

The Winsted Area Child Care Center, Inc.

Parent Handbook

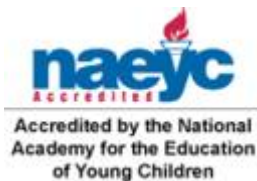


Early Childhood Education & Child Care

In operation since 1979

~This institution is an Equal Opportunity Provide and Employer~

Updated May 2022



This handbook has been prepared in order for you to understand our center policies and gain some general knowledge of our center and its history. Please keep this handbook as a personal reference.

General Information

Winsted Area Child Care Center, Inc. is a state licensed childcare center (License # 15769). In addition, we are a United Way Agency and a School Readiness program. The center has been accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) since 1986, which gives us the distinction of being one of the first centers to achieve this recognition.

Our program offers full and part-time care to children ranging from 6 weeks to 5 years. We currently house 4 Infant/Toddler classrooms with up to 8 children per room, with a 1:4 teacher ratio. In our School Readiness and Preschool classrooms, we can accept up to 20 children per class, with a 1:10 teacher ratio. Our hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 6:30am to 6pm. Additionally, our Before and After School Education program (BASE) is able to provide services to children from kindergarten through age 12. It is open from 6:30am to 9am and 3 pm to 6pm Monday through Friday. BASE is also open during school vacations and operates a summer program 6:30am to 6pm from late June to the end of August.

Our program is proud to enroll children of all backgrounds and cultures. Our non-discriminatory policy states that all children are welcome, regardless of their race, financial standing and developmental abilities, including the ability to be toilet trained. It is our belief that children should not be pushed to achieve this milestone, and therefore offers changing facilities throughout the building, including one of our preschool rooms. WACCC has a moral obligation to serve all children, including those with special needs.

WACCC maintains an open-door policy; families are always welcome to participate in the program. We believe that early childhood education is a partnership between families and caregivers. Likewise, parents are kept abreast of information daily and offered conferences on an annual and as-needed basis.

Mission Statement

Winsted Area Child Care Center, Inc. (WACCC) is determined to provide the highest quality of care for our smallest community members in a safe, nurturing and educational environment. Our program is committed to meeting the social and emotional needs of each child. We will continuously empower parents to advocate for their children. Our hope is to strengthen the family bond by utilizing community resources to support the families of our Center.

Center Philosophy

I [we] sincerely believe that for the child and for the adult seeking to guide him, it is not half so important to 'know' as to 'feel'. If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds grow. The years of early childhood are the time to prepare this soil. Once the emotions have been aroused-a sense of beautiful, the excitement of the new and the unknown, a feeling of sympathy, pity, admiration, or love-then we wish for knowledge about the object of our emotional response. Once found, it has lasting meaning. It is more important to pave the way for the child to want to know than to put him on a diet of facts he is not yet ready to assimilate.

“To Develop a Sense of Wonder”

The Sense of Wonder

By: Rachel Carson

History

The Winsted Area Child Care Center, Inc. is a private, non-profit corporation. It was founded in 1979 as the Winsted Area Public Day Care Center, Inc. by Penelope (Penny) Putnam, Ayrlea Denny, and Evelyn (Lyn) Haskell, all of whom had been preschool teachers for many years. They had been planning and looking for a site for two years before they joined forces with Ron Rosenstein, then a legal service lawyer, who was trying to find affordable childcare for some of his clients.

In June of 1979, the group obtained a diminishing three-year grant for Innovative Day Care from the Office of Child Day Care headed by Frances Roberts. John Groppo was instrumental in passing necessary legislation. In August, a Board of Directors was chosen and the first meeting was held.

In October, the lower level of Temple Beth Israel at 74 Park Place East was offered as a site. In November; Penny, Ayrlea and Lyn, with volunteers from the community; began scrubbing and painting to be ready for the January 2, 1980 opening. Ten thousand dollars of the initial \$25,000 grant was spent to make the site licensable. In June 1982, the grant ended and the Center became a United Way member agency and also applied for assistance from the Town of Winchester to help underwrite the tuition assistance program.

The center grew steadily in enrollment, staff and reputation. In 1986, the Winsted Area Public Day Care Center was one of the first in Connecticut to become Nationally Accredited. It has maintained its accreditation to date.

Funds from the Neighborhood Assistance Act made possible the onset of a toddler program in 1990. In the fall of 1991, a separate Before and After School program began enabling the Center to now serve community childcare needs for children ages 6 weeks through 12 years.

In July of 1995, the Center changed its name to The Winsted Area Child Care Center, Inc. to better reflect the broad range of childcare services being provided.

After years of relentless fundraising and a dream of updated facilities, the Board of Directors, Executive Director and staff, and an abundance of support from our town and local business made their dream come true. In December 2002, we packed up our things and moved into a brand-new building, located on Prospect Street in Winsted. We quickly outgrew the Prospect Street location and expanded once again to offer our School Age children a location of their own on Lake Street. With two locations we currently have enrollment of over 186 children.

We are continuously striving for improvement and are proud to be a quality early childhood educational center.

Program Goals & Objectives

The goals of the Winsted Area Child Care Center and School Readiness Program are to provide a comprehensive well-rounded program with the primary goal of meeting the needs of the “whole child”. We recognize that each child and family have different needs and customs, and do our best to help the families of our community strengthen their family bond. We are dedicated to providing families with the best possible care for their children at the most affordable cost.

It is the specific goal of the WACCC School Readiness Program to offer a safe, caring environment, which meets the emotional, social, developmental, health, nutritional, psychological and educational needs of each child. In addition, we will:

- Admit children on a non-discriminatory basis.
- Promote and facilitate each child’s individual development and self-esteem.
- Provide care and services for children with special needs.
- Create a happy, healthy, productive experience for each child.
- Provide aid to families in need.
- Recognize children with developmental delays and make proper referrals.
- Encourage children to enjoy their childhood.

National Association for the Education of Young Children

You have chosen an early childhood program for your child that is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is a professional membership organization that works to promote high-quality early learning for all young children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood practice, policy, and research. They advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children. The association comprises nearly 60,000 individual members of the early childhood community and more than 50 Affiliates, all committed to delivering on the promise of high-quality early learning. Together, we work to achieve a collective vision: that all young children thrive and learn in a society dedicated to ensuring they reach their full potential.

What is Accreditation?

Achieving NAEYC Accreditation is a four-step process that involves self-reflection and quality improvement in order to meet and maintaining accreditation over a five-year period. Directors, teachers, and families all participate in the process. Programs are required to meet standards grouped into 10 areas: relationships with children, curriculum, teaching approaches, child assessment, nutrition and health, staff qualifications, relationship with children's families, relationship with the community, physical environment, and program leadership and management. A copy of the criteria can be obtained from NAEYC at naeyc.org.

Accreditation is valid for five years from the date of issue on the accreditation certificate. Written complaints about an accredited center should be sent to NAEYC.

To obtain a list of accredited programs, contact the Academy:

National Association for the Education of Young Children
1313 L Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005

What is a High Quality Early Childhood Program?

A high quality early childhood program provides a safe and nurturing environment while promoting the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of young children.

In accredited programs, you will see:

- Frequent, positive, warm interactions among adults and children.
- Planned learning activities appropriate to child's age and development, such as block building, painting, stories, dress-up and active outdoor play.
- Specially trained teachers.
- Enough adults to respond to individual children.
- Many, varied, age-appropriate materials.
- A healthy and safe environment for children.
- Nutritious meals and snacks.
- Regular communication with parents, who are welcome visitors at all times!

Enrollment Procedure

*The following policies have been developed by the staff and Board of Directors to assure consistent, high quality care for all children.

Registration & Enrollment

- ✓ Upon initial interest in WACCC we encourage new families to visit our program, meet the teachers and obtain paperwork. The administrative staff is never too busy to take a prospective parent on a tour of our facility, answer questions and review policies.
- ✓ If there is an available spot for a new child, families are asked to return all registration forms and financial information to the main office.
- ✓ When your registration packet has been received your weekly tuition and start date will be determined. It typically takes 1 week to process all enrollment paperwork. Tuition is determined based on family income, size and current availability of assistance. Payment of security deposit, registration fee and 1st week's tuition is due prior to the start date. *Your security deposit will be used as a credit towards your child's last week.*
- ✓ The State of CT Office of Early Childhood requires that we have your child's up to date immunization records & completed physical signed by your pediatrician prior to your start date (Form ED 191). (See immunization requirement in your packet)
- ✓ Families are asked to fill out a family history questionnaire, in an effort to get to know the families, their history and culture. The questionnaire is not required, but it has proved to be helpful in planning curriculum and activities. It is always fun and exciting to bring new cultures and traditions to the classroom.

- ✓ Before your child begins their first day, we encourage you to make a few visits with your child for at least a few hours. This will help foster a good bond with teachers and children with a little comfort from the parent. It also helps your child to feel secure in their new environment and he or she will know what to expect on their first day of “School”.
- ✓ A Registration fee will be required **annually** to keep information current.

Admission Policies

WACCC accepts children and families of all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. We do not discriminate against any child, regardless of their family dynamic. We are happy to provide a safe, caring and diverse environment for local children and for those in surrounding towns. Our School Readiness preschool accepts all children ages 3 and 4 regardless of their abilities or backgrounds.

Acceptance to the Center: Children are accepted into on a first come, first serve basis, contingent on our enrollment priorities. These priorities are in numerical order as follows:

1. Siblings of children currently enrolled.
2. Children of single working parents.
3. Children of low-income working parents.
4. Children of working parents desiring childcare.
5. Children referred by other agencies.
6. Children of non-working parents who desire socialization.

Non- Discrimination

In accordance with Federal Law, The United States Department of Agriculture and the State of Connecticut, this institution does not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons except in the case of a bonafide occupational qualification on the grounds of race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, including civil unions, financial status, national origin, ancestry, sex, mental retardation, mental disability, learning disability, lawful source of income, sexual orientation or physical disability, learning disability, including, but not limited to, blindness or deafness.

We will maintain compliance with all laws and regulations of the United States and the State of Connecticut regarding equal employment opportunity and public accommodations with respect to all programs, clients, officers, employees and volunteers.

Hours of Attendance

Prior to Registration you will be asked to complete an enrollment form with the approximate time your child will be attending school. This enables us to provide enough staff to cover our teacher to student ratios. We ask that your child spend ***no more than a ten-hour day*** at the center. ****The Center closes its doors at 5:30 pm sharp. If you are late picking up your child more than twice you will be charged \$10.00 for the first ten minutes, then \$5.00/minute thereafter. Your next bill will reflect the late charge.**

Emergency Contacts

In the event of an emergency or illness, it is important that we are able to locate parents or other persons who can pick up your child. All children are required to have ***two emergency contacts***, other than the parents. You will be asked upon registration to provide this information. Please keep these forms updated if circumstances change. *If your address or phone number changes, please contact the office*

immediately. If we do not have the current phone number, it is difficult to notify you should an emergency occur.

Pick-up Permission

Children shall not be released for any reason to anyone that is not on their pick-up permission form. When someone new will be coming to pick up your child, a photo I.D. is required. **NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE!** As with the Emergency Contacts, authorized individuals may also change on the pick-up permission, so please keep us updated.

Legal Custody

The center cannot refuse to release a child to the child's parent or legal guardian who has or shares legal custody of the child. In most cases, both parents have equal custody rights unless a court or valid written separation agreement proves otherwise. If you are experiencing custody difficulties we strongly urge you to keep the center administration fully advised of circumstances that affect your child and their drop-off and pick-up routines at the center. Divorced or legally separated parents are required to provide a copy of custody documentation. Parent records will be kept confidential, in the child's file.

Calendar

We are closed on the following Holidays. Parents will be charged for the following days if it is a day the child(ren) is scheduled to attend WACCC.

New Year's Day	Labor Day	Christmas Eve
Good Friday	Columbus Day	Christmas Day
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving Day	New Year's Eve (close early)
Independence Day	Day after Thanksgiving	New Year's Day

BASE will be closed a few days during the summer before school starts for Staff Development and to clean and organize rooms (to be determined based on the public school calendar). Please see the current schedule of holidays in the enrollment packet for floating holidays and staff development date.

Security Features

The Winsted Area Child Care Center is a secured building. In order to gain access to the building all parents/guardians will need to ring the bell at the front door and be buzzed in by office staff. All other doors to the building are locked from the outside at all times. Any unknown person will not be permitted to enter the building unless accompanied by office staff. Local public school systems instill the same protocol and it is to keep everyone, especially our children, safe. This gives our staff better control of who has access to our building.

Please be advised that all property of Winsted Area Child Care Center is under video surveillance at all times.

Weather and Emergency Closings

We understand that even in stormy weather, our parents need to work. This is why we try to stay open when the weather is bad. However, if the weather is so extreme that it makes travel impossible or too dangerous WACCC will close. Under other unusual circumstances (e.g., water problems, prolonged power outage, public health emergency) we may need to make the decision to close the center. Parents will be charged even in the event that WACCC is unexpectedly closed if it is a day the child is scheduled to attend.

Closing Procedure:

1. Center closings, delayed openings, and early closings are announced on Brightwheel and Facebook by 5:30a.m.
2. If the center has been operating for the day and we determine that the weather is deteriorating we will close the center early.
3. If closing early, parents will be notified by phone or Bright wheel message of our decision and you will need to pick up by the designated time. If we are unable to reach you, we will contact someone from the emergency pick-up list.
4. In the event of a late opening, early closing, or full day closing, all parents will be notified via a Bright wheel text message. Parents are encouraged to sign-up for this service (standard text messaging rates apply but otherwise free to use).

Tuition and Fees Policy

Payment

Weekly tuition is due each Monday for the upcoming week. Statements are generated from the Office on Mondays and placed in student mailboxes or emailed to families (families may elect to get statements emailed on the first page of registration form). Effective September 1, 2015; an account more than 30 days in arrears is cause for withdrawal until the balance is paid. A last day notice will be given when an account is over 30 days past due. If an account is 30 days in arrears more than three (3) times in a 12 month period, the child(ren) will be permanently withdrawn from the program. After three (3) months families may petition the Board of Directors for re-admission into the program. In order to enroll or re-enroll in the program, all accounts must be current and have a zero balance. All costs associated with collection of past monies owed to WACCC, including but not limited to, court costs, attorney's fees and/or any other expenses incurred will be the responsibility of the family. Please be advised that tuition is based on enrollment not attendance. **Failure to make payments may result in termination of Tuition Assistance and exclusion from the Center.** Payment can be made in the form of cash, check, or card.

Withdrawal

We require two weeks' written notice if you choose to withdraw your child from the Center for any reason. If two weeks' notice is not given, the parents will be responsible for two weeks tuition from the date notice is given. WACCC reserves the right to request the withdrawal of any child whose presence is detrimental to the well-being of the whole group or any child whose best interest is not being served by this Center.

Scholarship/Tuition Assistance

Tuition fees are determined by the Board of Directors and Executive Director and reviewed on an annual basis. A Tuition Schedule for the current year is provided at the time of enrollment. The Center offers a limited amount of tuition assistance based upon income, family size, and the availability of funds.

Assistance is available through funding by the United Way of Northwest Connecticut, Office of Early Childhood, School Readiness, and Care4Kids. Also, limited scholarship funds are available for children whose parents are enrolled in a program of higher education, demonstrate financial needs, and satisfy the scholarship requirements. Please check with the office for more information. If any parent has a problem with their fee, they may present their concerns, in writing, to the Executive Director to present to the Board of Directors. All financial information provided with regard to financial assistance is held in the strictest confidence. Prompt payment and current accounts are required to remain eligible for our School Readiness and CDC grants.

United Way of Northwest Connecticut Tuition Assistance

Funding is provided by the United Way of Northwest Connecticut to families enrolled who are not eligible for any other assistance program. Adjusted Gross Income from the family's most recent IRS Form 1040 or current consecutive pay stubs will be used to determine eligibility. A copy of this form must be provided as proof of income and income is verified on an annual basis. Families that qualify for this program will receive a \$20 discount off their tuition rate. A Second Child Discount is available to full time families only. The first child will pay the full rate and the second child will receive a \$20 discount off the full rate.

Office of Early Childhood Tuition Assistance

CT Office of Early Childhood provides the Center with funding to assist parents with Tuition payments. Funding is provided for children who attend the Center on a full-time basis and is based on a sliding scale using the family's income and size. Family Fee Schedules are provided by the Office of Early Childhood each year. Eligibility is determined by using the family's most recent IRS Form 1040 or a months' worth of current consecutive pay stubs. A copy of this form must be provided as proof of income and income is verified annually. A copy of the child's birth certificate MUST be provided.

School Readiness

School Readiness provides the Center with funding to assist parents with Tuition payments. Funding is provided for children who are enrolled in the Center's Preschool Program on a full-time basis. Assistance is based on a sliding scale using the family's income and size. Family Fee Schedules are provided by the Office of Early Childhood each year. Eligibility is determined using the family's most recent IRS Form 1040 or current consecutive pay stubs. Proof of income is verified twice a year. Families utilizing a School Readiness slot are required to have their children in the program for a minimum of 6 hours per day. A copy of the child's birth certificate and proof of residency MUST be provided.

Care 4 Kids

Care 4 Kids provides funding to low and moderate income families who are enrolled on a part time or full-time basis. Care 4 Kids is a partnership working with the Center and the Office of Early Childhood to provide this assistance. Families wishing to apply for this Program may obtain an application in our Office. Our Office Staff are available to provide assistance in completing the application process and forwarding completed applications to Care 4 Kids. Care 4 Kids will review the applications and determine the family's level of eligibility and the amount Parents will be responsible to pay to the Center. Once Care 4 Kids accepts a family into the program, their portion of assistance payments is sent directly to the Center. Parents are responsible for paying the full tuition rate until a certificate is awarded. A refund will be issued if there is an overpayment on the account.

****The Winsted Area Child Care Center, Inc., reserves the right to change tuition rates. Parents will receive at least 30-day written notification of any changes, including rate changes for School Readiness and the Office of Early Childhood funded slots. ****

Collaboration with Community Programs

Throughout the years we have collaborated with outside agencies, to pursue all necessary avenues for children with special needs. These programs include, but are not limited to, the Connecticut Birth to Three System, Winchester Public Schools Family Resource Center, and Northwest Center for Mental Health and Connecticut's Early Childhood Consultation Partnership.

We are committed to serving all children. When a child is registered in our Center with a known disability we will refer to Winchester Public Schools Early Childhood Team and Pre-K. While our staff on-site do not specialize in serving children with disabilities, we will make every effort to bring outside services to work with the child. Every effort will be made to educate our staff on serving the needs of the child. Staff will try to provide a curriculum that incorporates the child and actively involves the parent in development and use of individual education plans, which are designed to meet the child's specific needs.

With the help of the Winchester Early Childhood Team, Family Resource Center and other area agencies, WACCC is committed to connecting families to necessary services that reflect their cultural and linguistic needs.

To begin the process of collaborating with area services the following steps are essential:

1. A formal interview between parents and caregivers is held to discuss the needs, if any, of the family.
2. Proper agency(s) is/are contacted and a request for assistance is made.
3. Follow up with parents and agency to ensure satisfaction with services rendered.

We as professionals of the Winsted Area Child Care Center are committed to providing all necessary services to ensure the success of each child entering Kindergarten. Two representatives from our program serve on the Kindergarten Transition Team, Early Childhood Connections, with the Winchester Public Schools.

Community Agency Support

Some of the Services Referred through Winsted Area Child Care Center:

- Batcheller School's Pre-K, Family Resource Center and Early Childhood Team
- EdAdvance
- Head Start
- Child First
- Birth to Three
- Northwest Center for Family Services and Mental Health
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Children and Families

Thanks to these collaborations, Winsted Area Child Care Center, Inc. is able to provide a safe and nurturing early childhood experience to hard working families in the community, regardless of their background or financial standing.

Our Commitment to Serving All Children and Families

When a child exhibits a need for intervention, such as a deficit in cognitive skills, behavioral issues, or other delay of age appropriate skills, the following process takes place:

1. The first step is to relay concerns to the parents.
2. Together all options are discussed, such as but not limited to: Birth to Three, Child First, Northwest Center for Child and Family Services, local Early Childhood Team, or Batcheller School's Pre- K.
3. With all information in place, the child's teacher will attend the monthly SAT (Student Action Team) where suggestions from specialists in the specific field of delay and other teachers will be presented.
4. Suggestions are taken back to the classroom and different strategies are used. The teacher will also modify the curriculum, focusing on the specific need of the child.
5. If deemed necessary the leader of the SAT will request a planning and placement team meeting (PPT) in which Parent and Teacher must attend to determine an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the child.
6. The lead teacher of the room will incorporate IEP into the weekly curriculum.
7. Follow up with the parent on the child's progress and ensure the parent's satisfaction with the process and its outcome.
8. Continue communication with parents on a daily basis.
9. All referrals are documented and kept strictly confidential.
10. Parents are asked to sign an "Information Release" form.

Referral Process

1. Identify the needs of the family or child.
2. Conference between parent and teacher/administrator to discuss needs or concerns.
3. Request a signed "Information Release" form from the parent.
4. Contact proper agency and relay information.
5. Keep open lines of communication with the agency and parent.
6. Follow up with parents to discuss the referral process to ensure satisfaction.

Children with Existing Individual Education Programs (IEP)

Children with existing IEP's upon acceptance to the center, will be mainstreamed into the classroom. Their teacher will take appropriate action (teacher may consult with special needs specialists, the child's pediatrician and family) to incorporate IEP into the weekly curriculum and coordinate goals and objectives. WACCC will do the following to gather necessary information to provide appropriate services to the child with disabilities in our setting:

1. Inquire at registration if the enrolled child has an IEP or other special need.
2. Request a copy of the child's IEP and all supporting documents from the parent.
3. Request to be a part of the process to ensure continuity between programs when appropriate.
4. Obtain a signed copy of an "Information Release" form from the parent.
5. Ask the parent to be invited to scheduled PPT meetings.
6. Request periodic meetings when necessary with the Winchester Public School (WPS) preschool teacher.
7. Consult with other specialists when necessary.
8. Request a time to make a site visit when necessary to observe the child in the primary setting.
9. Allow for WPS staff to make on site visits for observation purposes.
10. Maintain open communication with WPS staff and parents.

Health, Safety, and Nutrition

Notification of Absence

Please call to let us know if your child will be absent or you are running late by 9 a.m. We need to know how many children will be here for the preparation of our lunch. It also helps to keep track of the health of the children at the center and the presence of communicable diseases.

Health Practices

WACCC consults with a registered nurse who reports to the main office weekly. Our Nurse is familiar with all the children and any special health or care requirements they may have. The nurse will monitor the children's health, and keep immunization records up to date. In addition, all of our staff are trained in CPR, First Aid, and the administration of emergency medication.

Every child enrolled at WACCC must have a current health physical filled out by their pediatrician, as outlined by the State of CT form ED 191. Together with WACCC's office assistant, our nurse keeps track of physicals, their expiration dates and tracks to ensure that proper immunization have been given. All allergies are highlighted on each child's file and listed on a center-wide allergy list, which is posted in each classroom and in our kitchen.

Should the nurse discover any pertinent missing information, she is authorized to contact the family directly. Likewise, with parental permission, the nurse is able to contact the child's physician in the event the staff has questions regarding a child's personal care or health. In such an instance, a care plan is developed between families, the administration and the nurse.

WACCC has implemented a universal sick policy which is referred to when a child's good health is in question. Proper steps are followed by all employees to ensure that each child is healthy enough to participate in the program.

WACCC networks with local programs specializing in pediatric dentistry. WACCC collaborates with the Winchester Family Resource Center to assist with vision and hearing screenings.

In order to assist families in securing medical insurance, applications for Connecticut's HUSKY program can be found on site. Administrative Staff provide support in completing the application process and assisting parents with paperwork.

Nutrition

WACCC is proud to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) which grants funds to our food service program. We have a full time Food Service Manager (FSM) on board at our facility. We are able to offer breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack to every child, at no additional cost to our families. Sound health is essential to wholesome development. Annually, our FSM attends a statewide training to keep on top of nutrition policies and procedures regarding food preparation, kitchen maintenance and CACFP menu planning. At our annual staff training, the FSM educates the Center staff, in the knowledge of these components as well as sanitary and preparation policies and procedures.

When your child is here they will receive meals that are nutritionally well balanced in accordance with the CACFP meal pattern. Meals are served family style, in an effort to teach children the value of togetherness and to encourage self-help skills in feeding and passing food to one another. WACCC will never use food as punishment. Children will never be denied participation in breakfast, lunch, or snack time for behavior reasons. We have found this policy to yield positive results among children and their families. We ask you not to send your child to WACCC with food from home.

If your child has a food allergy/special feeding need; with written documentation from the pediatrician, we can develop menu substitutions within the guidelines of the CACFP meal pattern. A list of all children with food allergies or special nutritional needs is presented to all staff within the building and alternate food choices are provided. Children with special feeding needs will be accommodated to the best of our ability. All meal substitutions and foods consumed will be documented and communicated daily to the parents through our parent communication app.

Parking Lot Safety

For the safety of our children, we ask that you turn your cars off at pick up and drop off. Please do not leave cars idling in the parking lot.

Infant Feeding Policies

Breast Milk

WACCC supports nursing mothers by accepting, storing and serving expressed breast milk for feedings. We ask that the Breast milk arrive at WACCC in a ready to feed sanitary container labeled with the infant's name and date the milk was pumped. Expressed refrigerated breast milk must be no more than 48 hours old. Milk that has been frozen can be no more than 3 months old and must be served within 24 hours of defrosting. Staff gently mix (by swirling) the breast milk prior to feeding. Nursing mothers are encouraged to coordinate feeding and are welcome to nurse their baby in the classroom.

Infant Formula

WACCC offers iron fortified formula to families at no additional cost. Parents are required to complete an "Accepting/Rejecting Infant Formula" form at the time of enrollment (Please see this form for the specific brand of formula being offered). Parents may choose to sign up to use our formula or provide their own.

Bottle Feeding

Parents are responsible for providing clean bottles daily. Bottles need to be labeled with the child's name and are sent home at the end of the day to be sanitized. Infants are held for all bottle feedings. Bottles are warmed in a bottle warmer no longer than 5 minutes and at no more than 120 degrees. After one hour any bottle served but not completely consumed will be discarded. When medically necessary, a pediatrician must supply written instructions for bottles to contain cereal/solids.

Solid Foods

It is important for staff and parents to have a strong relationship and open communication, this is key in determining when your baby is ready to begin solid foods. In general solid foods are not served to children under the age of 6 months. Many factors need to be considered and with the guidance of your pediatrician we can work together to offer developmentally appropriate meals.

When a child begins to eat table food we ask that parents take home a copy of our menu and highlight the foods they have introduced to their child. This is an essential step in helping a child transition to the center prepared meals as required by CACFP. Please Note: Cow's milk will only be served to children over 12 months of age.

For more information on our solid food policy for infants, please see the CACFP Meal Pattern for Infants Information sheet in the enrollment packet. At any time, if you have any questions about this policy, please do not hesitate to speak with someone in the office.

Sick Policy

To prevent the spreading of illness from child to child we have implemented the following sick policy.

We ask that you do *NOT* bring your child to the center if he/she has:

- A fever of 100.5 degree or higher in the last 24 hours*
- Vomiting or Diarrhea in the last 24 hours*
- Cold Symptoms with discolored nasal drainage
- Persistent Cough
- Red, Swollen, and/or Crusty Eyes
- Discharge from Ears
- Unidentified Rash
- Starting a new medication – cannot attend until 24 hours after the first dose is given.
 - If after 24 hours of beginning new medication, the child presents with symptoms they may not return to the center until symptom free.

*Children may return when they have been symptom free for 24 hours, without medication.

When a child becomes ill while on the premises and is unable to participate in the program, parents are notified and required to pick up their child. Symptoms for exclusion include vomiting, diarrhea, a fever of 100.5 or higher, and any contagious symptoms listed above. Please note that when a child is sent home he/she cannot return to the Center the following day. In addition, we reserve the right to request a note from the doctor indicating that they have been examined and the child is not contagious, should we suspect a contagious illness.

- If a child is dismissed twice in one week for the same illness, we will require a doctor's note before the child may return
- If your child is taking any medication it must be logged in the child's classroom
- If you administer medicine to a child during their time at the Center, you must do so in the office, and log the information in the office
- If a fever is suspected, temperatures are taken in the ear with a digital infrared thermometer . We do not add a degree.
- If a confirmed case of contagious illness is evident, an exposure notice will be posted outside the classroom door to notify parents.
- On occasion we may need to consult with your child's doctor or with one of our medical advisors about general medical problems.

Emergency Medications

Our staff is certified in the administration of emergency medications. This certification allows us to administer Epi-Pen injections in the case of anaphylactic reactions or rescue inhalers in the case of diagnosed asthma or breathing complications under the following conditions:

1. We have written authorization from the prescribing physician using the approved form “Authorization for the Administration of Medication by School, Child Care, and Youth Camp Personnel”.
2. We have an “Emergency Care Plan” (for anaphylactic reactions) or “Asthma Action Plan” on file, filled out by the prescribing physician.
3. We have signed permission from the parent. Parent signature and information is required on both of the above mentioned forms.

The medication is in the original container with the pharmacy label with the child’s name, prescribing physician’s name, the name of the medication, dosage, method of administration, date of expiration, pharmacy name, and prescription number.

Each year, the employees are trained by our RN in the administration of emergency meds. Likewise, all staff are trained in CPR and First Aid. The office personnel keep track of each employee’s current certificates as well as their expiration dates.

Prescription and Nonprescription Medications

Staff is not permitted to administer any oral non-prescription or prescription drug. We are only permitted to apply non-prescription topical preparations with signed consent from parents. *Aerosol sprays will not be accepted and administered by staff.*

In the event that a child is taking medication, we ask that the parents document the name of the medication, the date it was started and the time of the most recent dose on the medication log found in each classroom. A parent or caregiver may come to the Center to administer the child’s medication, provided they do so in the main office, and record the information on our medication log.

Accidents

We strive to prevent accidents, but they do occur. All staff on-site are first aid trained. When a child has an accident at school the parent receives written notification. The attending teacher will write up an accident report. Accident reports do require a parent signature. If deemed necessary, parents may be notified at work.

Emergency Procedures

WACCC has established policies and procedures, which are dedicated to the support of WACCC’s mission of teaching, educating, and safety of all children, staff, and visitors on WACCC’s property. WACCC provides access to facility grounds for students, staff and visitors consistent with WACCC’s priorities and safety in mind. Access to WACCC’s grounds imposes certain responsibilities and obligations on the part of WACCC to ensure the safety of all who visit with respect to federal, state, and local laws. It is WACCC’s policy that proper security and emergency procedures be in place and established to ensure the safety of all who visit. Best practices to date are utilized for emergency planning and procedures.

Emergency Procedure for Staff

At least one staff member, if not all staff members, trained in Emergency Med., First Aid, and CPR, must be on site at all times from open to close.

In case of Emergency Staff follow this procedure:

1. Calmly assess the problem.
2. Give Child necessary first aid.
3. Ask another adult to call parent.
4. If the problem is serious, call 911
5. Inform parent of this decision.
6. A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital, bring along the emergency permission slip.
7. Remain calm and reassuring at all times.
8. Fill out the incident/accident report form after the child is under medical care and the parent has been contacted.

Fire Drills

A fire drill is an evacuation of the building. For the safety of the children and staff and by State law, we practice fire drills and evacuation procedures, as well as disaster drills with the children once a month. See evacuation procedure below for more information.

Evacuation Procedure

In the event of any emergency requiring evacuation from the building, we follow the same procedure as for fire drills. All children exit out the door leading directly outdoors, and the children line up at a specific area in the outdoor area, where attendance is taken.

If it is determined that the children cannot safely re-enter the building, the staff and children will walk by way of sidewalk to the Fire House on Prospect Street or our Before and After School Building on Lake Street. From there, the staff will contact parents to pick up their children. First aid kits, emergency medications, and a traveling emergency file, which includes emergency phone numbers, will accompany the staff and children whenever they leave the premises.

911 Emergency Lockdown

In the event that Winchester Police Department issues an emergency broadcast or a 911 situation is happening within the building (i.e. Eminent danger, unstable person or suspected armed individual), Administration will lock down the building. Teachers will calmly occupy children until the order is lifted and wait for updates with further instructions (i.e., Evacuation to Fire House on Prospect Street) from the police department.

In Case of Disaster

The plan of action for weather related emergencies are as follows: Children are gathered in the main hallway, outside of the office, away from all exterior doors and windows. Children in the infant and toddler one room are placed in evacuation cribs for prompt removal from the classroom. All other emergencies such as gas leak, malfunctioning furnace, excessive smoke or fire, etc., we will move from the Center to the Fire House located adjacent to the Center.

In the event of interrupted service, extra office staff will take the children's emergency numbers to the firehouse or to BASE to contact parents.

Mandated Reporter

What is a Mandated Reporter?

Connecticut law requires certain citizens to report suspected child abuse and neglect. These mandated reporters are people in professions or occupations that have contact with children or whose primary focus is children. The law requires that they report suspected child abuse or neglect. Under Connecticut General Statute, Section 17a-101, the following are considered mandated reporters:

Any person paid to care for a child in any public or private facility, child day care center, group day care home or family day care home which is licensed by the State.

We stress that when a call is made to DCF it is in good faith and strictly for the protection of the child. We are not required to inform parents or guardians if such a report is made.

What Must Be Reported?

Mandated reporters are required to report or cause a report to be made when, in the ordinary course of their employment or profession, they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of 18 has been abused, neglected or is placed in imminent risk of serious harm. (Connecticut General Statutes §17a-101a)

Child Abuse occurs where a child has had physical injury inflicted upon him or her other than by accidental means, has injuries at variance with history given of them, or is in a condition resulting in maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual molestation or exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment. (Connecticut General Statutes §46b-120)

Child Neglect occurs where a child has been abandoned, is being denied proper care and attention physically, emotionally, or morally, or is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to his well-being. (Connecticut General Statutes §46b-120)

By Connecticut State law, employees of The Winsted Area Child Care Center are mandated reporters for all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect or a child at risk and receive training annually. The Connecticut Abuse and Neglect “ Careline” number is 1-800- 842-2288.

Parent/Guardian Substance Abuse Policy

Should an adult arrive to pick up a child who is suspected to have consumed alcohol or other impairing substance the child will not be released. Staff will call an authorized adult on the pickup permission to pick up the child. By Connecticut State law, mandated reporters must report repeat offenders to the Department of Children and Families.

Your Child’s Classroom

Your child’s classroom is designed to provide a stimulating environment which encourages the child to solve problems, make decisions, begin activities, ask questions, and explore and experiment with educational materials. Each classroom environment is set up around learning centers. These centers may include areas for:

- Creative Art
- Library/Writing Center
- Dramatic Play

- Blocks
- Science/Discovery and Math
- Music and Movement
- Sensory Exploration

Determining your Child's Placement

Your child's placement into a classroom is based primarily on their age and developmental readiness. Children ages 6 weeks to 12 months are placed in our infant room. A child 12-20 months and able to walk and run without falling, will be placed into the Toddler One classroom. Toddler one provides an environment that fosters young toddler's gross motor abilities, such as climbing, jumping and running. Children who are over the age of 2 and are ready to start potty training or have already begun potty training are placed in one of two toddler classrooms. Here children are encouraged to explore their language and fine motor skills with an emphasis on self-help skills. A child entering the center ages 3-5 will be placed in one of three Preschool classrooms.

If at any time it is determined that the placement of your child is not fitting their needs, we may decide to place the child in another classroom. Also, at times the ages of the children in our Toddler 2 & 3 classrooms will affect transitions from the Infant and Toddler One classrooms. Our teachers understand Infant & Toddler development and adjust daily schedules and curriculum to work with the children enrolled in the classroom.

Cultural Diversity

WACCC stresses the importance of cultural heritage. Classroom materials reflect diverse cultures and provide experiences that stimulate children's natural curiosity about the world around them. Curriculum will provide for respect of cultural diversity through books, material experiences, music, art, and foods. Each child's home culture and language will be integrated into the classroom. Parents are encouraged to share your family's cultures and customs. If you have music, foods, clothing, arts and crafts, etc. that reflect your family background please let a teacher know. The more we know the more we grow!

Daily Schedule

Our center opens its doors at 6:30 a.m. Upon arrival please be sure you sign in your child and update the medicine log to keep teachers informed of any medication your child is taking. Teachers are always willing to update you on your child's progress. Don't be shy! Spend some time with your child in the morning and take a look at their room and all of their beautiful artwork displayed throughout. And remember you are always welcome! If you have any free time throughout the day and wish to stop in for a hug, please do not hesitate. We always have an open-door policy.

Your child's daily routine is peppered with times for quiet play and active play. Some activities are self-directed and some are directed by the teacher. Children are continuously encouraged to play and work independently. These child-directed activities help to promote self-confidence, and self-discipline.

All our programs operate on a full day schedule; however, the most structured and important part of the day comes before lunch. This is when core learning takes place. Group circle, art activities, literacy and math activities, center playtime and outdoor play all take place in the morning. So please be sure your child is here by 9:00 a.m. *In the event that you are running late or your child will not be attending please call the center to let us know.*

Curriculum

All classrooms utilize the Creative Curriculum approach to learning, which is a comprehensive, rigorously researched curriculum model that honors creativity and respects the role that teachers play in making learning exciting and relevant for every child. This curriculum aligns with national Core Curriculum objectives and the state of Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS). The Creative Curriculum makes it possible for teachers to assess and plan for children across a broad developmental spectrum. Teachers utilize assessments and observations to consider how best to provide support and decide how and when to adapt an activity to meet individual children's needs, giving them the opportunity to be successful each day, regardless of their developmental levels.

The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos helps teachers plan and implement a rich, developmentally appropriate learning experience that incorporates best practices and reflects how young children (birth through age 3) develop and learn. There are 38 objectives for development and learning that define Creative Curriculum's goals for young children. They cover all areas of child development and content learning and define the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are critical to children's future success in school and in life. For children in this age-group, it is important to understand not only how they develop and learn, but also to understand their individual differences.

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool is a play-based learning framework implemented in all our preschool classrooms. Creative Curriculum is a comprehensive system of learning based on research and knowledge regarding all areas of child development; social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and language. The teachers use their own experiences, as well as the children's interests, to adapt the curriculum to be unique to each class. Play allows children to learn about the world and themselves. As children play, they learn new skills, develop coping mechanisms, test new ideas, and master their bodies. *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool* provides extensive guidance for teachers in the content areas of literacy, math, science, social skills, the arts, and technology. Children are learning every minute of the day. They learn from the way the classroom is organized, from the daily schedule, from activities, and from their outdoor play.

*Information taken from the *The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos* and *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool* ©2015. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc.

The *Second Step Early Learning Program* is utilized in all our preschool classrooms with a focus on skills for learning, empathy, emotion management, friendship skills, problem solving, and transition to kindergarten. Our youngest learners will benefit more from preschool and be better prepared for kindergarten with self-regulation and executive-function skills. Executive function skills are the foundation for self-regulation and social-emotional competence. Brain Builder games taught throughout the curriculum focus on developing these skills by teaching children to pay attention, use memory, and control behavior.

Loveable *Matt and Molly* teach communication and literacy skills with familiar characters, predictable routines, and fun antics. Children develop skills in vocabulary, grammar, representational play, sequencing, reading comprehension, predicting, identifying feelings, answering questions, and determining missing information.

Foundations Pre-K supports students' emerging understanding of the alphabetic principles of letter-sound associations and alphabetical order, and the written language skill of manuscript letter formation. The skills taught align with those that the Report of the National Early Literacy Panel (2008) identified as strong and consistent predictors for the later development of literacy skills:

- Knowledge of the names and sounds associated with printed letters.
- Ability to manipulate the sounds of spoken language
- Ability to rapidly name letters, numbers, objects, or colors
- Ability to write isolated letters or one's name
- Ability to remember spoken information for a short time

The set follows the same principles of instruction as other Wilson programs: it is explicit and systematic; interactive, incorporating multisensory instruction and motor memory learning; and offers ample opportunities for practice and feedback. Explicit and direct instruction is conducted in a whole-class setting in the first semester and a combination of whole-class and small-group settings in the second semester.

Observations and Developmental Assessments

When a child enrolls in the Winsted Area Child Care Center, we aim to obtain a general sense of his or her development across a range of abilities (for example, physical coordination, everyday practical or adaptive skills, language, reasoning, memory, social behavior, and behavioral control). This information will help us evaluate changes to curriculum or classroom practices, be used by your child's teacher to better understand your child and be shared with you during parent conferences or as teachers deem necessary.

Children mature at quite different rates. Earlier or later development of specific abilities usually does not reflect a child's overall abilities or predict how well or poorly a child will do later in school, except in extreme cases. Typically, a child shows a range of developmental "ages," depending on the task. These tasks will not be used to "track" children or exclude them from our program. They may help your child's teacher provide an optimal level of comfortable challenge to your child.

Many of your child's current capacities will be assessed through questionnaires that you complete, or through teacher observations. The following are current assessment/observations done at Winsted Area Child Care Center:

- *Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ)* – A parent completed child monitoring System (Bricker & Squires, 1999) is a widely used screening tool designed to assist with the developmental monitoring of infants and young children during the crucial first 5 years of life. The ASQ is a tool that is used to determine if your child's development is on schedule and looks at the level of development that is expected for a certain age range. (Infant & Toddler)
- *Ages & Stages Questionnaires Social Emotional (ASQ-SE)* – A parent completed, in-depth screening of children's social-emotional development in seven key areas: self-regulation, compliance, communication, adaptive functioning, autonomy, affect, and interaction with people. (Infant & Toddler)
- *Early Screening Inventory (ESI)* – A survey of child's motor development (small and large muscle), speech and language skills, cognitive skills, and personal/social/emotional development. Observation of your child's developmental progress continues throughout the year. (Preschool)
- *Devereux Early Childhood Assessment Screening (DECA)* – Teacher and Parent screening of child temperament which looks at attachment, self-control, initiative, and behavioral concerns. (Preschool)

- *CT Documentation and Observation for Teaching System (CT DOTS) & Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards/Observations (ELDS)* – Measures the progress of students and the effectiveness of the curriculum. This is an ongoing evaluation tool utilized by program staff. When planning their lessons, program staff refers to the ELDS standards and utilize them in their teaching. As the children learn to accomplish these said tasks, it is documented. Observations are ongoing throughout the year. The DOTS summarizes the information collected over time at various points during the year in order to review, reflect, and communicate about children’s learning and development. (Infant, Toddler, Preschool)
- *Teaching Strategies Gold* – online assessment portfolio program, which directly supports Creative Curriculum utilized in all classrooms, and aligns with *CT ELDS*. This tool digitalizes current observation of all preschool children with a standardized, research based online platform that collects and organizes data. It creates a developmental portfolio of each child and interprets information to influence teaching to meet the need of each child. It also provides teachers with strategies and resources so all children in the classroom can be successful. Comprehensive, customized reports can be produced to share with families, kindergarten teachers, and/or specialized professionals (i.e., occupational therapist, speech pathologist, etc.) (Preschool)

Toys from Home

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and loss, children are not permitted to bring in toys from home, unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum. Parents are responsible for enforcing this policy with their child.

Children are permitted to include with their bedding supplies, one plush/non-musical toy with which to nap/rest. This toy will be placed in their cubbie and used only during nap/rest time.

All toys brought in for use as part of the curriculum, and/or for nap/rest time will be inspected by the classroom teacher for safety and appropriateness and may be prohibited at the sole discretion of the teacher. Please do not allow your child to bring in any toys that represent inappropriate or violent actions, character, or words.

Positive Discipline

Building a child’s self-esteem and a positive self-worth is key in early development. The main goal we wish to reach when disciplining young children is to instill inner self-controls in the place of teacher-maintained external controls. Positive discipline allows children to focus on their good behaviors rather than negative. A child who fears adults may never be able to form proper attachments. Our ultimate objective is to help the child achieve responsibility for him/herself.

We begin by arranging the environment to prevent discipline problems. This includes planning interesting activities, not asking children to be still for too long, and meeting their needs for food, rest, and active play.

When disputes arise among children or between a child and teacher, the teacher will encourage a talking out process among those involved. The goal of this talking out process will be to acknowledge feelings and find solutions using children’s ideas whenever possible. If your child has had a difficult time, the staff will give you a verbal or written note which summarizes your child’s day. We will work together with the family to assure consistency at home and at school in working with the child, and all will be discussed in a confidential manner that is respectful to your family.

Our methods of Positive Discipline Include:

- Encouraging children to solve problems through the use of words learning to acknowledge feelings and associate feelings with actions
- Redirect children to focus on a different activity in a positive manner
- Tell children what they can do, rather than what they cannot do
- Continual focus on building self-help skills in order to strengthen self-esteem and positive self-image
- Positive reinforcement and acknowledging appropriate behavior that should be continued in the future
- Assisting children in planning actions and language for similar situations in the future
- Modeling kind, patient, and gentle actions, words and behaviors

Aggression Policy

WACCC is responsible for the care and safety of all children attending the center. To this end, injuries to children by accident or as a result of aggression on the part of another child, are given full and immediate attention. Center staff recognizes that aggressive acts are often a developmental issue, and most children resolve this behavior in a timely manner.

A child who may be overly aggressive or is repeatedly destructive of other children's work may be asked to make an activity choice in another area if talking things through has not resulted in better self-control. Staff will continuously supervise children during disciplinary actions.

In the event, however, that a child is repeatedly aggressive, including biting, hitting, kicking, and/or use of foul language, the teaching staff will discuss the behavior with the Education Manager and/or Executive Director. Each child involved in such behavior will be discussed confidentially, and the consequences for each child will be determined in an independent manner. Teachers will follow-up with parents regarding suggestions and strategies for halting the behavior. If determined necessary, the child and family will be connected to the proper agency for support or go through the referral process.

Staff will never be abusive, neglectful, or use corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment under any circumstances. Staff will never threaten to withhold or withhold food as a form of punishment. No child shall be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the safety and health of the child, another child, or adult.

Mailboxes

Every child has a mailbox for notes or artwork. Please learn where your child's mailbox is located and check it daily. There is always important information that needs your attention!

Clothing

Dress your child in sturdy play clothes. At this age, children learn through play, so we like to give them every opportunity to explore. While we supply smocks for your children, they may not always be sent home as clean as they were when you dropped off. Your child will be supplied with a bin for their extra clothing. Please keep a good supply of extra clothes including seasonal pants, shirts, shoes, socks and underwear. **TO AVOID MIX-UP'S, PLEASE HAVE NAMES ON ALL CLOTHS SENT TO THE CENTER!!** It is a good idea to label backpacks and jackets as well.

Toilet Training

We have diaper-changing facilities for toddlers and provide individualized help for children who are still learning to use the toilet. Please supply either diapers or underpants. If your child is still making the transition to using the toilet and needs a diaper for nap time, we will gladly put it on. Parents are

responsible for providing disposable/cloth diapers for their children. Please keep a minimum of one week's supply of diapers and wipes on hand. Note that we can only apply non-prescription diaper ointment .

Outdoor Play

Except in very wet or extremely cold weather, the children go outdoors at least twice a day. If a child is well enough to be at the center we assume he or she is well enough to participate in outdoor activities. Also, occasionally children will go for walks around town. The infants and toddlers go for walks in our "sixer wagons", or in the double strollers. Our preschoolers pick partners to walk with. Please dress for the conditions, snow pants for winter, and sturdy sneakers are the best bet for summer weather. Sandals tend to slip off and get wood chips from the playground stuck in them. **Please NO flip-flops.**

Field trips

Any field trip taken that is not within walking distance requires bus transportation. For such trips, you will be asked to sign a permission slip giving your consent. If your child is under the age of four and less than forty pounds, you will be asked to supply a car seat. Parent participation is always welcome!

Nap Time

Rest and or sleep are an essential part of the day. We are conscious of arranging the daily schedule so that active periods are followed by quiet ones. The children may sleep up to two hours each day on their own cots, with their own blanket and pillow and a favorite soft toy. We offer to rub your child's back or read them a story at naptime or just sit nearby to help relax them. Bedding is sent home every Friday for laundering. If your preschool age child has outgrown naps, you can make arrangements for your child to have quiet activities during rest time.

Infant Sleeping

The state of Connecticut requires infants to be put to sleep on their back. To ensure the safety of all infants we have implemented the following policies:

- Infants under 12 months of age shall be placed on their backs on a firm, tight-fitting mattress for sleep in a crib.
- Waterbeds, sofas, soft mattresses, pillows, and other soft surfaces shall be prohibited as infant sleeping surfaces.
- All pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and other soft products shall be removed from the crib.
- The infant's head shall remain uncovered during sleep.
- Unless the child has a note from a physician specifying otherwise, infants shall be placed on the back for sleeping.
- When infants can easily turn over from the back position to the stomach position, they shall be put down to sleep on their backs but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep.
- All infants are supervised during sleep by sight and sound.
- Infants that arrive sleeping in a car seat or fall asleep in equipment not specifically designed for infant sleep (car seats, swing, bouncer, stroller, infant seat or highchair) will be promptly removed and placed in a crib.

For more information on reducing the risk of SIDS please refer to the Fact Sheet in your registration packet from the BACK to SLEEP Campaign.

Transition to Kindergarten

Leaving the safety and confines of the childcare center can be a scary milestone for children. Oftentimes there are children and their families that have been with our program since infancy! It is only natural to feel a little intimidated when Kindergarten rolls around. WACCC works hard to make this transition as seamless as possible for our preschoolers.

As a School Readiness program, our staff works diligently to prepare our preschoolers for this next and important phase in their lives. The State of CT issues a base list of tasks that children should be able to accomplish by the time they enter the public school system. This list is updated from time to time, and immediately relayed to our teachers to ensure that they are guiding the children in a manner that will prepare them for what is to come.

WACCC Education Manager and Executive Director serves on the Early Childhood Connections committee along with kindergarten teachers, special education teachers, Head Start representatives, Family Resource Center staff, Batcheller School principal, and preschool special education staff. Early Childhood Connections oversees Kindergarten Transition and serves as the Winchester School Readiness Council. Early Childhood Connections provides WACCC with an established link with our local elementary schools to help families prepare for and manage transitions from our program to kindergarten. Winchester is the first school district in Connecticut to have a Kindergarten Transition policy adopted by the Board of Education. Early Childhood Connections meets on a monthly basis during the school year. Parent information sessions are planned, registration procedures and timelines are decided upon, and improvement based on the previous year's transition is occurring at every meeting. All information from these meetings is brought back to our center and shared with our preschool teachers and parents.

Professional Teaching Staff

Teaching Staff

Our highly qualified and screened teachers and staff meet all requirements and regulations set by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Licensing Division Statutes and Regulations. Each teacher in your child's classroom is certified in first aid, CPR, and to administer emergency medications .

Staff Development

It is our belief that by professional development obligations, staff make a positive impact on the quality of the program. By increasing their knowledge of early childhood education and best practice guidelines, they are better suited to educate young minds.

The State of CT requires all childcare employees to engage in professional development opportunities. For instance, a full time employee works 2080 hours per calendar year and would therefore need 20 hours of continuing education. (1% of hours worked annually)

WACCC maintains a professional development policy, in which each employee is required to not only complete their hours but to also provide a Professional Development Plan, outlining what they hope to accomplish in the year to come. This includes anything from workshops that would interest them and college courses they plan to take in the upcoming semester. These are workshops that the teacher feels would advance their knowledge in the field. We also ask that the plans include goals that each teacher has set for themselves and their classroom.

All School Readiness staff must be trained in Pre-literacy skill development and Social and Ethic Diversity in the classroom. These trainings need only be done within the first year of employment and

every three years thereafter. These training must be at a minimum 2 hours in length. School Readiness staff must also be trained annually regarding children with disabilities; this training must also be a minimum of 2 hours in length. (The training year for SR is July 1 to June 30)

Confidentiality/Non-Disclosure Statement

The Winsted Area Child Care Center, Inc. (WACCC) has an ethical and legal obligation to respect the privacy of families, students, donors, prospective donors, volunteers, directors, and staff, and to protect, safeguard, and maintain any information it acquires that is deemed confidential by its nature or definition.

The protection of confidential business and client information is vital to the interest and success of the Winsted Area Child Care Center, Inc. Such confidential information includes but is not limited to the following:

- Any information about children attending WACCC
- Compensation data
- Family information
- Matters that pertain to labor relations
- Pending projects and proposals

All employees are required to sign a confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement as a condition of employment. Employees who improperly use or disclose confidential business or client information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and legal action, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

Parent Participation and Responsibilities

Parent Involvement, Education and Outreach

WACCC believes that the family is the foundation for each child's success throughout their education. Therefore, it is our priority to continuously strive to assist parents in the complex job of raising their children.

Whenever possible, our program will provide information regarding opportunities in the community for parent education classes. Our capable staff is equipped with educational resources for parents, including articles regarding child development and a lending library containing parenting books and videos. Often parents are invited to attend staff workshops, should the topic be relevant.

WACCC maintains an open-door policy; parents and family are always welcome at the center. Parents are able to drop in at any time to visit their children, participate in classroom activities or mealtimes and are always welcome on field trips or at special events.

As part of our annual accreditation process, parents are provided the opportunity to complete a self-assessment family and program improvement survey. When all the surveys have been returned the results are compiled and distributed back to families for further feedback. The valuable information gained from this process helps the program plan for the future.

Parents serve in an advisory capacity through our Board of Directors and through our Fundraising Committee. It is stated as policy in our WACCC by-laws that some members of our Board shall be parents.

Parent Teacher Communication

It is our philosophy that daily parent communication is key in any childcare setting. Upon enrollment, parents fill out registration paperwork which includes information about their child and a nutrition questionnaire that informs program staff of the child's dietary preferences and habits. Parents are provided with newsletters, weekly curriculum and daily reports regarding their children. Likewise, they are kept abreast of any new information or events throughout the year and attend parent-teacher conferences annually and on an as needed basis.

Parents are invited to attend annual Parent Teacher Conferences. We encourage all parents to take advantage of this time to discuss your child's progress and set academic goals for the upcoming year. This is a great time for you to ask questions and discuss pertinent concerns with your child's teacher. Conferences can also occur throughout the year as requested by the teacher or family.

In addition to the above information, parents also participate in our program through assessments, daily communication logs, journals, take home activities, and the annual family survey.

WACCC utilizes the bright wheel App to send out messages, reminders, and to contact parents. Information on signing up for this can be found in the registration packet or you may speak with any office staff.

Family Outreach

Within the program there are often families who find themselves in crisis. WACCC is committed to community outreach and philanthropy, financial or otherwise. Thanks to the kindness of our staff and other families, we have been able to assist those in need by providing food, clothing and supplies. Our parents are aware that they can turn to us for help, should they need it.

Communication between school and home is a key piece to working together to understand behaviors. Throughout the year, if there are any transitions at home please let us know. This might be severe illness, a relative in the hospital, parents going away, anticipated move or house for sale, death of a relative or pet, fire in home or neighborhood, witnessing or being in an accident, etc. Even though your child may not seem to be affected, we may see that he/she is upset.

Fundraiser Participation

WACCC is a private non-profit corporation. Although we are a United Way member agency, we must also raise money ourselves. We would appreciate every parent to take part in our fund-raising events in some way.

Family Literacy

For many years, WACCC has had a lending library in an effort to promote family literacy and parent-child interaction

We are fortunate to have a community college minutes down the road, with which we have a great professional relationship. We are happy to communicate with the college for information, per parents requests. EdAdvance, a local agency that provides adult education is also within reach should the need arise for parents. We are ready and willing to provide this information to our families.

The community college has an impressive library available to students. Additionally, the Beardsley Library is nearby and offers a variety of programs for children and adults.

Incorporation of Pre-Literacy Activities/Teacher Training

As a NAEYC accredited and School Readiness early childhood program, WACCC is committed to providing the most educational environment and activities as possible, incorporating elements of the “whole child” perspective, which of course includes the area of pre-literacy development.

Beginning in infancy, children are exposed to literacy on a daily basis, first as quiet observers, their senses working overtime. WACCC understands this, and continuously strives to support literacy throughout the age groups. To begin, children in our program are given literacy opportunities simply in the classroom environment. All cubbies, cots and cribs are labeled clearly with each child’s name. Similarly, toy bins, shelving and furniture is labeled for children to become familiar with letters and words. As children move on throughout the classrooms they are exposed to rapidly escalating number of literacy activities.

Teachers implement strategies to instruct in areas of literacy from infants to preschool. These things can be as simple as work repetition, flashcards, singing and fingerplays. Likewise, books and reading play an integral role, as every classroom is stocked with children’s books, which range in content from photo/picture books and increase in complexity as the children grow.

Additionally, various displays within the classroom offer exposure to pre-literacy. Classroom “centers” are labeled with both words and pictures and all classroom schedules and routines are posted at the children’s eye level with pictures to ensure children’s natural processing of information.

Early Literacy in a Preschool Classroom

The preschool School Readiness classroom teachers have had specific training in Early Literacy for Preschoolers. Some teaching skills that now have been added to the learning environment are:

- Concepts of print
- Phonological awareness
- Comprehension strategies
- Writing in Preschool
- Journal Writing
- Teaching individually as well as small groups
- Using related books in all learning centers
- Using “big books”, fiction and nonfiction
- Using sign language

Annual Evaluation

As stated earlier, program staff utilizes the results of assessments and observation not only to evaluate the children’s development and progress, but the program itself. These results illustrate the effectiveness of our Infant/Toddler and Preschool Programs and where improvements need to be made.

As an NAEYC accredited and School Readiness program, WACCC is required to distribute an annual evaluation to our parents. This survey is distributed to every family in a language they understand and asked to return by a certain date. This information is compiled and returned to NAEYC in conjunction with the annual report, the Executive Director and Education Manager also meet to review the surveys and discuss the program’s effectiveness, as well as ways to improve the program based on answers in the survey. These results are tallied and shared with all families and the School Readiness liaison annually.

Volunteer

Families are always welcome and encouraged to volunteer and spend time in the classrooms. Way for families to help out include:

- Volunteering in the Classroom – make sure to coordinate with your child’s teacher(s) to ensure that you have something to do while in the classroom (reading to the children, working on a project, helping with a walking field trip, etc.)
- Making things like play dough, labels, signs, etc. for your child’s classroom
- Donating items (recyclables, extra art supplies, gently used toys, etc.)
- Cleaning or maintenance projects in and around the center
- Fundraising Committee
- Serve as a member of our Board of Directors
 - As a non-profit WACCC is governed by our Board of Directors. They set procedures and policies. Ensure the fiscal integrity of the program. And plan and execute fundraisers.

Babysitting

We strongly discourage our employees from making independent childcare arrangements with families at the program. However, in the event that you enter into an agreement with a WACCC employee to babysit for your family outside of the employee’s normal work hours and/or outside of the program hours, it must be done away from the program and with the full knowledge and understanding that the sitter enters into such an agreement as a private citizen and not as a WACCC employee. We cannot be responsible for our employees away from the program, outside their working hours, and will not be liable for their acts or omissions when not on our property including the transportation of children. You will be required to sign acknowledgement and waiver to this effect – Release of Responsibility Form.