

Hugging Tree Nature Preschool

PARENT HANDBOOK AND POLICIES

2024-2025

Hugging Tree Nature Preschool
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Table of Contents

	Page		Page
Mission	3	Conferences	11
License	3	Health	12
Purpose/Objectives	3	Absences, Sickness, Medication	12
Preschool Staff	3	Medical/Dental Emergencies	12
Board of Directors	3	Injuries and Illnesses	12
Staff Training, PD, and Orientation	4	Policy for Admission/Exclusion	13
Mandatory Child Abuse	4	Procedures to Prevent Disease	16
Curriculum	5	Outbreak or Pandemic	16
Enrollment and Fees	6	Smoking	16
Tax Information	7	Biting Policy	16
Nondiscrimination Policy	8	Safety	17
Hours of Operation	7	Emergency Procedures	17
School Calendar	8	Intoxicated Parent	19
Weather Cancellations	9	Intruders	19
Transportation	9	Lost/Abducted Children	20
Unlimited Access	9	Unauthorized Access	20
Arrival and Dismissal	9	Immobile Students	20
Discipline and Guidance	9	Visitors	20
Withdrawal and Release	10	Volunteers	20
Clothing and Personal Items	10	Pets	21
Snacks and Nutrition	10	Fundraising	21
Objects at School	11	Special Services	21
Field Trips	11	Grievance Policy	21
Communication	11	Supplies	22
		Daily Schedule	22

Hugging Tree Nature Preschool

PARENT HANDBOOK AND POLICIES

OUR MISSION

The mission of Hugging Tree Nature Preschool is to meet the needs of the whole child, while nurturing a lifelong appreciation of the natural world.

LICENSING

Our preschool is licensed by the Iowa Department of Human Services. Strict standards must be met in order to maintain our license. Copies of the licensing regulations are available upon request.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Our program provides opportunities for the preschool child to realize his/her potential. It is structured for the developmental age level of the children enrolled at preschool:

- *To provide a loving, caring, and stable environment for young children in a nature-based setting.
- *To promote positive self-awareness through individual and group activities.
- *To promote meaningful relationships with adults and other children in a sharing environment.
- *To develop responsibility for self and others.
- *To develop motor skills and emotional/intellectual skills through a variety of learning activities and experiences.

PRESCHOOL STAFF

Director/Teacher: Melissa Haugo

Email: melissa.haugo@gmail.com

Phone: 319-423-9798

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The Board of Directors is made up of 3-5 individuals serving 3-year terms. A list of our current Board members can be viewed at www.huggingtreepreschool.com. We welcome diversity of demographics and thoughts within our Board and service is open within or outside of the Hugging Tree community. Please let us know if you are interested in serving on the Hugging Tree Nature Preschool board.

Meetings are open for anyone to attend and are generally run in a relaxed manner. Please feel comfortable bringing suggestions, comments, or concerns to our attention. Our goal is to improve Hugging Tree and be responsive to those involved in the organization and wider community.

SUBSTITUTES

Substitutes used for the Director/Teacher or Associate must meet the regulations of the Department of Human Services. They will sign a statement indicating whether or not they have: 1. A conviction of any law in any state or any record of founded child abuse or dependent adult abuse in any state, 2. A communicable disease or other health concern that could pose a threat to the health, safety, or well-being of the children, 3. Have been informed of the their responsibilities as a mandatory reporter, and 4. Undergo the record check process when the person is responsible for child care for a child other than the person's own child or has access to other children when they are alone. Records of the record check process shall be maintained as required in IA Code 109.9(1).

STAFF ORIENTATION, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND TRAINING

Our staff will receive a copy of and orientation of the center's policies and licensing regulations at the beginning of each school year. Orientation topics and dates will be documented in the school file for DHS. Each staff member is responsible for receiving training to keep his/her certificates for First Aid, CPR, Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting, continuing education hours, and OSHA Universal Precautions current.

Our preschool director/teacher is licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and holds an Elementary Education degree, and/or an Early Childhood Endorsement. Our staff will hold current certification in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). In addition, our preschool staff will meet DHS requirements for continuing education each year. Ten hours of professional development are required the first year for all staff and eight hours are required each year after for the director and six hours thereafter for the associate. Each staff person will also receive training in universal precautions, and maintain current certification for mandatory reporting of child abuse.

MANDATORY CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

Under Iowa Law, preschool employees are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect. The intent of this law is to protect children and to bring families into contact with those who can provide appropriate help. Volunteers must sign a written statement acknowledging that they are aware they are also mandatory reporters according to state regulations.

CURRICULUM AND ACTIVITIES

Nature-based learning is the combination of early childhood education and environmental education. Developmental domains are combined with environmental literacy. While building developmental skills in a natural environment, a nature connection is made. Children become aware of the relationships between themselves and the land.

Nature-based learning allows opportunities for creative, sensory rich, child-led activities; it is simultaneously stimulating and calming.

At Hugging Tree, we use emergent curriculum in our planning. Emergent curriculum is defined as a process where teachers plan activities and projects based on the specific group of children they are working with, taking into account their skills, needs, and interests.

The process starts with the teacher carefully observing, listening to, documenting, and visiting with the children to discover their interests. The teacher thoughtfully plans the environment by offering different materials for the children to explore. While exploring the materials, an in-depth project may emerge. The project may last several days to several months.

As part of the in-depth project work, many important skills are developed and curriculum areas are covered. Examples are:

- * math
- * science
- * literacy
- * communication
- * critical thinking
- * problem solving
- * collaboration
- * creativity

Through this approach, the children guide their own learning and the teacher gains greater understanding of each child's individual needs. There is a balance of unstructured learning and intentional teaching.

To assure all developmental domains are addressed, Hugging Tree utilizes *The Creative Curriculum* and the Iowa Early Learning Standards. *The Creative Curriculum* is a research based curriculum that encompasses four main areas of development: social/emotional, cognitive, physical, and language.

We will spend most of our day outside if the wind chill and/or temperature are above 0 degrees. Appropriate clothing is essential. Parents must be certain children come to school with warm coats, hats, and mittens in cold weather and boots and snow pants when it is snowing or snow is on the ground.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES AND AGE REQUIREMENTS

Children attending our preschool program must be 3, 4, or 5 years of age by September 15, 2024. Children attending preschool must be potty trained by the time school begins. Each class has a maximum of 8 students.

Registration: Complete the Application of Registration form and return with a \$50.00 non-refundable application fee. No forms will be accepted without the application fee.

The forms listed below are required forms that must be completed before your child's first day of attendance. Because the State of Iowa requires these forms, we do not have the ability to make any exceptions. **Please fill out all spaces on the forms.** If something does not apply, please write N/A in the section. **If your child's enrollment packet is not returned to the preschool by August 15, we will have to deny attendance.**

REGISTRATION FORMS REQUIRED

1. Registration Form
2. Physical Examination Form or a Health Update Form
3. Parental Emergency Medical Consent Form
4. Travel and Activity Authorization and Picture/Information Release Form
5. Field Trip Release Form
6. Current Immunization Record
7. Liability Waiver
8. Tuition Contract

All information on these forms is confidential. They are to be filled out, mailed to the preschool, or brought to the preschool before the first day of school. When you return these forms/please make sure you have put your signature on all PARENT SIGNATURE LINES.

Enrollment: Your child is permanently enrolled in the class when your first of nine tuition payments is received—at any time between the date you register and August 15th. If the first tuition payment is not paid by August 15th, your placement may be forfeited. Registration for the upcoming school year begins in early spring. Returning students and their siblings may register 2 weeks before the community.

A \$35 fee will be charged for switching classes after the start of the school year. This fee is charged when any change in class enrollment is made.

FEES AND PAYMENTS

Tuition can be paid on the first day of each week (Monday or Tuesday) or monthly by the 1st of each month.

Payments are considered late if:

- * Weekly payments are received on Wednesday or Thursday.
- * Monthly payments are received after the 1st of the month.

A \$25 late fee will be charged on all late payments or returned checks.

In the event that tuition is one month overdue and alternate arrangements have not been discussed with the director, your child will not be allowed to attend Hugging Tree Nature Preschool until payment is made in full.

Refunds for days missed because of illness/ appointments, or vacations are not possible since our operating costs continue, and we save space for your child. If you are having temporary problems, please talk to us so that we can work something out. For your convenience, the yearly tuition has been divided into equal installments (September-May); this is a fixed amount regardless of the number of days the classes meet each month. All tuition payments must be made by check or online. Parents may set up with their bank to make automatic payments for tuition.

Tuition will not be refunded or prorated for any school closings.

There are two built in make-up days in case of inclement weather.

TAX INFORMATION

If you claim the tax credit for child or dependent care expenses on your income tax you will need this information:

Hugging Tree Nature Preschool
1617 Rainbow Dr.
Waterloo, IA 50701

Tax identification number: 86-1907430

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Hugging Tree Nature Preschool admits students of any race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, or other school-administered programs.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The preschool is open the following hours:
Monday through Friday 9:00 am – 3:30 pm.

- Drop off times are 9:00 am and 12:00 pm. Pick up times are 12:00 pm and 3:30 pm. **Drop offs and pick ups outside the above times are disruptive to our day and are strongly discouraged.** Please keep this in consideration when scheduling appointments.

Families may choose to register for a two day class on Tuesday and Thursday, a three day class on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, or a five day class, Monday through Friday. All classes meet 9:00 am – 12:00 pm or 9:00 am – 3:30 pm.

Hugging Tree Nature Preschool

2024-25 School Calendar

September

Tuesday, September 3 First Day of School!

Friday, September 20 No School

October

Friday, October 25 No School

November

Monday, November 11 Parent/Teacher Conferences (evening)

Tuesday, November 12 Parent/Teacher Conferences (evening)

Wednesday, November 13 Parent/Teacher Conferences (evening)

Thursday, November 14 No School

Friday, November 15 No School

November 27-29 No School – Thanksgiving Break

December

Friday, December 6 No School

December 23 - January 3 No School - Christmas Break

January

Monday, January 6 School Resumes

Friday, January 17 No School

Monday, January 20 No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February

Friday, February 14 No School

Thursday, February 27 No School or Make-Up Day

Friday, February 28 No School

March

Monday, March 3 Parent/Teacher Conferences (evening)

Tuesday, March 4 Parent/Teacher Conferences (evening)

Wednesday, March 5 Parent/Teacher Conferences (evening)

March 17-21 No School - Spring Break

April

Monday, April 4 No School or Make-Up Day

Friday, April 18 No School

Monday, April 21 No School or Make-Up Day

May

Friday, May 2 No School

Monday, May 12 No School or Make-Up Day

Friday, May 23 Last Day of School!

WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

We will follow Waterloo Community Schools for weather-related delays and closings.

Tuition will not be refunded or prorated for any school closings.

There are two built in make-up days in case of inclement weather.

TRANSPORTATION

We do not currently provide transportation to and from preschool. Transportation arrangements must be made by parents. The preschool may be able to provide a list of families who have indicated an interest in carpooling.

UNLIMITED ACCESS

Parents and guardians have unlimited access to their children. A court order prohibiting parental contact must be in a child's file to deny access. A picture of the restricted parent must be provided by the custodial parent/guardian.

Please feel free to visit the preschool at any time, however, please consider the needs of the children as they become accustomed to our preschool routine and establish a classroom community during the first two weeks of the school year.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Drop off times are 9:00 am and 12:00 pm. Pick up times are 12:00 pm and 3:30 pm. **Drop offs and pick ups outside the above times are disruptive to our day and are strongly discouraged.** Please keep this in consideration when scheduling appointments.

A fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged if more than 5 minutes late picking up. This fee will be added to the next month's tuition.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

Each child is encouraged to be responsible for his/her own behavior. The positive approach to discipline includes the use of anticipatory guidance, redirection, natural or logical consequences, and positive reinforcement. When working with young children, our emphasis is on the development of self-control and character. We will provide an atmosphere of kindness and caring. The child will know that he/she is loved even though we may not love his/her behavior. When it is necessary to use discipline, only gentle methods will be used. These methods include: asking the child to repeat the behavior in the correct manner, removing the child from the situation, ignoring inappropriate behavior, giving direction to resolve the conflict, and setting well defined limits. We do not allow discipline involving physical punishment, verbal threats, or shouting.

If a child has had difficulty adjusting to the program, then a meeting will be held between the teacher and parent. At this time, they will discuss the situation and problem solve to find a way to help the child benefit from his/her experience at Hugging Tree Nature Preschool. If a child is not successfully able to participate and meet the behavioral expectations of the program, another meeting will be held to determine if the child will be able to remain in the program. The director may also meet to discuss any benefits provided from a consultation with Central Rivers AEA.

WITHDRAWAL AND RELEASE

If your child is not ready for the group experiences at preschool, or if his/her needs are not being met in the group setting, we may ask for a confidential conference with you. We do not believe a child should remain in preschool unless the child derives some benefit from the program and therefore, we may decide to postpone the preschool experience. If you decide that your child's needs are not being met by his/her experience in the group setting, please feel free to ask us for a conference.

CLOTHING AND PERSONAL ITEMS

Because of the wide range of activities your child will participate in, it is recommended that children be dressed in washable, comfortable clothes that allow the child independence at restroom time. We ask that children wear tennis shoes or hard-soled street shoes for their own safety. Please try to make sure that all outdoor wear clothing can be put on and secured by your child. Example: no lace up boots, coats that button...etc. Please be sure to mark all sweaters, jackets, caps, boots, mittens, etc. with your child's name. Teachers will assist children in keeping track of their belongings; however, we cannot be responsible for lost, stolen or broken articles.

As a precaution, we ask that your child has an extra set of clothing at the preschool as accidents do happen. In the event that Hugging Tree clothing is sent home with your child, please wash and return them as quickly as possible.

SNACKS AND NUTRITION

Hugging Tree Nature Preschool will be preparing two snacks and beverage and lunch for your child each day. We follow CACFP guidelines for snacks and lunches.

You will be asked to pay a snack fee at the beginning of the year. We will limit cookies and cake to special occasions like birthdays and parties. If your child would like to bring a special treat (for his/her birthday, etc.), a treat day can be scheduled with the teachers. Teachers should be made aware of any food allergy and adjustments will be made to the snacks as necessary.

OBJECTS BROUGHT TO SCHOOL

Our school provides plenty of creative toys, so we ask that you do not send toys with your child to preschool unless a teacher requests them. Please do not send money, play weapons, or food, and keep in mind, many children playing with a toy could mean accidental breakage or loss. Hugging Tree Nature Preschool will not be responsible for any lost or damaged items brought from home.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips will be scheduled throughout the year. Parents will be notified prior to each field trip. If you do not want your child to go on a particular field trip, please inform the preschool that your child will be absent that day.

Parents may be needed to serve as helpers on field trips. Younger siblings of preschool students may not accompany the preschool on field trips. Children are not allowed to ride in the front seat. **Each child must be buckled into a child safety seat.** Parents that chauffeur preschool children for field trips must have a valid driver's license and proof of insurance, they must meet the requirements of volunteers and have a criminal and background check. Parents cannot chauffeur for field trips if they are under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription or nonprescription drugs that could impair their ability to operate a motor vehicle.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

Communication between families and the preschool staff is very important. Please feel free to speak with us at any time if there is something you would like to share with us about your child that could help us to better understand him/her, or if you have questions or concerns regarding their preschool progress. If we are aware of special circumstances, we can offer support and encouragement. Our preschool's basic communication with families will consist of:

1. Staff members will be available to speak to families personally on a daily basis.
2. The staff may also be contacted by phone or email.
3. Informal conferences may also be scheduled with our preschool staff.
4. Please check your child's backpack daily for projects and updated information.
5. A newsletter from the teacher will be emailed weekly.

If additional assistance is needed to clarify information, the preschool staff will contact UNI for translation services or Central Rivers AEA for special education clarification.

CONFERENCES

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled for November and March. You will be notified in advance and asked to sign up for a time to come to school and visit with the teacher. Missed conferences will not be rescheduled. A conference may be requested, however, at any time either by preschool staff or upon parent request.

HEALTH

Absences and Sicknesses:

Please call or email before school starts when your child is ill or will be absent. If your child will be absent for several days, please send a note stating the dates he/she will be absent.

If your child is sick, please do not send him/her to preschool. A sick child will not benefit by being at preschool. In fact, it can be a frightening experience and may also spread illness to other children. If symptoms of illness are observed, or should a child become ill during preschool, a parent will be notified immediately. The child will be kept comfortable until a parent arrives. Children need to be free of vomiting, diarrhea, or fever of 100F or higher for at least 24 hours before returning to preschool.

Medications:

Parents must provide the original container and directions for all medications. A medication form will be filled out by parents.

Injury or Illness at School:

In the event that your child is injured at the center, a written report will be given to you to explain the injury. If children are running a temperature over 100, the parent will be contacted. Other symptoms for which parents will be contacted are vomiting, diarrhea, severe continuous coughing, pinkeye, suspicious rashes, swollen glands, or head lice. Children must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to preschool.

Medical and Dental Emergencies:

The staff is trained in CPR and first aid and will administer when necessary. First aid kits are located in all program areas. In the case of an accident or sudden illness, the parent/guardian will be notified immediately and the child will receive prompt medical care, as directed in your medical consent form for physicians and dentists. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the individuals you designated as emergency help will be called. Please let these individuals know where you will be if you do not plan to be home or at work during preschool hours.

We also strongly suggest that you tell your child what your plans are for the time he/she is in preschool—visiting a friend, staying home, going to the bank, shopping, etc.—be specific. It is comforting for your child to know where you are when there is an emergency, but, even more important, it is nice if your child needs you and he/she can tell the teachers that you are probably at the store, work, etc.

If no one can be reached, or if the situation warrants immediate care, drivers from the approved driver list of the center the child/children must be transported to another site. When warranted, an ambulance will be utilized for transport.

Policy for Admission and Exclusion from Child Care Due to Illness

A diagnosis of disease can only be made by the child's health care provider. The parent, legal guardian, or other person the parent authorizes shall be notified immediately when a child has any sign or symptom that requires exclusion from the preschool program. The preschool shall ask the parents to consult with the child's health care provider, and to keep the preschool informed of the advice received from the health care provider. Hugging Tree Nature Preschool reserves the right to admit or exclude a child regardless of the health care provider's recommendations. The child's health care provider shall determine if antibiotics or other medication are required for treatment of an illness. The use of antibiotics for illness is not required or encouraged as a condition for attendance at the early childhood education or care program unless noted below.

Children with the following conditions may be permitted to attend preschool if they can:

- 1) Participate in the usual daily activities with other children and the early childhood education;
- 2) Or the care provider is not leaving the other children unattended to care for the ill child.

Children with the following conditions may be permitted to attend:

- 1) Young children may have as many as six respiratory illnesses each year. These diseases include... the common cold, croup, bronchitis, pneumonia, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and otitis media (ear infection).

Exclusion of children with these illnesses from early childhood education and care has not helped in preventing these infections:

- 2) Children who are carriers of an infectious disease in their stool or urine that can cause illness, but who have no symptoms. Exceptions include E. coli 0157:H7, Shigella or Salmonella typhi;
- 3) Children with conjunctivitis (pink eye) who have a clear, watery eye discharge and do not have any fever, eye pain, or eyelid redness;
- 4) Children with a rash, but no fever or change in behavior;
- 5) Children with cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection, parvovirus B19, HIV or carriers of Hepatitis B;
- 6) Shingles (herpes zoster), children shall keep sores covered by clothing or a dressing until sores have crusted;
- 7) Pediculosis (head lice), there is no need for the child to be sent home before the end of the day and can return after first treatment. Parents should be notified.
- 8) Children with influenza may return to early childhood education and care when the child feels well enough;
- 9) Children with Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) do not need to stay home as long as the wound is covered and drainage is contained;

10) Children with norovirus infection who have no diarrhea and are not otherwise ill, may remain in the program if special attention is paid to hand washing and maintaining a clean environment. See part II for children who have had diarrhea and/or vomiting;

11) Children who have ringworm. Children with ringworm should **not** go to the gym, swimming pools or play contact sports. Treatment may take at least four weeks;

12) Children with viral meningitis may return to child care when the child feels well enough.

To ensure the overall health and safety of all the children, we ask that you not bring your child to preschool if one or more of the following exists:

1) The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in child care center activities including outdoor play;

2) The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without risking the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care;

3) The child has one of the following, unless medical evaluation by a health care professional indicates that you can include the child in the child care center's activities:

a. Fever, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness until medical professional evaluation finds the child able to be included at the facility;

b. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness like:

i. Lethargy that is more than expected tiredness,

ii. Uncontrollable coughing,

iii. Unexplained irritability, fussiness, or persistent crying,

iv. Difficult breathing,

v. Wheezing,

vi. Other unusual signs for the child.

4) Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, hard stools, or medication that may cause gastrointestinal damage such as ibuprofen, naproxen, or aspirin;

5) Vomiting illness (two or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours) until vomiting resolves or until a health care provider determines that the cause of the vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration;

6) Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than two hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms;

7) Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines that the child is noninfectious;

8) Rash with fever or behavior change, until a health care provider determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease;

- 9) Diarrhea, defined as loose, watery, and frequent stools. Children with diarrheal illness of infectious origin generally may be allowed to return to child care once the diarrhea resolves, except for children with diarrhea caused by Norovirus, Salmonella typhi, Shigella, or E. coli 0157:H7. For Salmonella typhi, three negative stool cultures are required. For Shigella or E. coli 0157:H7, two negative stool cultures are required taken at least 24 hours apart. If treated with antibiotics, samples should not be taken less than 48 hours after therapy is done;
- 10) Norovirus, children not in diapers and child care center staff with diarrhea and/or vomiting should remain at home until 24 hours after diarrhea and/or vomiting cease, and until stools are formed. Children in diapers should remain at home for three days following cessation of diarrhea and/or vomiting and until stools are formed;
- 11) Erythema infectiosum(5th Disease), keep child at home if fever is present;
- 12) Pink eye (conjunctivitis) with purulent discharge (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge), child may go back to child care when all symptoms are gone;
- 13) Scabies, until after the first treatment; Iowa Department of Public Health 12/07
- 14) Tuberculosis, until a health care provider or health official states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend care;
- /15) Impetigo, until 24 hours after the child started medicine from the health care provider;
- 16) Strep throat or other streptococcal infections, until 24 hours after antibiotics are started;
- 17) Varicella-Zoster (Chickenpox), until all sores have dried and crusted;
- 18) Pertussis, until five days of appropriate antibiotic treatment have been completed or 21 days of cough if no antibiotics are given;
- 19) Mumps, child can go back to child care five days after start of symptoms or until symptoms are gone, whichever is longer;
- 20) Hepatitis A virus, until one week after start of symptoms;
- 21) Measles, until four days after onset of rash;
- 22) Rubella, until six days after onset of rash;
- 23) Herpes simplex, children with herpetic gingivostomatitis, an infection of the mouth caused by the herpes simplex virus, who do not have control of oral secretions, shall be excluded from child care. Children with mild cases who do have control of their mouth secretions may not have to be excluded; or
- 24) Meningitis (bacterial), child may return to child care 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

If a child becomes ill while in child care and it is determined that the child should be excluded:

- Contact immediately the parent, legal guardian, or other person authorized by the parent;
- Care for the child apart from other children;

- Give appropriate attention and supervision until the parent picks the child up; and
- Give extra attention to hand washing and disinfecting surfaces.
- Use Universal Precautions

Procedures to Prevent Disease:

All preschool teachers are trained in infectious disease control. It is the practice of our center to ensure good hand washing practices. Children and staff must wash their hands following any bathroom activity and before any food activity. All children are taught the technique of using warm water, soap, and friction. In order to prevent the spreading of any contagious disease, staff is required to wear gloves when treating children with blood or body fluids.

CANCELLATIONS DUE TO CONTAGIOUS OUTBREAK OR PANDEMIC

If we have to close preschool due to either of these causes all effort will be made on the part of the teacher to provide learning to continue for your child. We will do this by internet with web sites, stories read by teachers and others, craft, science and academic activities resources and ideas. If the internet is not possible, packets will be provided for pick up at an arranged location. Because the preschool is offering continued learning opportunities tuition will still be due on a regular basis. Consideration will be given on a case to case basis, if adjustments are made. Participation is expected but strictly voluntary, no adjustments are made for non-participation.

SMOKING

Smoking and use of tobacco products is prohibited at all times in the preschool and every vehicle used to transport children. It is also prohibited in the outdoor play area during hours of operation of the center

BITING POLICY

Biting is a very common behavior among children from birth to age three. Biting is a form of communication, as biting is almost always a response to the child's needs not being met or coping with a challenge or stressor. We offer small class sizes to try to ensure a healthy relationship develops between teachers and child. This allows each teacher to recognize each child's needs and to adjust routines to individualize care. Teachers can anticipate behaviors that are likely to occur and redirect children to help guide them toward controlling their own impulses.

Immediate Response to Biting

The teachers shall keep their feelings in check and not express frustration to the child and they will also ensure that all children are safe from being bitten again. After the incident, the child that bit will be addressed in a firm and clear way by the teachers. The teachers will also shift their attention to the child that was bitten and show concern and support. The child shall immediately be cared for and all first aid procedures will be administered as necessary. The teachers may suggest that a health care provider see the child that was bitten, as there are possibilities for tetanus, hepatitis, or infection.

Lastly, there will be a discussion with the child that bit about different strategies that can be used next time, instead of biting.

Assessment of Supervision, Context, and Environment in Which the Biting Occurred

We will assess the quality of relationships between the child and the teachers. We will ensure there is a nurturing relationship established and that all the child's needs, routines, and preferences are being considered.

We also will assess the environmental influences on the child's behavior. Does the environment prevent large groups and reduce disorder? Is the preschool organized to minimize stress? Is there a quiet place a child can go when overwhelmed?

We will assess the social emotional supports for the children. Are the children provided safe and secure daily routines? Do teachers routinely assist children with identifying feelings and learning to calm themselves?

All assessments will be made through observations and documentation to determine what is causing the behavior.

Notifications and Documentation Process

An incident report form will be filled out for the children involved. A paragraph describing the incident will be submitted on the incident report form. The teachers will also give a brief verbal description to the families and under no circumstance will the teacher disclose the name of the child that bit or was bitten. The incident report will need to be signed and a copy will be given to the family and a copy will be kept in the child's file. If the biting continues, confidential observations will be recorded regarding the child, the environment, and the teachers' interactions. Interventions will be tried and documentation of the results of each intervention will be made also

SAFETY

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Inclement Weather or Blizzard:

Weather related cancellations, postponement, or early closure will follow the Waterloo Community Schools and will be announced over the following media outlets: KWWL TV channel 7, KWAY Radio 93.3 FM, and KWAY 1470 AM. If Waterloo Community Schools have a 2-hour delay, Hugging Tree Nature Preschool will open at 11:00 am that day. If Waterloo Community Schools dismiss early, Hugging Tree Nature Preschool will dismiss at the same time.

Tuition will not be refunded or prorated for any school closings.

Fire:

Emergency plans for fire (including a diagram of escape routes) are written and posted in the home, by each exit. Emergency procedures will be practiced monthly. Children's emergency information will be taken when leaving the building. In case of fire, all children and staff will proceed to the nearest exit and meet at the bus stop bench at the west edge of the property. Children will be counted, and parents will be contacted as soon as possible to pick up their children.

Tornado:

In the event of a tornado warning, children will be moved to the basement as the determined safe area. As the children gather in the assigned area, each child will kneel, put their head in their lap, using their arms to cover the back of their head. Children will be counted. If structural damage occurs, police will be notified, and staff and children will walk to Dave Wallbaum's home. Children's emergency forms will be taken if leaving the building.

Earthquake:

As determined by the staff, children and staff will go outside and move away from the building. If there is structural damage to the building, children will walk with staff members to Dave Wallbaum's home. Children will be counted, and parents will be contacted as soon as possible to pick up their children.

Power Failure:

Children will remain in the home. We will continue to follow scheduled activities if possible. We will contact parents to pick up children if early dismissal is necessary.

Floods:

Staff will be informed by the city of Waterloo if evacuation is needed because of flooding from the Cedar River. Parents will be called immediately upon evacuation notification. The students should be picked up as soon as possible within 1 hour. If immediate evacuation is required, the students will go to the Cedar Valley Sportsplex or The W.

Bombs:

Any staff informed of a bomb threat will immediately notify the Waterloo Police Department. The school will be evacuated to the Cedar Valley Sportsplex. Children will be counted, and parents will be contacted as soon as possible to pick up their children. Children's emergency forms will be taken when leaving the building.

Chemical Spills:

Staff and children will leave the area immediately. A staff member will contact the Waterloo Fire Department and follow their directions. Staff and children will evacuate the building according to the fire department instructions, if necessary. Children will be counted. Staff will notify parents if necessary.

Pandemic:

1. The preschool will follow Waterloo Community Schools and the Governor on closing of the preschool. All families will be notified by phone, email and Facebook private pages.
2. All effort by the staff will made to provide continued learning for the children. This will be offered through the internet on the private Facebook pages, videos, Zoom and other media. If no internet is available an alternative method will be used for the child, possibly to pick up a packet at a location set up by preschool
3. Tuition will be expected but will be addressed and adjusted if needed depending on the length of the closure.
4. The preschool will be completed disinfected and sanitized before children are returned to the preschool.
5. If allowed to return before the pandemic is completely over each child and staff will be checked for symptoms, (ie. fever, cough, rash, etc) before entering the building. The staff and children will be the only ones allowed in the rooms until it is announced safe by local authorities. Parent will be greeted outside the door at arrival and pickup.
6. If a staff member, child or a member of their family becomes sick, they will not be allowed to attend until recommended to do so by a doctor. If anyone has been in a high infection concentrated area or has contracted known virus/disease, the staff member or preschooler shall not attend preschool for 14 days (if the preschool is still open at that time.)
7. Staff will listen each day for announcements from CDC (Center for Disease Control) and Governor and keep families inform of when preschool will be open again.

INTOXICATED PARENT/GUARDIAN

If a parent/guardian comes to pick up a child and preschool staff suspects intoxication, the staff member will attempt to detain the parent and ask, "Is there someone else we could call to transport the child?" Another staff member or church secretary will contact the named person or another person from the emergency contact list and request pick up. The intoxicated parent will be informed of the alternate pick up plan. If unable to contact another pick up person or parent refuses to allow someone else to transport, the child must be allowed to leave with the parent. The parent will be informed that the police will be called, and staff will notify the police of the situation immediately.

INTRUDER

If it is determined that an intruder may be harmful, staff members will close and lock all doors. Staff members will contact the police depending on the situation. We will proceed as instructed by the police. If children are moved, they will be counted by staff. Parents will be contacted if necessary.

LOST OR ABDUCTED CHILDREN

If the child is not found in ten minutes, parents and police will be notified. Staff will proceed as directed by the police.

UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS

According to Iowa law, any person in the preschool who is not an owner, staff member, substitute, or volunteer who has a record check and DHS approval to be involved with child care shall not have unrestricted access to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian, or custodian. Persons who are exempt from the record check process (Chapter 109.6 (6) are granted access in accordance with 109.6(6). A person who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor shall not be present upon the property of the preschool without the written permission of the center director, except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender's own minor child or ward to and from the center.

IMMOBILE STUDENTS

The staff will help any immobile student who needs additional aid during emergency procedures.

Hugging Tree Nature Preschool is covered by West Bend Insurance.

VISITORS

While we appreciate interest in Hugging Tree, we ask that an appointment is made ahead of time if you wish to visit. All appointments will be after 4:00 pm Monday-Friday. No unauthorized visitors will be allowed on Hugging Tree property during school hours.

Parents and guardians have unlimited access to their children. A court order prohibiting parental contact must be in a child's file to deny access. A picture of the restricted parent must be provided by the custodial parent/guardian.

VOLUNTEERS

Family participation in the preschool is welcome and encouraged. From time to time, we will need volunteers to help with field trips and parties. If you have a hobby or occupation that could be of interest to share at the preschool, we would love to have you share it with the children. Volunteers will not have direct responsibility of the children in the classroom. Classroom staff will be present at all times and will supervise the volunteers and the children in the classroom.

Volunteers are required to be at least 16 years of age and complete and sign a statement indicating whether or not they have: 1. A conviction of any law in any state or any record of founded child abuse or dependent adult abuse in any state, 2. A communicable disease or other health concern that could pose a threat to the health, safety, or well-being of the children, 3. Have been informed of their responsibilities as a mandatory reporter as required by IA Code 109.0 (1). If a volunteer drives a vehicle with preschool children for a field trip, the volunteer must complete a criminal record check and background check with finger printing as required by DHS.

PETS

There are two dogs who reside at Hugging Tree Nature Preschool. Both dogs are current on vaccinations and are annually checked at a veterinarian.

FUNDRAISING

The Hugging Tree Nature Preschool may have fundraisers to help offset costs.

SPECIAL SERVICES

When preschool staff suspects that a child has a development delay or other special need, this will be communicated to families in a sensitive, supportive, and confidential manner. An explanation and documentation for the concern will be provided along with the suggested next steps. Information about additional resources will be provided. Parents and staff will then work together to form a plan that is best for the child. A partnership with families, staff, and various agencies, consultants, and/or organizations in the community is of utmost importance. Parents always have the final say in their child's education and are encouraged to advocate for any of their needs or wants. A list of family support services are listed below.

1. Central Rivers AEA-Their services includes speech and language, hearing tests, physical and occupational therapy, and psychological evaluations. (319-273-8200)
2. Department of Human Services, Child Care Consultants (319-291-2452)
3. Regional Child Care Nurse Consultant (319-233-0804 or 800-475-0804) Diane Hoffman, RN.
4. Child Care Resource and Referral (800-475-0804).
5. Poison control (800-222-1222).
6. Community Based Services of Blackhawk County (319-833-3005).
7. Report Child Abuse (800-362-2178).
8. Hawk-I 800-257-8563) www.hawk-i.org Free or low cost health care for children.

HUGGING TREE NATURE PRESCHOOL PARENTS GRIEVANCE POLICY

Should any difference of opinion arise between parent(s) and preschool staff, the procedure outlined below will be followed in an effort to reach a conclusion that is satisfactory to both parties involved.

1. The parent(s) will orally communicate the matter to the teacher of their child's class.
2. If the grievance cannot be resolved in Step 1, the matter must be referred in writing by parent(s) to the Director of Hugging Tree Nature Preschool. If the director is the teacher involved, the matter will be referred to the president of the Hugging Tree Nature Preschool board in writing. The chairman shall meet with both parent(s) and staff member(s) involved to be sure he/she has a clear understanding of the viewpoints of both sides of the issue.

3. If the matter cannot be resolved, the grievance shall be addressed by the full membership of the Hugging Tree Nature Preschool board.
4. If at any time a matter appears to be a legal issue, the Hugging Tree Nature Preschool attorney, Gary N. Jones, will be consulted.

SUPPLIES

Each child should have a backpack or school bag to carry projects and papers safely home with them. It should be easily opened and large enough to hold school papers and projects. PLEASE MARK IT WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.

We ask each child to bring the listed items below. The supplies will be pooled together so everyone in our class can use them. There is no need to label the items because they will be shared. Thank you for your cooperation!

- 6 Elmer's glue sticks
- 4 rolls of paper towels
- 1 package of paper napkins
- 1 blanket to use outdoors and leave at school (labeled with child's name)
- 1 two pocket folder (labeled with child's name)
- 1 backpack (labeled with child's name)
- 1 set of extra clothes (shirt, pants, underwear, socks)

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

Our days vary with the rhythm of the seasons and weather conditions. We strive to spend as much time as possible outdoors throughout the entire year. More indoor time occurs during the winter with dropping temperatures. We will not meet outside if hail, thunder, or lightning are present or if the temperature, including wind chill is 0 degrees F or below.

The times listed below are not intended to be implemented as "hard and fast" transitions during the day. Our daily rhythm offers teachers, parents, and children a sense of how we move through our time together, but it is not intended to be a "schedule". Children find comfort knowing what comes next, but the exact time frames are based on the energy, interests, and needs of the children. This rhythm is a flexible framework, *not* a tightly prescribed timetable.

9:00 am: Arrival

9:00– 10:15 am: Exploration Time: provocations/invitations for play

10:15 -10:25 am: Circle Time: welcome song, question of the day, talking/listening time

10:25 - 10:45 am: Morning Snack

10:45 -12:00 pm: Exploration/Activity Time

12:00 – 12:45 pm: Lunch

12:45 – 1:00 pm: Lunch clean up, free journaling

1:00 -1:30 pm: Story time

1:30 - 1:50 pm: Quiet Time on cots

1:50 - 2:00 pm: Gentle Wake Up

2:00 - 3:00 pm: Exploration/Activity Time

3:00 - 3:15 pm: Afternoon Snack

3:15 - 3:25 pm: Closing Circle

3:25 -3:30 pm: Gather belongings

3:30 pm: Dismissal

OUR FINAL THOUGHTS

Our hope is that your child will have a happy and enjoyable experience of loving, caring, sharing, and learning with us. If at any time you have questions, concerns, or suggestions about any part of our preschool program, please speak with us. We care about our children and our parents, and we want to try and meet the needs of everyone.