

Early Childhood Education Center

Parent Handbook

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Introduction & History

Welcome to the Iowa Western Early Childhood Education Center! Our center is a state licensed facility, providing quality early childhood care and education for children ages 6 weeks through 5 (or when they begin kindergarten). The center is open 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday. The ECE center follows the college calendar in determining closed days. A copy of the calendar is provided to each family upon enrollment in the center, as well as the beginning of each contract year.

The center is staffed with degreed teachers who have backgrounds in early childhood education, child development and other related experiences. The center serves as a training laboratory for students studying Early Childhood Education at Iowa Western Community College. An excellent adult/child ratio is maintained in our center by our paid staff and our laboratory students.

In addition to being licensed by the State of Iowa, the Iowa Western ECE Center has a level 3 on the Iowa Quality for Children rating scale. Accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. The Academy, which is sponsored by the National Association for Education of Young Children, awards accreditation to programs which have demonstrated high quality care and education to children.

The Iowa Western ECE Center began existence in 1971 as a half day preschool program which provided a training site for students studying early childhood education. In 1982, the center expanded to provide both full day and half day programming. After the building remodel of Lewis Hall, the center expanded to its current space in 1999. Infant care was added to our program in 2007.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a unique learning experience for young children through the partnership with the Early Childhood Studies Academic Program. We provide a nurturing child centered learning environment with eco-healthy practices that meet the interests, ages, developmental needs, and the diversity of each child. The learning environment at our center fosters exploration through hands on developmentally appropriate materials that ensures access to all children. Social, emotional, cognitive, and physical areas of development are considered through planned activities to foster the development of each individual child.

Curriculum Statement

The Iowa Western Early Childhood Education Center curriculum philosophy is based on research and a variety of learning theories which form the foundation that young children learn best through play. Our program offers a nurturing child centered learning environment that meets the interests, ages, developmental needs, and the diversity of each child. Children's learning occurs through individual choices during play, teachable moments and planned activities facilitated by staff and students. The learning environment and interest areas are set up to encourage and foster exploration through hands on developmentally appropriate materials that ensures access to all children. Each area of development: Social, Emotional, Cognitive and Physical, is considered through planned activities that allow each individual child to develop these skills.

Our center offers a unique learning experience for young children through the partnership with the Early Childhood Studies Academic Program. Each day the ECS students engage the children in one on one and group learning opportunities under the guidance of the center's teaching staff. This affords our center a consistently low child-teacher ratio as well as an opportunity to effectively incorporate current educational theories into everyday practice for the students to experience.

Educational Philosophy & Daily Activities

The Iowa Western ECE Center program is based on the foundation that children learn through play. A nurturing learning environment with eco-healthy practices is provided for the children based on their ages, interests, and levels of development.

The curriculum includes both structured and unstructured activities. Throughout the day, children engage in self-selected activities in the various learning centers of the room. Children participate in teacher facilitated group activities. Each day is designed to follow a predictable routine to foster security in the children. Children are encouraged to plan what they will do during the self-selected activity times. They participate in recall times with teachers to discuss what they have done during the activity times.

The staff at the center provide respectful care and education for each child. Each child is treated as an individual and encouraged to grow and develop at his/her own rate. Staff interact with children in ways which help them to develop a positive self-image as well as learning to help others. The following is a listing of the areas of the room and aspects of the daily routine. A description of the key learning concepts for each of these centers is provided.

1. **Housekeeping and Dramatic Play Area**

This area allows children to develop social skills. Play with others helps develop an understanding of family members. Experiencing being, “mommy,” “baby”, or “daddy” gives children an opportunity to communicate feelings. Theme play such as grocery store and restaurant provide children opportunities for developing language, imagination, and social skills.

2. **Literacy Area**

This area includes books, CD, tape recorders, folder games, puppets, quiet play, and pictures. Children learn to appreciate and enjoy books and utilize written and spoken language as listening skills develop. Opportunities to write with pencils are available for children who are interested. These early literacy experiences are the key in the development of pre-reading and pre-writing skills.

3. **Blocks**

Physical development, dramatic play and social development occur as children build with a variety of blocks and accessory materials. Math and Science skills such as size, shape, quantity, and balance are also discovered in this active area.

4. **Art Area**

“Process” rather than “product” is emphasized in the art area. Children learn about colors, cutting, pasting, and creating their own things. Easel and/or table painting experiences are provided daily as well as play dough, crayons, and markers. Children choose from a variety of open-ended activities rather than “projects” from teacher models.

5. **Science Table**

This area includes magnifying glass, plants, animals, rocks, and nature awareness activities that help children to observe and learn about the world around them. Classrooms may incorporate pets such as hamsters, guinea pigs, and fish in this area.

6. **Manipulatives**

Small table games, beads, and puzzles help children to work on their problem-solving skills, group cooperation and language development. Activities in this area assist in the development of small muscles as well as hand-eye coordination. Skills in patterning, colors, and sequencing are also developed in these activities.

7. **Sand/Water Table**

This area includes play with water, sand, and other exploratory materials. Children fill, dump, and measure liquids and solids. Children enjoy sensory experiences such as wet, cold, warm, squishy, gritty, etc. as they explore materials in this area. Materials available in this area change regularly to keep interest high and to encourage active sensory exploration.

8. **Large Motor Area**
This area provides a place inside for children to enjoy vigorous play: large muscle development, including activities such as hopping, skipping, jumping, and climbing are encouraged in this area.
9. **Outdoor Play**
This area offers refreshing fun, which promotes large muscle development. Children enjoy and discover nature. Riding toys, running, climbing, constructing obstacle courses, sand play, and balls are daily activities. Kites, sledding, water play, and gardening are seasonal activities that occur as well. Children play outdoors daily as the weather permits. If wind chill temperatures are below 15° F, children will be offered large motor activities indoors. If the heat index is about 105°F, the children will be offered large motor activities indoors.
10. **Large Group Time**
During this time, music, quality literature, body movement and non-competitive group games are emphasized based on age-appropriate expectations. This time is designed to build group cooperation, togetherness, and community. Children enjoy songs, finger plays and music activities as they develop language and communication skills.
11. **Quiet Time**
Quiet time provides a time for “winding down” and relaxing before lunch. Creative movement, group games, singing, and books are planned activities during this time.
12. **Mealtimes**
Breakfast, lunch and snacks provide daily opportunities for children to experience eating together and learning to enjoy nutritious foods. Children participate in preparing food, setting tables, and cleaning up. These activities promote a sense of responsibility among the children. Adults sit with children during these times to model appropriate eating behaviors and encourage conversation. Meals and snacks are served family style with children serving themselves with adult assistance as needed.
13. **Rest Time**
Children need rest to promote healthy bodies. Relaxing music and dimmed lighting are provided to create a restful atmosphere in the room for the children. Daily rest time provides an opportunity for rest and relaxation. State Licensing regulations require a minimum of one hour rest time for children who are enrolled in a full day program. Children will be assigned a labeled cot and use the same cot each day. Blankets are provided by the center and washed weekly or as needed. Security items such as a special blanket (small), or stuffed animal/doll may be brought to assist the child in feeling at ease during rest time.
14. **Planning Time/Recall Time**
Use of the planning board assists children in choosing activities to do. This gives children a sense of direction and purpose in their play in the room. The planning board is used as a guidance tool for children. Recall Time provides time for a teacher and a group of peers for children to discuss the activities of the day. Recall time promotes the development of language, listening, and memory skills.
15. **Routines of Daily Care (RDC)**
RDC includes toileting, diapering, teeth brushing and hand washing. These routines offer children opportunities to develop health habits and skills in independence. The center provides liquid soap and disposable towels by bathroom sinks and classroom sinks to promote healthy hand washing. Toilet learning is not required before children enroll in the center. Staff will work in partnership with parents to assist in the process, as children are ready.

Oral Health: All staff will at least once a day provide an opportunity for toothbrushing and gum cleaning to remove food and plaque. (The use of toothpaste is not required).
16. **Transitions**
Children will transition from the Toddler room at 7:30am. Staff will assist children in facilitating a smooth and easy transition period for children during and leading up to these times. Twice a year based upon development and age for ratio Toddlers will be moved into a Preschool Classroom serving 3-5 years of age children. These transitions will be made at the beginning of the Fall Semester and the beginning of the Spring Semester upon a child turning 3 years of age prior to the transition period. Every effort is made to keep Toddlers (children aged 2) with their toddler teachers for at least 9 months.

Admission & Enrollment Policies

Iowa Western ECE Center accepts children of faculty, staff, and students as well as children from communities in the surrounding areas. Children will be entered onto the center waiting list upon receipt of a completed application form. Applications will be accepted in the order received and/or as space is available. Factors such as the age of a child are used in determining enrollment for the year. Children remain on the waiting list until enrolled or removed from the listing by parent request or decline of enrollment slot by parent.

Parents will be notified in writing of their child's enrollment in the program. The signed contract signed current immunization card and physical form must be on file before the child attends the center. This procedure is in accordance with State of Iowa licensing regulations.

Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Parents are asked to provide information regarding special needs, and to identify the Child's Service Coordinator if child currently has an IEP or IFSP. This information ensures that we can meet the needs of the child with proper support. If it is determined that a child's needs cannot adequately be met at the Iowa

Western ECE Center, he/she may be dis-enrolled and other care options recommended. One or more conferences involving the child's family and appropriate center staff will be arranged to address any concerns and to research alternatives.

Disenrollment & Withdrawal Information

Children may be disenrolled from the program if any of the following situations exist:

- If it is found that the child or family presents a danger to staff and/or other children in the program.
- If the family fails to pay for services in accordance with the enrollment contract.
- If it is determined that the program cannot adequately meet the needs of the child.
- If there is a lack of regular attendance in the program by the child without notification to the staff.

Iowa Western uses a variety of tools to determine individual children's needs. Parent input, including information in the child's Enrollment Packet. Parents' goals for their child. Developmental screening tools based on Teaching Strategies Gold are conducted twice a year. In addition to health screenings by the child's physician, hearing and vision screenings provided by Green Hills AEA and the Lion's Club KidSight program. Classroom documentation completed by children's teachers. When a challenging behavior is found teachers will consult with the director to resolve the behavior using the Challenging Behavior Policy.

Classroom teachers complete Accident/Incident reports for behaviors such as biting and any physical alteration that results in bodily harm to another child, teacher, or staff. These reports provide a detailed explanation of the event. These reports are placed in the child's personal mailbox and parents are required to sign these reports. A copy is kept on file for the child in question. When a child is put on an action plan using the Challenging Behavior Policy, teachers will document in a specific notebook for items on the action plan and share this information with parents at scheduled meetings or through the Brightwheel app.

Teachers will follow our Challenging Behavior policy from our Parent Handbook when encountering challenging behaviors with children. If a child becomes a danger to others, additional staff can be called into a classroom to assist teachers. When it is determined that additional assistance is needed for a child, Green Hills AEA will be consulted with the parents' permission. The director will reach out to CCR&R with parent permission for additional resources and training to assist parents, teachers and staff to better equip them to manage challenging behaviors in the classroom. IWCC Early Childhood Program Facility can be consulted with parent permission.

Every effort will be made to allow the child to remain in care. However, in the event a child is required to leave Iowa Western Early Childhood Education Center every effort will be given to support the child and parents during this transition. Contact information will be provided for CCR&C for assistance in obtaining new childcare in an environment that will support the needs of the child and family. Green Hills AEA contact information will be shared as well.

Parents may voluntarily withdraw their child from the program at any time by providing a two-week written notice to the center director. Parents will be responsible for all fees occurring through the last day of attendance and/or contract. Parents are charged in accordance with the enrollment contract unless the program director has received written withdrawal information. Every effort will be made to allow for an easy transition into or from a program or school after disenrollment or enrollment.

Billing Information

Families are billed for enrollment in the ECE Center based upon a contracted fee which is determined by the child's age. Reduced tuition is available for full-time IWCC employees and students. A reduced fee is assessed for families with multiple children enrolled in the center. Parents sign a contract at the beginning of the academic year which states the fees for services. Billing statements will be issued based on the

information on the contract. Fees for the center are announced at the beginning of each school year. Fees are subject to change upon notice. IRS statements will be made available for tax purposes through the college finance office.

Billing statements for the month will be in the child's mailbox at the center by the 1st of the month.

Payments must be paid to the College Business Office via Auto Pay. Tuition will be charged on the 20th of each month for the current month's services. Care will be discontinued when a bill is more than one month delinquent. Parents will pay for 49 weeks of care until time of termination and will pay a monthly fee to retain their childcare space. Parents do not pay for 2 weeks at winter break and 1 week dispersed throughout the year. When child/children are not utilizing the program, payment will need to be made to retain their space. If no notice is received, patrons will be charged the monthly fee until notice is received. Parents are required to give two weeks written notice for termination of care to the ECE director. Accounts which have outstanding balances are subject to being sent to collection at the discretion of the College Business Office. The Center reserves the right to disenroll a child when a payment for services is not made in a timely manner.

Children must be picked up by 5:30pm. Parents will be given a five-minute grace period before late fees apply. Starting at 5:35pm a late fee will be charged at \$2 per minute. Late fees will be added to the next scheduled autopayment. Fees will not be refunded for holidays, vacations, illness of children, or any unforeseen circumstances.

Fees may increase at any time with notice.

Parents who participate in employer flexible benefit plans and third-party payment plans (such as DHS, HHS and Promise Jobs) are responsible for delivering the appropriate documents to the Director and the College Business Office for processing. Participation in flexible benefit plan does not exempt parents from timely payment of ECE Center fees. Families utilizing a third party pay method will be responsible for all contracted care each month not paid off by the third party pay agency. Third party payment is accepted for a limited number of preschooler only spaces.

Sample Daily Schedule for Preschool Rooms (Actual Schedule May Vary)

7:00 AM	Center Opens Children arrive in the Toddler Classroom Self-Selected Learning Center Activities
7:30 AM	Preschoolers move to East Classroom
8:30 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM	Self-Selected Learning Center Activities
9:15 AM	Morning Large Group Time
9:30 AM	Small Group Activities
9:40 AM	Self-Selected Activities
10:40 AM	Clean-up/Recall Time
10:50 AM	Outside Play

Please Contact the Early Childhood Education Center with any questions:

Office Hours: Monday – Friday 7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

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11:30 AM	Clean-Up for Lunch
11:40 AM	Lunch
12:00 – 2:00PM	Rest Time/RDC
1:30 PM	Self-Selected Activities/Informal Planning for those who wake early
2:45 PM	Afternoon Large Group Time/Recall RDC/Snack
3:00 PM	RDC/Snack Outside Play
3:30 PM	Outside Play
4:30 PM	Self-Selected Activities may be indoor or outdoor as staffing and weather dictates
5:30 PM	Center Closes

*Children play outdoors each day as weather permits

Sample Daily Schedule for Toddler Rooms (Actual Schedule May Vary)

7:00 AM	Center Opens –Older Children arrive in Toddler Classroom Infants arrive in Infant Classroom Self-Selected Learning Activities
7:30 AM	All Preschoolers transition to East
8:30 AM	West Preschooler transition to West
8:30 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM	Routines of Daily Care (RDC). (RDC includes teeth brushing, diapering, toileting and hand washing)
9:15 AM	Group Time
9:30 AM	RDC
9:50 – 10:30 AM	Outdoor Time (weather permitting)
10:30 – 11:20 AM	Free Choice Activities
11:20 – 11:30 AM	Story/Large Group Time
11:40 – 12:15	Lunch/RDC
12:15 – 2:30 PM	Rest Time/RDC as children awake
2:00 – 3:00 PM	Free Choice Activities

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3:00 PM	Group Time
3:15 PM	Snack
3:30 PM	RDC/Free Choice/Outdoor Time
4:00 PM	Recall
5:30 PM	Center Closes

*Children play outdoors each day as weather permits.

Discipline & Guidance Policy

The IWCC ECE guidance policy is based on the belief that discipline is part of teaching. Our guidance policy considers children's ages, individual temperaments, and levels of development. The staff of the center provide respectful care, treating each child as an individual, but also being mindful that the children are participating in a group situation. Staff interactions with children are to help them to develop positive self-images as well as learning to help others. Emphasis is on positive behaviors. Most effective communication with children occurs at their eye level and in face-to-face situations.

Our classroom environment is designed in ways that let the children know what behavior is expected. Active areas are for active play and quiet areas are for quiet play. Labeling of shelves shows children where to return materials when they are finished with them. Three consistent limits in our classrooms are:

1. Children may not hurt themselves.
2. Children may not hurt others.
3. Children may not destroy property.

Children are provided with a consistent routine, a predictable environment, and clear limits of appropriate behavior. Simple, consistent limits are communicated to the children through both the words and actions of the teachers. These limits are based on realistic expectations for children's behavior considering their developmental levels. When children are having difficulty behaving within these limits, one of the following techniques may be used. Choice of technique depends on the child as well as the specific situation.

Positive Reinforcement

Teachers use this technique to communicate to children that their behavior is okay and meets expectations. For example, a teacher might comment to children putting toys away at clean up time, "I like the way you are cleaning up the toys."

Redirection & Choice

Children who are behaving inappropriately may be asked to tell the teacher what the rule is. Teachers may make polite requests to have children examine their behavior to see if it fits with what the rule is. The children can then verbalize to the teacher what appropriate behavior is for the situation. The child may be asked to choose a different activity if they cannot follow rules for the activity they are doing.

Problem Solving

When children are having difficulty in a situation, a teacher's intervention might be to talk with the children and have them help come up with a solution to the problem. This technique involves the teacher and children listening to what is being communicated and together developing a plan for how to resolve the conflict or difficulty. This technique may be used with individual children or with groups of children.

Consequences

Children are taught that behavior has consequences, either natural or logical. Consistent use of consequences helps children to develop understanding about their behaviors and feel more in control of themselves. Talking with children about these consequences is also part of staff interactions with the children.

Time to Reflect

Occasionally it may be necessary to have a child move apart from the group in order to regain control of themselves. The child may be encouraged by the staff to "sit apart" from the group or choose an individual activity when his/her behavior indicates a need to be away from the group to prevent hurting self or others. Time to reflect is not used to isolate and/or punish children. It is used as a tool the child and/or teachers can select when time is needed for regaining self-control. Teachers will debrief children when the child indicates readiness to rejoin the group.

Biting & Challenging Behavior Policy

Biting is a common behavior among children birth to three-years-old in group care. Every effort will be made to determine the reasoning or the function behind the biting behavior so that we can try to figure out what teachers and parents can do to teach the child more appropriate responses than biting. Children bite for many different reasons. Some of the reasons include, but are not limited to, exploration, teething, investigating cause and effect, attention, frustration in expressing needs or wants, becoming independent, learning to play with other children, anxiety, or feeling threatened by new or changing situation.

When biting or ongoing challenging behavior occurs, teachers will record incidents and document observations to better understand the context before and after a bite (where, when, how, who), as well as noting when the behavior is absent. Teachers will also note the location and availability of staff during the incident to ensure proper supervision is taking place. As staff members are working to better understand why the child is doing the behavior, they will work to be proactive in striving to prevent future incidents.

When a child has challenging behavior or bites another child, staff will.

- Intervene immediately.
- Help the child who was bitten by showing concern and support. First aid will be given such as washing the wound with soap and running water as well as providing a bandage for an open wound and an ice pack if needed.
- Work to teach the child in a caring and firm way that the behavior is not acceptable as well as alternate behaviors that are acceptable.
- Reinforce positive behaviors.
- Provide a confidential incident report to the parents of the bitten child, while a confidential biting report will be provided to the parents of the biter. These forms assist in documenting and identifying patterns so that staff can work to prevent future incidents by changing the environment and implementing intentional teaching strategies (social-emotional supports). A copy of the incident or biting report will be kept in the child's individual file. Confidentiality will be maintained

by not using other children's names on the forms and training staff to not release children's names when questioned.

If the biting or challenging behavior continues, we will.

- Meet with the parents of the child who is biting to plan strategies for supporting child in positive social behaviors.
- Assign a teacher to shadow the child as much as is possible within the confines of group care.
- Consider if changes to the environment and/or routines will assist in reducing future incidents.
- Seek consultation for assistance if needed.

On the rare occasion that the biting or challenging behavior continues without improvement, IWCC ECE reserves the right to ask the parents to remove the child from the program so that the parents can find another learning environment that will better meet the child's individual needs.

Health Policy

Laws of the State of Iowa require that each child enrolled in an early childhood education program have an annual physical checkup. **A report of this examination and an up-to-date immunization card shall be in the Center's office, on or before the first day the child attends.** Both must be signed by a physician or physician's designee such as a physician assistant or nurse practitioner.

Medications:

No medication (prescribed or over the counter) will be given to any child without the parent or guardians' written authorization and a licensed health care provider's written authorization. Both signatures and written authorizations must be provided. The following does not require a physician note only a written permission form by parent; sunscreen, bug repellent, medicated or non-medicated chap stick, over the counter skin ointments, lotions, and sprays. Over the counter medication must be labeled with the child's first and last name. Each medication must be accompanied by a physician's or pharmacist's written directions and in an original and up to date container. Center staff will administer the proper medication to your child as directed by the written authorization from the physician. Center staff will record dosages in the center medication log. All medications are stored in the center west kitchen away from the children in locked boxes. Rescue medications will be stored in the child's classroom in a cabinet out of reach of children.

A medication form must be on file for all medications including sunscreen. A special sunscreen form is available. Medications left at the center after dosages have ended will be disposed. Parents should take medicine home when it is no longer being dispensed. Medication left more than one week after medication authorization has expired will be thrown away by the center staff. Rescue medications, such as Epi pens and Asthma medications, shall accompany the child when leaving the Center. Teachers will carry the medication in a fanny pack provided for this purpose.

Sunscreen:

Because children play outdoors daily, parents are requested to send sunscreen (labeled with child's name) or use the sunscreen provided by the Center, for children to use especially during the summer. There is a sunscreen authorization form available which requires a parent signature. Sunscreen is kept in the children's classrooms in a cupboard out of children's reach.

Illness:

When children are sick, they need TLC at home. **We are not set up for providing sick childcare;** we are also not licensed to provide sick childcare. Illness is caused by germs, viruses, and bacteria and not by cold weather. Sick children who attend the center could spread germs to other children and make them sick. **Each child shall be free of symptoms of illness each day that he/she attends the center.** The following guidelines will be observed to know when to keep your child at home.

A child should stay home if any of the follow conditions exist:

- Upset stomach, diarrhea or vomiting within the last 24 hours.
- Excessively runny nose or unusual cough; common colds are okay as long as the child does not have an excessive nose discharge, severe cough or complaint of unusual pain.
- Any rash or skin sores that have not been identified and/or are under treatment.
- Suspected impetigo, scabies, or ringworm
- Head lice and/or nits (children must be lice or nit-free to return to the center)
- Fever over 100 degrees F; children are to be fever-free for 24 hours before returning.
- Pink eye: child may return after being on antibiotic treatment for a full 24 hours
- Sore throat-including strep throat; child may return after being on antibiotic treatment for a full 24 hours.

A child should stay home if he/she has been exposed to a communicable disease and indicates signs of that disease. A chart of communicable diseases is at the end of the parent handbook. **If your child becomes ill with a communicable disease, please notify the center so that we may post a notice of exposure for the other parents. If you call to report that your child will not attend the center due to illness, please let the staff member know what the illness is.**

Iowa Western ECE Center staff may call a parent to pick up a child if he/she shows symptoms of illness during the day. Center staff also may refuse to allow a child to attend the center on a day if they display symptoms of illness upon arrival. **Your cooperation will assist us in lessening the number of illnesses in the center. As you are working parents, we understand that it is difficult for you to miss work when your child is ill. We do, however, ask that you not send your child to the center when you know he/she is sick and that you cooperate with staff when asked to pick up a sick child from the center.** There is sick childcare available in the community through Mercy Hospital and the Visiting Nurses Association. If you would like more information about these services, please let a staff member know.

We will assist with lessening illness by:

- Calling parents to send sick children home
- Observing proper hand washing procedures to prevent spread of germs
- Observing proper surface sanitation procedures around mealtimes and diapering
- Ensuring that staff members who are ill stay home
- Providing your children with a rest time each day which contributes to a healthy body
- Posting exposure notices for parents when we are notified of communicable illness in the center
- Observing universal precaution procedures when handling bodily fluids.

Oral Health:

Parents must provide contact information for their child's dentist in the Enrollment Packet. If a child's dentist cannot be contacted in a dental emergency 911 will be contacted. Center staff will provide appropriate oral first aid to children and contact their parents as needed for dental emergencies. Children are provided an opportunity twice a day to brush their teeth with an age appropriate, center provided toothbrush. These will be inspected by staff daily to ensure they are in good working condition, no bristles falling out or any other defects. Toothbrushes will be replaced twice a year at the end of the semester in December and again in June when the summer schedule resumes. Toothbrushes will be sanitized in the sanitizer after each use. Sippy cups and bottles are only used at meals and feeding times and to provide water throughout the day to toddlers and infants. Iowa Western provides a yearly field trip to the dental program for preschool aged children, to tour and be exposed to what dentists do,

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equipment and tools. Toddlers, infants and preschoolers take part in oral health activities planned in their classrooms throughout the year. These include playdough dentist set, dental office visit lesson plans, books describing a visit to the dentist, how to brush teeth and eating healthy to keep teeth healthy. These books are age appropriate to each age group. Our program takes part in the CACFP food program ensuring the children have healthy meals and snacks every day they are in our care. Posters and other visuals are displayed in each classroom. The program has specific requirements regarding the amount of sugar in food items and sugary snacks provided.

Safety & Emergency Policy

Parents/guardian shall provide in writing to the Center a phone number of two persons who can be reached in case of an emergency when we are unable to reach the parents/guardian. Staff will attempt to contact parents at their emergency numbers should any of the following emergency situations occur.

In case of minor accidents, the child will receive basic emergency care by staff that is first aid certified. The parents will be notified of the accident in writing. A copy of the accident report is filed in the child's center record folder.

In the case of medical or dental emergency or more critical accident, the child will receive basic emergency care according to the abilities of the staff. An attempt will be made to notify the parents/guardian immediately. If the parents/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be notified, and the child's personal physician or dentist will be notified, and his/her instructions will be followed. If the physician is not available, 911 will be called and the child will be taken by ambulance to a local hospital should this be necessary. The parents/guardian will be responsible for all payments of medical fees for the care of their child. Center staff cannot transport children to the hospital, only ambulance service can. If a child were to be transported a staff member with whom the child is comfortable would accompany him/her if parents aren't available.

In the case of fire or tornado the children are taken to designated safe areas. They will be always supervised by Center staff. Fire and tornado drills are conducted monthly in accordance with licensing regulations. These drills are recorded in the Center monthly safety log. Designated safe areas for tornado drills are Lewis Hall Room 159, 142 and 160. Designated safe areas for fire drills are in front of the Student Center. In the event of an actual fire in Lewis Hall, the children will be evacuated to the Reiver Room in the Student Center.

In the event of an armed or dangerous person, the staff may decide to stay in a "lock-down" status. No staff or children will be permitted to leave the facility until the "all-clear" message is given by the security or public safety officials. However, should staff decide it is safer to vacate the facility, **the children will be taken to the rally point for IWCC at the New Horizon Presbyterian Church across from College View School, 30 Valley View Drive.**

In the case of a bomb threat, the children will be evacuated by IWCC bus to the rally point for IWCC at New Horizon Presbyterian Church across from College View School, 30 Valley View Drive.

Infant Safe Sleep Policy

All staff follow the safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death (SIDS). Parents will review this policy upon enrolling their infant. Parents can request a brochure about safe sleep and reducing the risk of SIDS. Safe Sleep for Iowa Babies at any time. Staff will follow the following guidelines:

- Infants younger than 12 months will always be put to sleep on their backs.

- Infants will be placed on a firm mattress, with a tight fitted sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements CFR1219 for full-size cribs and CFR 1220 for non-full- size cribs.
- No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets quilts, sheepskins or loose bedding will be in the crib or draped over the crib.
- Devices such as wedges or infant positioners will not be used unless ordered by a physician. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe, and their use may increase the risk of suffocation.
- Sleeping areas will be ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- If extra warmth is needed, sleep clothing (i.e.: one-piece sleeper, sleep sack, wearable blanket, or sleep bag) will be used as an alternative to blankets. No weighted blankets or sleep sacks will be used.
- Only one infant will be placed in a crib to sleep.
- No crib toys, mobiles, or musical/nightlight crib attachments will be used in the crib.
- Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. It may not be attached to the infant's clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a strangulation risk.
- If the infant falls asleep anyplace other than a crib (i.e.: bouncy chair, while being held, or arrives to the Center asleep in a car seat) the infant will be moved to a crib immediately.
- Our childcare program is smoke free, and smoking is not allowed in Iowa childcare businesses.
- Sleeping infants will be actively observed by sight and sound.
- When infants can roll back and forth from front to back, the infant will be placed on their back for sleep and allowed to assume a preferred sleep position.
- Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times daily. This will strengthen their muscles and develop normally.

Field Trips

Children from the center may participate in a variety of field trips. Upon enrollment, parents complete a permission form allowing their child to participate in these activities. On campus field trips can occur weekly and may include walks to campus places or activities such as the library for stories or the campus woods for nature walks.

Field trips off the IWCC campus will be announced in the center newsletter as well as by parent notification. Preschool children generally participate in off-campus field trips two to three times per semester. The off-campus field trips will be by college bus. Drivers for field trips include paid college faculty and staff; the college has copies of the driver's licenses for these people and has run background checks on their driving records. Staff carry first aid kits as well as emergency notification cards for each child on field trips on and off the campus.

Outdoor Play

Children will play outside daily, including the winter season, as weather permits. Please, make sure your child has appropriate clothing depending on the weather. A child who is well enough to come to the center is usually well enough to be able to play outside Children will go outside daily when the temperature is above 15° F or below 105°F. Wind chill and heat index factors will be considered in determining outdoor play safety.

Clothing:

Please Contact the Early Childhood Education Center with any questions:

Office Hours: Monday – Friday 7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

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- Play at the ECE Center is active, and occasionally messy, children should wear comfortable, washable play clothes and shoes. Each child will need an extra change of clothes clearly labeled with his/her name. This change of clothing can be left at school. Soiled clothing will be sent home to be replaced with clean clothes the next day. Parents should check this supply regularly to ensure that it fits and is appropriate for the seasonal weather.
- In the winter, please make sure your child has the necessary clothing to go outside. If your child wishes to play in the snow they must have boots, snow pants, coats, mittens/gloves, hat/hood, and extra shoes to change into when coming inside. Please dress your child warmly. PARENTS are asked to clearly label all clothing with the child's name. Mittens and boots all start to look the same; labeling assists staff in returning items to proper owners.
- In the summer, children should have swim clothes, and shoes for water days.

Strangulation Prevention Policy

- No staff shall tie a pacifier or any other object around a child's neck.
- Do not place a crib, cot, or chair near blinds.
- Tie or fasten Venetian blinds to the appropriate fastener out of reach of children.
- No mobiles allowed.
- Do not remove the center strap from highchairs or strollers.
- Pay attention to children's clothing while on the playground. Avoid scarves, string, ties or any other loose clothing that may catch on playground equipment. Children are not allowed to wear these items.
- Lanyards used by staff and children must be breakaway.

Strings and cords long enough to encircle a child's neck are not allowed in the center. Children are not allowed to bring these items from home and will be asked to take off any necklace that would encircle a child's neck. Window blinds have tie downs devices to hold cords tight. When using strings/cords/straps close supervision is required. All dramatic play items with handles or straps are removed or shortened. Dramatic play items like ties, scarves, necklaces or boas are only allowed for children 3 and over. Pacifiers are only used when not attached to anything. This policy is in the infant packet parents receive upon enrollment. Teachers inspect hooded sweatshirts, coats and hats for strings, if they are found the child is not allowed to use the item and it will be sent home, or the parents will remove the strings.

Routines of Daily Care

Toilet Learning and diapering:

Toilet learning is not required before children enroll in the center. Staff will work with parents to assist with the process when the child is ready. When a child is toilet learning, parents should make sure that the clothing worn can be managed independently by the child. Parents will supply diapers and wipes for their child. Please label diapers and wipe containers with the child's name. Parents should check the child's supply of diapers regularly and replenish as needed. Staff will record on the Brightwheel app when children need diapers or wipes.

Infant Feeding and Expressed Milk:

Children with any special feeding needs and all infants' families will be provided daily communication of type and quantity of food consumed. Nursing mothers are welcome to breastfeed at the center in the Nursing Room. Expressed milk must be labeled with the infant's full name and the date that the milk was expressed and the date the milk was received by infant room staff. Staff will discard any unfinished and unrefrigerated formula or breast milk after one hour.

Meals, Snacks, and Food Preparation:

The ECE Center participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Weekly menus are posted on the parent bulletin board. We make every attempt to provide a variety of nutritious menus for the children. Children will only be allowed food substitutions for medical or religious reasons with written doctor or religious authorization. For Infants and children with special feeding needs, staff will document the food consumed by the child and document this in the Brightwheel app. This follows CACFP guidelines.

Due to food sensitivities, food allergies, food program guidelines and an increased awareness of childhood nutrition needs, **NO FOOD** of any kind may be brought into the Center. This includes snacks for various celebrations as well as food for eating in the car on the way to or from school. Please finish these up before entering the Center. Birthdays and other holidays may be recognized with certificates or other small tokens. The classroom teacher must approve these.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit our completed form or letter to USDA by : 1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant of Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; 2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or 3) email: program.intake@usda.gov."

Arrival & Dismissal Information

PLEASE CALL YOUR CHILD'S CLASSROOM IF YOUR CHILD IS ABSENT FOR ANY REASON or post in the Brightwheel app. If your classroom teacher has not been notified of your child's absence, they will contact you on the Brightwheel app within an hour of typical drop-off. In the event there is no response, staff will contact parents via contact numbers provided in the child's Enrollment Packet. Child's emergency contacts will be contacted in the event parents are not reached.

Each child attending the center must be accompanied into the center by a parent or someone given custody of the child that day. The child should not be left until his presence is acknowledged by the center staff. We want to make sure that the child is safely within the building and in the care of the center personnel before the accompanying parent/adult leaves.

Sign in/Sign out—Please accompany your child into the room, make contact with a teacher, sign in your child on the Brightwheel app using your phone or the iPad provided, and assist in washing hands. At the end of each day, notify the teacher that you are picking up your child and sign out of the program. The Brightwheel app includes the date and time a child is dropped off, picked up and by whom. Parents are required to have the Brightwheel app for sign in/sign out and tracking communication for the center staff. If parents are unable to download the app center staff will manually log the child, recording date, time and who is signing in/out.

You may temporarily park your car in the visitor's spaces in front of the center when arriving to drop off or pick up your child. Please avoid letting your car idle in the parking areas unless the temperature is extremely hot or cold. **Parents must sign in/out upon arrival and departure so we have a record of children's attendance.** Each child has a mailbox in this area for messages, notes, and billing. Please check your child's mailbox daily

The center will close at 5:30 pm each day. Parents who are late picking up their child due to an emergency, PLEASE call 712-388-6800 or notify your child's teachers via the Brightwheel app. Parents who are late to pick up their child may be assessed a late fee of \$2.00 per minute after 5:35. This will be charged to cover staff expenses. The center clock will be the official time.

We reserve the right to add a fee for early arrivals and late departures. We also reserve the right to disenroll children whose parents are habitually late to pick them up.

Center Closing

When the college closes for inclement weather, the center will be closed. Local media outlets will be notified in case of severe weather closure. Should the college close after a day of classes has begun, the center will also close. Parents are expected to pick up their children as soon as possible when such closings are announced. Parents can contact the college information line at 712-325-3700 for information on school closure. Staff will send announcements through the Brightwheel app regarding all college closings. In addition, parents may sign up for the Reiver Alert system which will alert parents of emergencies through a text or email to the number provided.

Family Involvement

The Iowa Western ECE Center maintains an open-door policy for families. You are welcome to visit the center at any time. We ask only that you consider your child's temperament and stage of development before visiting him/her. Sometimes children can separate easily from a parent once a day; sometimes twice may be more difficult.

The observation room is open to parents during center hours 7:00am and 5:30pm. This room can also be used while waiting for your child to finish meals, snacks, or group time. The observation room is a valuable teaching tool for students enrolled in the program. The room is used by students, staff, and visitors. It allows us to get a realistic view of children's activities as they continue to play without interruptions.

Each of the classrooms provides written daily communication to parents through the Brightwheel app and parent boards with daily lesson plans and other information. Monthly newsletters will be sent home. Parents should regularly check mailboxes and bulletin boards for information about program events. Each classroom maintains a bulletin board with information specific to that room. Each child has a mailbox in his/her classroom for distribution of newsletters, important notices, and monthly billing statements.

Credit and non-credit parenting classes are offered at IWCC for parents who would like support in parenting or seek additional information and experience regarding the guidance and discipline techniques used in the childcare center. The center sponsors at least one family event each semester.

Court Orders—a copy of any document issued by the court, such as a “no contact order” or “joint custody order” must be on file with the director for the lab school to fully abide by the orders.

Multicultural environment—the IWCC ECE center welcomes and encourages diversity in its population and programs. All families are welcome regardless of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, or differing ability. Appreciation of diversity is immersed in our curriculum in daily planning, tolerance of others, and involvement with families. Multicultural materials and discussions are incorporated into the curriculum and are addressed in a natural and meaningful way for the children. We encourage families to share their culture through activities in the classroom as well as sharing a family picture poster.

Family Advisory Board

We believe that children benefit from a supportive partnership between center and family. We invite parental input, concerns and suggestions through our Family Advisory Board. If you have any concerns, please discuss them with the staff and/or director. Families are also encouraged to complete the Parent Participation Questionnaire upon enrollment. This information will be used by staff for family involvement in the program.

The Family Advisory Board consists of parents of children enrolled in the center. The Board offers ideas and suggestions on center policy. The Board also organizes family get togethers for the center. Membership is open to any parent/guardian of an enrolled child. The directors of the center and college lab faculty are ex-officio members. The Family advisory Board meets once a semester during the fall and spring semesters.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Formal parent teacher conferences regarding children’s development and activities at the center will be offered at least once each semester. Parents and/or teachers may request a conference at any time to discuss concerns or observations about their child.

Center staff utilize assessment tools based on Teaching Strategies Gold, Ages and Stages and Iowa Early Learning Standards, in conjunction with anecdotal records and other observation techniques to chart children’s development, learning and interests. This information is used to plan activities and curriculum in the center. All this information will be shared with parents at Parent Teacher Conferences or daily as needed.

Assessments

Assessment is completed through our staff developed assessment tools, which are based on Teaching Strategies Gold, Ages and Stages and Iowa Early Learning Standards. All areas of development are considered through planned activities that allow each individual child to develop these skills. Children are assessed by collecting anecdotal notes and daily observations. These assessments are shared with parents at Parent-Teacher conferences, held twice a year or more frequently at the request of the parent and/or teacher.

Confidentiality Statement

Milestones Collection Form will be used as a tool to collect the data to be shared with the parent/ parents. The records kept on families enrolled at the center are confidential. Records are shared with the directors and staff in your child’s room. Staff may not share information on file with others without written permission from a parent or guardian. Information received while in the performance of duties, either written or verbal, shall also be considered confidential and shall be treated the same as written information contained in the child’s file. Staff are reminded that information regarding a child cannot be shared with other agencies such as AEA without the written consent of the child’s parent or guardian.

Staff members who do not maintain the confidentiality of children's information can be dismissed from employment.

Communicable Diseases

A note to Parents:

Communicable diseases spread easily in childcare, preschool, and school environments. When children enter such group situations, their associations with other children are greatly increased in number. Contacts are closer and more prolonged. Parents should know that most of the common diseases of childhood usually begin with innocent-appearing symptoms, quite like those of the common cold. It is only after a few days that the more telltale symptoms appear, other members of the family may be infected and incubate the disease. If a disease appears in a family, the parents should notify the center that their child has that specific disease. If this is one, the staff will be on the alert for other cases. Sometimes prompt action of the staff will enable the physicians of the community to take preventive action to stop the spread of disease. Diseases are reported by the center to the Iowa Department of Public Health or the County Public Health Department. The Department, by watching the "big picture" is often able to prevent much suffering of our children. **Reporting of disease is important. Please do your part to make it complete, timely and useful.**

Methods of disease transmission:

Childhood diseases are usually spread by direct contact or indirectly via the respiratory or alimentary routes. Direct contact means touching one person by another, such as walking hand-in-hand, kissing or any other instance where skin comes in contact with skin. Indirect contact includes handling of objects such as pencils, apples, handkerchiefs, papers, or desks freshly contaminated by an infected person. Airborne spread on the other hand, does not require touching or handling of persons or things. The germs are breathed in by another. The infected person may have left the room or program/school long before the airborne transmission interval is rather brief.

Rules to prevent the transmission of the disease:

1. **Wash hands frequently** with soap and water, particularly after toilet and before eating.
2. **Cover nose and mouth** when sneezing or coughing. Use of tissue.
3. **Stay home when ill.** Contact your doctor.

Concise descriptions and recommendations for exclusion of cases from school.

Readmission shall include written permission from the health officer, physician or attending physician, before any child is readmitted to the center/preschool following any disease which requires exclusion, not mere absence.

Enrollment in Iowa Western ECE Center constitutes an understanding of the following expectations.

Parents' Expectations of the program:

Parents may expect that:

1. Their child will be cared for in a safe, supportive environment with eco-healthy practices
2. They are invited to visit the program at any time
3. They may visit with the Director or On-Site Leader about concerns related to their child or the program
4. They will be regularly informed about program activities by the staff
5. They will regularly be informed of developmental milestones data collected on their child by anecdotal notes.

Program's Expectations of the parents:

IWCC expects that parents will:

1. Pay fees on time

2. Keep the child's records up to date
3. Pick up child on time, signing the child in and out
4. Follow health policies of the program
5. Contact the program if your child will not be attending on a scheduled day.
6. Pay attention to any communications from the program regarding their child's behavior, and cooperate in efforts to bring about improvements in the situation

Children's Expectations of the program

Children may expect:

1. To have a safe, supportive, and caring place to grow
2. To use all the program equipment, materials, and facilities
3. To be treated with respect
4. To receive nurturing care from staff members who are actively involved with them

Communicable Disease Chart

ILLNESS	EXCLUDE	RETURN TO CHILD CARE/SCHOOL
Chicken Pox	Yes	When all blisters are crusted with no oozing (usually 6 days) and resolution of exclusion criteria.
Diarrhea (infectious)	Yes (there are special exclusion rules for Shiga toxin producing E.coli (STEC), shigellosis and cryptosporidiosis).	When diarrhea stops and health care provider and public health official states the child may return.
Diarrhea (non-infectious)	Yes (there are special exclusion rules for Shiga toxin producing E.coli (STEC), shigellosis and cryptosporidiosis).	When diarrhea stops and health care provider and public health official states the child may return.
Fifth Disease	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria.	If excluded due to presence of other exclusion criteria, resolution of exclusion criteria.
Hand, Foot and Mouth	No. Unless the child meets other exclusion criteria. Or is	If excluded due to presence of other exclusion criteria, resolution of exclusion criteria

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	excessively drooling with mouth sores.	
Head Lice (Pediculosis)	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria.	Treatment of an active lice infestation may be delayed until the end of the day. Children do not need to miss school or childcare due to head lice. Treatment recommendations can be found here: https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/treatment.html
Impetigo	Yes, exclude at the end of the day if blisters can be covered.	After child has been seen by the doctor, after 24 hours on antibiotic, and blisters are covered.
Molluscum Contagiosum	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria	Skin disease similar to warts. Do not share towels or clothing and use good hand hygiene.
MRSA	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria	Wounds should be kept covered and gloves worn during bandage changes. Do not share towels or clothing and use good hand hygiene.
Otitis Media (ear infection)	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria	If excluded due to presence of other exclusion criteria, resolution of exclusion criteria
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Yes.	Child may return after 5 days of antibiotics and resolution of exclusion criteria.
Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)	Yes.	Child may return after treatment begins or Doctor approves readmission.
Respiratory illness (cough and cold symptoms) includes influenza, COVID-19, and RSV	Yes.	When child is fever free for 24 hours without use of a fever reducing medication AND respiratory symptoms are mild and improving.
Ringworm	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria.	Treatment of ringworm infection may be delayed to the end of the day. Child may be readmitted after treatment has begun. Cover lesion(s) if possible. Do not share clothing, bedding or personal items.
Strep Throat	Yes.	When resolution of exclusion criteria and after 24 hours of antibiotic.
Vomiting	Yes	When vomiting has resolved and resolution of exclusion criteria.

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