there will be a spot for the child upon return. A Family will have to re-enroll the child with a non-refundable \$130 registration fee accompanied with the one-month non-refundable security deposit. The child will be accepted based on availability of space. (This information can also be found under "Enrollment Suspension and Termination.")

Vacation

While we recognize the value of family vacations, the Center does not provide credit for vacation days. However, during the months of July and August, tuition is prorated based on the number of weeks a child attends the Summer Program.

Withdrawal

A minimum of 30 days' written notice is required prior to withdrawal from the Program. In most cases your Deposit will be applied to your child's final month in attendance if the required notice is provided and your child has no outstanding balances. The Deposit will not be refunded if tuition for your child's final month has already been remitted. Tuition will not be prorated if you choose to terminate enrollment mid-month. If you elect to re-enroll your child after having withdrawn from the Program, space is not guaranteed. A new Registration Fee and Deposit must be remitted for re-enrollment, even if your child is re-enrolled within the same school year.

Change of Schedule

PERMANENT SCHEDULE CHANGES

30 days' written notice is required prior to reducing your child's attendance schedule. If you reduce your child's attendance schedule, it is not guaranteed that you will be able to increase the days/hours of attendance at a later time. 2 weeks' written notice is required prior to increasing your child's attendance schedule. Such changes in your child's schedule may be subject to a \$50 Change in Schedule fee. A schedule change will not be considered final until a new Enrollment Agreement is signed. If the schedule change requires an additional deposit, the schedule change will also be contingent upon payment of these monies. If the requested schedule is not available, a Family may choose to continue with the current schedule until the requested schedule becomes available. Any additional deposit required due to a schedule change need not be remitted until the requested schedule is available.

ONE-TIME SCHEDULE INCREASES

To make one-time increases to your child's schedule, you must have prior written agreement with Program Administration. One-time increases may be subject to a \$15/hour (per child) fee.

Transfer of Records

When transitioning to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Village Early Childhood Center may be closed or have a delayed opening due to inclement weather. A recorded message will be left on the Program's answering machine by 5:30 A.M.

Please call the school at (201) 767-9909 and listen to the message. An email alert will also be sent via the Tadpoles App. If inclement weather arises during school hours, Families will be contacted immediately upon the decision to close and will be asked to arrange for their child to be picked up as soon as possible.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

Daily attendance is very important. Please make every effort to have your child in school on time every day so that they can get the full benefit of this learning experience.

Anyone picking up your child must be of legal age.

Family members and caregivers that enter the Center are required to self-screen using temperature and symptom screening questions *prior* to entering the building. Anyone exhibiting fever or symptoms will not be permitted to enter the Center. Persons entering the building for drop-off or pick-up *do not* have to sign in at the Office.

Additionally, we ask that Parents/Guardians and caregivers limit the time they are in the Center at pick-up. The Staff will always do their best to speak with Parents/Guardians. However, since Staff are devoted to caring for children, it usually is not feasible to have a long discussion during regular Program hours. Please keep conversations with Staff brief during drop-off and pick-up. If a situation requires longer discussion, kindly arrange for a phone call or meeting with the Staff member.

A letter listing your child's Teacher, classroom, and supply list will be mailed prior to the start of the school year.

ANTICIPATED DROP-OFF PROCEDURES

- Families should ring the VECC doorbell at the church side of the building (150 Harriot Ave) to be buzzed into the building by a Staff member. *Families with children in Infants, Sprouts, or Toddlers are permitted to ring the doorbell by the main office doors (155 Parkway) if they choose to do so.*
- Families should walk their child to the hallway entrance of their child's designated classroom.
- VECC no longer will be using the Infants, Sprouts, or Toddlers egress doors for drop-off.

ANTICIPATED PICK-UP PROCEDURES

- Families should ring the VECC doorbell at the church side of the building (150 Harriot Ave) to be buzzed into the building by a Staff member. *Families with children in*

Infants, Sprouts, or Toddlers are permitted to ring the doorbell by the main office doors (155 Parkway) if they choose to do so.

- Families should walk to the hallway entrance of their child's designated classroom to pick-up their child. If their child's class is not in the room, they should refer to the class welcome board to see where the children are (gym, playground, etc.) and collect their child from that location. Families should bring home any forms, notices, or artwork from their child's mailbox and/or cubby each day.
- VECC no longer will be using the Infants, Sprouts, or Toddlers egress doors for pick-up.

*Drop-Off/Pick-Up procedures are subject to change.

Cell Phone Usage

The times spent in the Center dropping off and picking up your child are primary windows for quick Family/Teacher exchanges and greetings. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you not use your cell phone at any time while visiting the Center.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to a Parent/Legal Guardian or those persons that have been listed on the Enrollment Application as an Emergency or Authorized Contact. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency or Authorized Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify the Program in writing in advance. Your child will not be released to any person(s) not identified on the Enrollment Application without your prior written authorization. Any person(s) picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification upon request. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

If a child has not been picked up after registered hours and we have not heard from their Family, attempts will be made to contact a Parent/Guardian and contacts listed as Emergency and Authorized Contacts. If it is after Program hours have ended, provisions will be made for someone to stay with the child as long as possible. If we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency or Authorized Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Custody

VECC legally cannot deny access to or release of a child to a Parent/Legal Guardian unless there is an active restraining order, a specific schedule of court-ordered visitation rights, or other Court order in place. In order to safeguard your child, we will need copies of any court ordered custody agreement. Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a Parent/Legal Guardian (except when the Program has reasonable concern for the child's safety, as outlined below under "Right to Refuse Child Release").

Right to Refuse Child Release

Village Early Childhood Center may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. If the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) or person(s) authorized by the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) appear(s) physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the Program Administrator and/or Staff member, the child would be placed at risk or harm if released to such an individual, the Center shall ensure that:

- The child may not be released to such an impaired individual
- Staff members attempt to contact another Parent/Guardian, or an alternative person(s) authorized by the Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, the Program Administrator or Staff member shall call Department of Children & Families 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring

Updated supply lists are sent to enrolled families before the start of each school year.

INFANTS

Keep at school: Diapers, wipes, creams, at least 2 full changes of clothes, bibs

Bring to school beginning of week, wash on weekend: 2 fitted crib sheets, sleep sack if applicable (*zip-up sleep sacks are permitted, but swaddle style blankets/sleep sacks are disallowed at the Program*)

Bring to school each morning: Enough clean bottles for a day's use (all bottles must be labeled and dated), any replacements for supplies/clothing that have been used

SPROUTS

Keep at school: Enough cups for a day's use (*cups will be cleaned/disinfected after use in the commercial dishwasher*), diapers, wipes, creams, at least 2 full changes of clothes

Bring to school beginning of week, wash on weekend: A nap mat

Bring to school each morning: Any replacements for supplies/clothing that have been used

TODDLERS/TYKES

Keep at school: tabbed pull-ups/diapers and wipes/creams (if applicable), At least 2 full changes of clothes

Bring to school beginning of week, wash on weekend: A nap mat

Bring to school each morning: Any replacements for supplies/clothing that have been used

PRE-K3/PRE-K4

Keep at school: At least 2 full changes of clothes

Bring to school beginning of week, wash on weekend: A nap mat

Bring to school each morning: Any replacements for supplies/clothing that have been used

All items brought from home (e.g., clothing, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheets, nap mats, etc.) must be labeled with your child's name to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. The Program is not responsible for lost or damaged items. Sheets/nap mats will be sent home on the weekend to be laundered and returned to the Center. Soiled items will be sent home on an as-needed basis to be laundered and returned to the Center.

Cubbies/Communication Station

Upon enrollment, each child will be assigned a "cubby" and if applicable, a slot in their classroom's communication station. Cubbies and slots are labeled with your child's name.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Office. Please note that the Program is not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the Center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity. Please note that the Program is not responsible for lost personal property.

NUTRITION

Food Program

If your child is on solid foods and is in attendance during the meal times listed below, they will be offered the meal that is scheduled for that time frame. Program tuition includes the meals for which your child is in attendance. Foods offered for Breakfast, AM Snack, and Lunch are noted on the posted monthly menu. Families will be notified of any changes that occur after a menu has been posted. Please note, fruit and vegetables offered vary based upon farmer's market availability. Families are asked to bring an alternate snack/meal (packed with ice pack or thermos as appropriate) if they know their child will not eat the school-provided food. Tuition is not prorated or refunded for children who do not utilize the school-provided food for any reason (e.g. preference, religious obligation, food allergy).

| | |
|-----------|---------------|
| Breakfast | 6:45am-8:00am |
| AM Snack | 9:30am* |
| Lunch | 12:00pm* |
| PM Snack | 3:30pm* |

**May vary by classroom*

Food Prepared for or at the Center

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared, and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program and New Jersey requirements for food service.

Food Allergies/Dietary Restrictions

Families of children with a food allergy or dietary restriction must notify the Program in writing so that appropriate food substitutions can be made, if available. The written notification should list appropriate substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy **must** have an Allergy Action Plan for emergency care that is completed by the child's physician or allergist. The Allergy Action Plan must be on file at the school before the child's first day. Children requiring life-saving medication must have the medication as listed on the Allergy Action Plan at school at all times. Please see additional details under the 'Allergy Prevention' section of the Center's Health Policies. A child with a food allergy must have their Allergy Action Plan and listed medication at school in order to be admitted into the building.

Upon the child's enrollment, Families are responsible for notifying the Program of their child's religious or other dietary restrictions. Individual dietary and allergy needs will be posted in the office, the food preparation area, and the child's designated classroom. Food allergies and/or dietary restrictions will be shared with the kitchen Staff.

Foods Brought from Home

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Foods intended for your own child's snacks/meals should be labeled with your child's name, date, and type of food. If the food needs to remain cold it should be packed with an ice pack. If the food needs to be served hot it should be packed in a thermos.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration or come in a commercially-wrapped package that was never opened.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by a child's family unless the food is intended for sharing with all of the children in the class (i.e. during a classroom party).
- Food to be shared with other children (i.e., for a birthday party or other celebration) must be store-bought, in its original package, have a visible ingredient label, and be made in a nut-free facility.
- All food brought to school, whether to be shared with others or for your own child, must be nut-free.

Good Lunch Box Suggestions for a Balanced, Nutritional Lunch:

- Bean and cheese dip, tortilla chips (crackers), tropical fruit salad, broccoli, milk
- Chicken strips, whole wheat roll, orange wedges, broccoli, milk
- Cheese quiche, fresh fruit cup, broccoli, milk
- Whole wheat macaroni, tuna salad, apples, carrots, milk

Infant Feedings

Families of children in the Infant room must provide a Care plan which outlines the child's daily schedule, including the feeding schedule. The Care plan must be updated accordingly.

Infant feedings adhere to the following procedures:

- Infants are held for bottle-feeding until they are able to hold their own bottle. Bottles are never propped.
- Infants are fed "on cue" to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/Teacher.
- The Program supports breastfeeding by providing a place for nursing Parents/Guardians to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child's name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for the allotted time according to CDC guidelines.
- Breast milk and formula brought from home must be dated and labeled with the child's name.
- All thawed breast milk and formula shall be returned to the child's home or discarded at the end of each day.
- Labels on all milk/formula containers should be resistant to loss of the name and/or date/time when washing and handling.

- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child's family.

Children 24 Months and Older

No child shall go more than 4 hours without a meal or snack being provided. Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced, to eat a variety of foods.

HEALTH

Importance of Medical Home

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the National Center for Medical Home Implementation (NCMHI) want children, youth, and families across the country to know that EVERY child and youth deserves a MEDICAL HOME.

A MEDICAL HOME is not a place—it is the way care is provided to your child/youth and your family. At the core of a MEDICAL HOME is a knowledgeable, compassionate health care provider and care team chosen by a patient and their family to take care of a child/youth's health needs. A MEDICAL HOME means that – your pediatric team knows the health history of your child/youth; Listens to your concerns and needs, as well as those of your child/youth; follows up with any other health care providers your child receives care from, when necessary; works in partnership with you to make sure that the medical and non-medical needs of your child/youth and family are met; creates a trusting, collaborative relationship with you and your child/youth; treats your child/youth with compassion and an understanding of their strengths; develops a care plan with you and your child/youth when needed; respects and honors your culture and traditions. You and your child/youth...are comfortable sharing concerns and questions with your pediatric team and other health care providers; routinely communicate your child/youth's needs and family priorities to your pediatric team; remember to tell your pediatric team about any care received between visits (e.g., emergency room visits, urgent care clinics).

Health Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every December, the Program checks with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Children 6 months and older must receive the flu immunization by December 31st. Religious or medical exemptions are permitted for immunizations. However, the Program follows applicable state regulations regarding the attendance

of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

Universal Health Record

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical should be received before, but must be received no later than 30 days after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for ensuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the Program. Universal Health Records must be renewed yearly from the date of exam for children 2.5 years and older and every 6 months for children under 2.5 years. If the universal health form is not updated within one month from the date it expires, your child may be excluded from the Program until the updated universal health form is on file with the school.

Dental/Oral Health Policy

Early detection and management of oral conditions can improve a child's oral health, general health, well-being, and school readiness. The AAPD recommends your child visit a dentist upon the eruption of the first tooth, typically between 6 and 12 months of age.

Village Early Childhood Center will encourage oral health by providing non-sugary drinks/snacks, ensuring bottle-fed infants are never laid to sleep with a bottle, and making drinking water available to children throughout the day. Yearly, the Program will host a dental workshop for the children. Additionally, the Program aims to offer a Family Workshop each year that focuses on the importance of dental health.

Illness Policy

We understand that it is difficult for a Family member to leave or miss work, but in order to protect other children in the Program, a Family may not bring a sick child to the Center. The Program has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. In such cases, the Family of the child will be called and asked to retrieve their child.

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, we will try to keep them comfortable, but they will be excluded from all activities until an authorized person arrives to pick them up. The following list is non exhaustive:

- Illness that prevents a child from participating in activities
- Illness that results in greater need for care than the Program can provide
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others
- Fever (100.5° or higher)

- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet 2x or more within 24 hours
- Vomiting
- Rash unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed and belongings have been sufficiently cleaned to remove any remaining lice
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment

Children who have been ill must stay home for at least the day following the presence of symptoms and may not return until:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours without the aid of medication
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours, if applicable
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless: The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and; the involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

Children who have been ill must stay home for *at least* the day following the presence of symptoms and may not return to the Center until they are symptom free for 24 hours without the aid of medication *or* with a health care provider's note stating the child no longer poses a serious health risk to themselves or others, unless contraindicated by local Department of Health. Families should communicate with the Program about any illness or symptoms a child presents with while at home. If illness occurs while a child is at home Families must abide by the same Return-to-Center protocol noted above (i.e. If a child is ill Sunday morning but recovers and has no symptoms the rest of the day, that child *may not* attend the Program on Monday. The child may attend the Program on Tuesday provided they have remained symptom free without the aid of medication.)

Policy on the Management of Communicable Diseases

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, the child should not attend the Center. If such symptoms occur at the Center, the child will be removed from the group and the Family will be called to take the child home.

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Diarrhea 2x or more in 24 hours

- Vomiting
- Elevated temperature of 100.5° or higher
- Lethargy
- Severe Coughing
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Skin rashes
- Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Stiff neck

The child must stay home for at least the day following the presence of symptoms and may not return to the Center until they are symptom free for 24 hours without the aid of medication or with a health care provider's note stating the child no longer poses a serious health risk to themselves or others, unless contraindicated by local Department of Health.

If your child contracts any of the following diseases, report it to the Center immediately. In such cases your child MAY NOT return to the Center without a Doctor's note.

| <u>Respiratory Illnesses</u> | <u>Gastrointestinal Illnesses</u> | <u>Contact Illnesses</u> |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Chicken Pox | Campylobacter* | Impetigo |
| German Measles * | Escherichia Coli* | Lice |
| Tuberculosis* | Giardia Lamblia* | Scabies |
| Hemophilus | Hepatitis A * | Shingles |
| Influenzae* | Salmonella * | |
| Measles* | Shigella* | |
| Mumps* | | |
| Whooping Cough* | | |
| * Reportable Diseases; as required by N.J.A.C. 10:122-7.10 (a) | | |

Excluded Communicable Diseases

A child or Staff member who contracts an excludable communicable disease may not return to the Center without a health care provider's note stating that they present no danger to themselves or others.

Note: If a child has chicken pox, a note from a Parent/Guardian stating that all sores have dried and crusted is also required.

If a child is exposed to any excludable disease at the center, Families will be notified in writing.

Masking

Any Family may choose to have their child wear a face mask (N95, surgical, cloth, etc.) while at the Center provided that:

- The child is two years of age or older
- The Family completes and submits a Masking Permission Form
- The Family provides multiple clean masks for the child each day
- All masks sent to school are labeled with the child's name

Center Staff will do their best to ensure that those children wear their masks consistently and effectively. Gentle reminders will be given, but no child will be forced to put on their mask. Children will not be allowed to wear visibly soiled masks.

Please be aware that there are times during the day at which masks generally will not be worn. These are during gross motor play (indoor and outdoor), while eating and drinking, and during rest time. Choosing to have your child wear a mask does not preclude them from any required exclusion as a result of close contact with a communicable illness.

COVID-19 and Additional Health-Related Policies

Families should **not** send a child who is sick to school. The Center will primarily use the Illness, Communicable Disease, and Masking policies above, but in order to combat the spread of COVID-19 or other communicable illnesses, may implement additional policies related to exclusion, testing, masking, and/or vaccination in consultation with state and local health departments. Such policies may be in effect for a specified time period or indefinitely. In the event the Center implements additional policies, Families will be notified in writing. Changes in health-related policies are *not* subject to 30 days' written notice before taking effect. Any additional health-related policies will supplement the Center's existing policies. The provisions contained in newly enacted health-related policies will supersede any contradicting provisions of existing policies for the duration of time, specified by the Center, in which the new policies are in effect.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify the Center regarding a child's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed Food Allergies or other allergies (e.g. bee stings) are required to provide the Center with an Allergy Action Plan before the child's first day. Allergy Action Plans must be completed by the child's physician or allergist and detail the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care during an allergic reaction. If needed, an Allergy Action Plan form can be found on the VECC website. Families are required to provide the Center with any medications listed on their child's Allergy Action Plan (e.g. Benadryl, Epi Pen) to be used for treatment at the Center.

Such medications must be:

- as listed on the current Allergy Action Plan
(*e.g. If the Action Plan lists Benadryl, the Family must provide Benadryl. If the Action Plan lists Diphenhydramine, either a name brand such as Benadryl or a generic brand is acceptable.*)
- in original packaging
- within expiration date
- labeled with the child's name.

**additional policies regarding medication are included below in the 'Medications' section.*

A current Allergy Action Plan and applicable medications are required to be at the Center in order for a child to be admitted into the building. Allergy Action Plans on file must be updated at least annually. A list of each child's allergies will be posted in the child's classroom, in the office, and in the kitchen. Center Staff are trained to familiarize themselves with and to consult the list in order to avoid the potential of exposing a child to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medications

All medications (over-the-counter or prescription) brought to the Center should be handed to a Staff member and have specific written instructions for administration attached. Medications should never be left in a child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Center Staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and dispense the medication as directed.

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the Family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication must meet this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. **All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles).** The physician must specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.
- **Non-prescription medications (over-the-counter medications)** require written permission and instructions signed by the child's primary care physician and Parent/Guardian. The written permission must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication may not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless an updated written order by the physician is received.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

PURPOSE: *This policy was written to encourage communication between the child's Family, the child's healthcare provider, and the childcare provider to assure maximum safety in the giving of medication to the child who requires medication to be provided during the time the child is in childcare.*

INTENT: *Assuring the health and safety of all children in the Center is a team effort by the childcare provider, Family, and health care provider. This is particularly true when medication is*

necessary to the child's participation in childcare. Therefore, an understanding of each of our responsibilities, policies, and procedures concerning medication administration is critical to meeting that goal.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES:

1. Whenever possible, it is best practice that medication be given at home. Dosing of medication can frequently be done so that the child receives medication prior to going to childcare, and again when returning home and/or bedtime. Families are encouraged to discuss this possibility with the child's healthcare provider.
2. The first dose of any medication should always be given at home with sufficient time before the child returns to childcare to observe the child's response to the medication given.
3. When a child is ill due to a communicable disease that requires medication as treatment, the healthcare provider may require that the child be on a particular medication for 24 hours before returning to childcare. Families should abide by the illness policy regarding Return-to-Center guidelines unless the healthcare provider issues a note stating that the child may return to childcare sooner because they no longer pose a serious health risk to themselves or others, unless contraindicated by local Department of Health. This is for the protection of the child who is ill, as well as the other children and Staff at the Program.
4. Medication will only be given at the Center when ordered by the child's healthcare provider and with written consent of the child's Parent/Guardian. All information on the Medication Permission Form must be completed before the medication can be given. The Permission to Give Medication in Childcare form can be found on the VECC website. Copies of this form can be duplicated or requested from the childcare provider.
5. "As needed" medications may be given only when the child's healthcare provider completes a Permission Form that lists specific reasons and times when such medication can be given (e.g. "When the child has been wheezing for more than ten minutes.").
6. Medications administered in the Center will be administered by a Staff member designated by a Program Administrator and who has been informed of the child's health needs related to the medication and who has training in the safe administration of medication.
7. Any prescription or over-the-counter (OTC) medication brought to the Center must be specific to the child who is to receive the medication, in its original container, have a child-resistant safety cap, and be labeled with the appropriate information as follows:
 - a. Prescription medication must have the original pharmacist label that includes the pharmacist's phone number, the child's full name, name and phone number of the prescribing healthcare provider, name and expiration of the medication, the date it was prescribed or updated, and dosage, route, frequency, and any special instructions for its administration and/or storage. It is suggested that the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) ask the pharmacist to provide the medication in two containers, one for home and one for use in childcare.
 - b. OTC medication must have the child's full name on the container and the

manufacturer's original label with dosage, route, frequency, and any special instructions for administration and storage, and expiration date must be clearly visible.

- c. Any OTC medication without instructions for administration specific to the age of the child receiving the medication must be accompanied by a completed Permission Form from a healthcare provider (including dosing information) *prior* to being administered in the childcare Center.
8. Examples of OTC medication that may be given at the Center include:
 - a. Antihistamines
 - b. Decongestants
 - c. Non-aspirin pain relievers
 - d. Cough suppressants
9. All medications will be stored:
 - a. Inaccessible to children
 - b. Separate from Staff or household medications
 - c. Under proper temperature control
 - d. In a small lock box in the refrigerator for medications requiring refrigeration
10. For the child who receives a particular medication on a long-term daily basis, the Staff will advise the Family one week prior to the medication needing to be refilled so that needed doses of medication are not missed.
11. Unused or expired medication will be returned to the Family when it is no longer needed or able to be used by the child.
12. Records of all medication given to a child are completed in ink and are initialed by the Staff designated to give the medication. These records are maintained in the Center.
13. Information exchanged between the Family and childcare provider about medication that a child is receiving should be shared when the child is dropped off at and picked up from the Center. The Family should share with the Staff any problems, observations, or suggestions they may have in giving medication to their child at home, and likewise with the Center Staff to the Family.
14. Confidentiality related to medications and their administration to a child will be safeguarded by Program Administrators and Staff. Families may request to see/review their child's medication records maintained at the Center at any time.
15. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will sign all necessary medication related forms that require their signature.
16. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) authorize Program Administrators to contact the pharmacist or healthcare provider for more information about the medication the child is receiving, and will also authorize the healthcare provider to speak with the Program Administrators in the event a situation arises that requires immediate attention to the child's health and safety.
17. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will read and have the opportunity to discuss the content of this policy with Program Administrators. The Parent's/Guardian's signature on this policy is an indication that the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) accept the guidelines and procedures listed

in this policy, and will follow them to safeguard the health and safety of the child. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will receive an electronic copy of the Medication Administration Policy through email communication.

18. A Program Administrator and a Parent/Guardian of the child will review the Medication Administration in Childcare Policy annually.

References: *Information for the Medication Administration Policy was derived from the current Manual of Requirements for Childcare Centers in New Jersey and Caring For Our Children—The National Health and Safety Performance Standards for Out-of- Home Child Care Programs, second edition.*

IMPORTANT NOTE: The Family **must** inform Center Staff in writing of any medication (OTC or prescription) that is administered to their child prior to the child being dropped off at the Center each morning. Such notice should include *the name of the medication, dosage, time the medication was administered, by whom it was administered, and the reason for the medication.* This notice is most easily accomplished on the Tadpoles App under the “Drop-Off Notes” section. Please include the information listed above as a Note under “Med Info.” As a reminder, Drop-Off Notes must be sent before a child is brought to the Center and checked in for the day. This requirement of notice does not apply to prescription or OTC medication that is part of a child’s daily routine *and* that is already notated under the child’s health information on the Enrollment Application (e.g. a multivitamin).

Sunscreen/Insect Repellent Application

Sunscreen and insect repellent should be applied to a child at least once at home to test for any allergic reaction. **For protection during outdoor activities that take place in the morning, Families are responsible for applying sunscreen and insect repellent to their child *before* the child arrives at school.** Village Early Childhood Center Staff members are not allowed to apply sunscreen/insect repellent to students without written permission from a Parent/Guardian. For Center Staff to reapply sunscreen or insect repellent in the afternoon, you must complete the Sunscreen/Insect Repellent Permission Form so that your child can safely participate in all summer outdoor activities. Completing and submitting the Permission Form allows a Staff member to assist with reapplying the sunscreen a Family provides to their child’s bare skin surfaces including the face, tops of ears, bare shoulders, arms, legs, and feet. Sunscreen will not be applied to any broken skin or if a skin reaction has been observed. Any skin reaction observed by a Staff member will be reported promptly to the Family. It is the Family’s responsibility to provide commercial sunscreen with a minimum of SPF 30, labeled with the child’s first and last name.

*Please note, if a Family elects **not** to apply sunscreen to their child, the Family must indicate such on the Sunscreen Permission Form.*

Diaper Cream Application

If a Family would like Center Staff to apply diaper cream to their child, they must request a Diaper Cream Permission Form from the child’s Teacher. Staff will not apply any diaper cream to a child until

the completed and signed Permission Form is submitted. It is the Family's responsibility to supply the specific diaper cream that is listed on the Permission Form.

Other Non-Medicated Products

If at any time during the year a Family would like their child to use a non-medicated product while at the Center (e.g. non-medicated lip balm, non-medicated lotion/cream, etc.), the Family must request a Non-Medicated Product Application Form from the child's Teacher. All products should be applied at least once at home to test for an allergic reaction. Children will not be allowed to apply any product at school for which there is not a signed Permission Form. It is the Family's responsibility to provide the products as listed on the Permission Form. Non-medicated products cannot be kept in a child's cubby. Classroom Staff will keep the products out of reach of children and will do their best to apply the product as requested. Any product brought to school that contains medication (e.g. camphor, menthol, etc.) will be returned to the Family unless the appropriate documentation is on file, as noted under the "Medications" section.

SAFETY

Parking Lot Safety

The safety of children is always a priority. Here are some safety tips to help you do your part:

- « **DO** hold your child's hand in the parking lot. It is unsafe for children to walk ahead of or behind an adult.
- « **DO** park in the parking spots near the black gate
- « **DON'T** leave your car running if an adult is not behind the wheel.
- « **DON'T** leave children, young or old, in the car without an adult.
- « **DON'T** block in other Parents/Guardians.
- « **REMEMBER**, it only takes a second for an accident to occur.

Clothing

Children should be dressed in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities that may include: painting, outdoor play, sand, and other sensory activities. Please remember, "Creativity is Messy," and children should arrive to school in clothing that can get dirty. The playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that can become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment, leading to potential choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Children must arrive to school dressed in weather appropriate attire. During the cold weather, children need warm coats, hats, and mittens/gloves in order to enjoy the outdoors. In changeable weather, children should be dressed in layers. In hot weather, children are most comfortable in cool, loose-fitting clothing.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for play at the Center and make it difficult for children to participate in some activities. Closed-toe shoes are required at all times. Crocs are not permitted.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if there is an air quality alert or if it is less than 32°F degrees.

Communal Water Play

Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play and outdoor water activities. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in childcare, so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the Center area in order to prevent injuries. In the event a child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee), first aid will be administered by a trained caregiver. In such instances, the Family will receive an accident report outlining the accident and course of action taken. If injury occurs above the shoulder or if the injury is a bite, a Parent/Guardian will receive a phone call from a Staff member, alerting them of the injury.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance while Center Staff attempt to contact a Parent/Guardian or emergency contact.

Any incident or illness which results in a child visiting the emergency room or urgent care, a call to 911, onsite medical care, or transported emergency care will be reported by Village Early Childhood Center to the Office of Licensing.

Biting Policy

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers—and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

Biting is an impulsive behavior. Each biting incident will be handled on an individual basis, taking into account the age of the child, the environment, and the suspected reason for the biting incident. If a child bites, a Staff member will immediately attend to and comfort the child who was bitten and provide first aid if needed. Staff will focus not on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting. The Families of both children involved will be notified about the incident. The identities of the children involved in the incident will not be released. Center Staff and the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of the child who bites will work together to resolve the biting in an effort to help prevent future biting incidents.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, the same is expected from all Families at VECC. Hostile or aggressive behavior will not be tolerated. If this occurs, the Program reserves the right to ask a Family to control their behavior or to remove their children from our care.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies. Therefore, the indoor and outdoor Center environment and vehicles used by the Center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the Center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the Center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, Staff, or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, all Parents/Legal Guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of a Parent/Guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. VECC will not accept the responsibility of deciding which Parent/Guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation. The court order will be kept on file. Village Early Childhood Center will comply with the terms of the court order. It is the responsibility of the custodial Parent/Guardian to keep the Program informed of any changes in the terms of the court order. In the instance that Child Protective Services are involved, Village Early Childhood Center will abide by the written instructions of the caseworker.

Mandated Reporters

By the state of New Jersey, we are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect, or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our Center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Fire Safety/Building Safety

Our Center is fully equipped with the following fire safety precautions: fire alarms, emergency lights, extinguishers, fire safety panel, and evacuation cribs.

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and Staff on a yearly basis. Fire drills and evacuation procedures are performed monthly.

Emergency Preparedness

Village Early Childhood Center has an emergency preparedness plan that provides guidelines for a wide range of unlikely emergency situations from a naturally occurring weather condition to a terrorist attack.

The types of emergencies that Village Early Childhood Center prepares for include fire and explosions, severe storms, flooding, winter storms, earthquakes, unexpected utility failures, hazardous and radioactive materials, terrorism and other potentially violent situations, medical emergencies, and family/community concerns and/or violence.

The emergency plan will be reviewed annually by Program Administrators and updates will be made if needed. Each classroom has a copy on file.

Emergency Transportation

In the event a child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a Family member or emergency contact arrives.

Emergency Contact Information

Village Early Childhood Center must be able to contact a Parent/Guardian or caregiver at any time during the school day. It is the Parent's/Guardian's responsibility to provide the school with current, working phone contact information. **Each child's Enrollment Application must list at least TWO emergency contacts, other than Parents/Guardians, who may be contacted in case of an emergency.** If any information regarding a Family's Emergency Dismissal Procedures changes, the Family must notify the Center immediately. In the event of an emergency, the Program's first priority is to keep all the children in its care safe. Second, a Parent/Guardian will be called and expected to arrive within the hour to pick up their child. If this is not possible, the Parent/Guardian must reach an emergency contact. If no one arrives to pick up a child, they will be brought to the local police department.

ADDITIONAL CENTER POLICIES

Program policies and documents not included in this handbook, including those related to Covid-19, are reviewed and updated as needed. Such policies are available for review upon request to a Program Administrator.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

We offer a variety of ways for families to participate in the growth and improvement of our program. We encourage families to take an active role.

Advisors

- Discussion of Program Goals – annual meeting for families to provide input into our plan for the program.
- Family Advisory Committee – which will include 4-5 Parents/Guardians and meets 4 times a year to review progress toward annual goals.
- Classroom Representative – each classroom will have a representative that serves as a liaison between classroom Parents/Guardians and Teachers and help plan family events.

Family Events

We have several events throughout the year that bring our entire community together. Watch for the announcements!

Events may include: Back to School Night, Trunk or Treat, Holiday Singalong, Book Swaps, Family Celebrations

Classroom Activities

Enjoy time with your child and help their class with these special activities.

- Share a meal with your child
- Chaperone a field trip
- Read to children at arrival or pickup
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Donate requested items
- Serve as a Parent/Guardian representative
- Welcome new families
- Contribute to a class Pot Luck Meal
- Family Teacher conferences

Family Workshops

Our menu of family workshops changes annually. Below is a list of workshops we typically offer. We try to offer these in the early evening or virtually. We welcome requests for workshop topics.

- Positive Guidance and Loving Discipline
- Toilet Training
- Safety in the Home
- Child Proofing Your Home
- Brain Development
- Nutrition and Exercise for Small Bodies
- Supporting Your Child in Times of Stress
- Food Allergies
- How to Prepare for a Conference
- Warning Signs for Developmental Delays
- Importance of Play in Child Development

GENERAL RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

Information to Parents Document

<https://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/CCL.Information.to.Parents.Statement.pdf>

Child Development and Special Needs Zero to Three <https://www.zerotothree.org>

NJ Parent Link (provides links to various types of services) <http://www.nj.gov/njparentlink/>

Moms2Moms <http://ubhc.rutgers.edu/mom2mom/links.htm>

Early Intervention System (birth to 3 years) <http://nj.gov/health/fhs/eis/index.shtml>

Family Link (birth to three years) <http://www.familylinknj.org/>

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) <http://www.spanadvocacy.org>

Autism Speaks <https://www.autismspeaks.org>

Family Workshops and Informational Articles may be found at:

United Way Success by 6

http://www.unitedwaynnj.org/ourwork/ed_successby6resources.php

National Association for the Education of Young Children <http://families.naeyc.org/>

Oral Health

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/Pages/ErrorPage.aspx?requestUrl=https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-%20living/oralhealth/Pages/Teething-and-Dental-Hygiene.aspx>

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Let's Move <https://letsmove.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/>

Eating Healthy www.nutrition.gov/life-stages/children

My Plate <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

Communicable Diseases/Preventative Health Care

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/reportable_disease_magnet.pdf

General Child Safety

Child Health <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/default.aspx>

Child Safety www.safekids.org/safetytips

Mental Health Services

Directory of Bergen County Mental Health Services

<https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/mental-health-services/about-mental-health-services>

Perform Care (behavioral health for children) 1-877-652-7624 <http://www.performcarenj.org/index.aspx>

Substance Abuse

Prevention is Key www.mcpik.org

Health and Human Service Resources

NJ 2-1-1 is a statewide information and referral service that is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Go to www.nj211.org

Bergen County Departments of Human Services

<https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/departments-and-services/human-services>

New Jersey Regional Crisis Hotlines

Contact We Care: 24/7 Helpline 908-232-2880 Information and referrals, crisis suicidal helpline and listening service and covers Bergen, Essex, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset and Union Counties.

Addictions Hotline of NJ: 24 hr.: 1-800-238-2333

Gambling: 1-800-GAMBLER

Parents/Guardians Anonymous Helpline-Referral: 1-800-THE-KIDS

National Child Abuse Hotline: 1800-422-4453 **National**

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK **National**

Runaway Switchboard: 1-800-RUNAWAY NJ **AIDS/STD**

Hotline: 24hr: 1-800-624-2377

Health Care:

NJ Family Care <http://www.njfamilycare.org/default.aspx>

New Jersey State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs and Medicare Part D

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/pbp.html>

NJ Drug Card <https://www.newjerseydrugcard.com/index.php>

Housing Assistance <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/programs/emergency/>

<http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dhcr/offices/ha.html>

Additional Resources

Child and Family Resources <http://www.childandfamily-nj.org/>

Devereux Center http://www.devereux.org/site/PageServer?pagename=nj_index

Children's Safety Network <http://www.childrenssafetynetwork.org/>

Family Support Organization of Bergen County for Families by Families

FSO <http://fsobergen.org>