



WHITE BIRCH CENTER
FAMILY HANDBOOK
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WWW.WHITEBIRCHCC.ORG



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Important Information

White Birch Federal Tax ID Number: 02-0325474


Your Child's Classroom:

Your Child's Teacher:

Teacher's Email Address:

_____@whitebirchcc.org

Executive Director: Marc McMurphy

 marcm@whitebirchcc.org

Director of Children's Programs: Leanna Lorden

 leannad@whitebirchcc.org

Child Care Licensing Unit: 1-800-852-3345 ext. 9025

Or

License Numbers: 00719 (Child Care Programs)

06343 (School Age Programs)

Notes:

NOTES

NOTES

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About White Birch

White Birch Center began as a cooperative preschool, Crayon College, in 1974. Eight years later, the preschool incorporated as White Birch Community Center, Inc.



White Birch is a private, 501c3 nonprofit organization that is dedicated to enriching the lives of those residing in the greater Henniker area. Since 1974, the agency has grown to serve children, families, and older adults with a wide variety of programs.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

White Birch provides high-quality child care focusing on Early Learning and, school age care and summer camp focusing on Extended Education, and senior programming for older adults focusing on Active Living in the Henniker area. Annually, more than 500 children, families, and older adults enroll in our early childhood programs, preschool, enrichment activities, swim lessons, summer camp, and senior programming.

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

White Birch is recognized as a *Program for Strengthening Families*, offering family-support activities. These activities are designed to keep children safe and families strong by offering support, providing a strong sense of community, fostering social connections, and presenting prevention-based family programs. Information, resources, parent education and support, as well as referrals to other programs are offered. The goal is to enhance a family's capacity to support the growth and development of each and every member — adults, youth, and children.

HOLIDAYS IN THE CLASSROOM

Holiday celebrations can be wonderful opportunities for children to learn about the traditions and values that are cherished parts of people's lives. White Birch believes that decisions about what holidays to celebrate are best made together by teachers, parents, and children. Families and staff are more comfortable when both have expressed their views and understand how a decision has been reached. The important thing for all to remember is that when planning holiday activities, the rules of good practice continue to apply. Such as are the activities meaningful to the children? Are their needs and interests being met? Is the activity a valuable use of children's time?

When celebrating holidays in the classrooms, there are a few things that apply in order to show good practice. First, the activities are connected to specific children and families in the group. This helps children understand holiday activities in the context of people's daily lives. Children should have the chance to explore the meaning and significance of each holiday. Second, children are encouraged to share feelings and information about the holidays they celebrate. This will help them make the distinction between learning about another person's holiday rituals and celebrating one's own holidays. Third, every group represented in the classroom is honored. Once families and programs have decided on what holidays to celebrate, none should be treated as if they are unusual. Children should recognize that everyone's holidays are culturally significant and meaningful. In any case, holiday celebrations are just one way for programs and families to work together to create developmentally and culturally appropriate learning experiences.

rather than a punishment based approach.

Occasionally a child may pose a safety risk to themselves or others or are disruptive to the classroom due to behavior; e.g. refusal to follow directions, running away, biting, kicking and hurting others or themselves.

Often a behavior plan is developed at this level and is implemented by all who interact with the child; e.g. child may work towards earning a privilege by demonstrating positive behaviors.

A formal behavior referral is initiated when a child exhibits behaviors that pose a significant safety risk to themselves or others that do not appear to be responding to typical positive interventions. A behavioral referral requires input from staff, parents and the behavior analyst. A meeting will be held with staff and families to assist in uncovering possible stressors or underlying health or developmental issues that may be contributing to behavioral challenges.

SAFETY POLICY: PEER and PERSONAL

WBC is also able to provide resources such as the Early Intervention screening (0-3 years) and Child Check through the public school from the school district that the family resides for children 3 years and older.

If challenging behaviors continue to persist and escalate to the point that the child (or others) cannot be kept safe, it is at the discretion of WBC to terminate the child care contract for the child. A two-week written notice will be provided.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Teachers and directors within child care centers are required **by law** to report child abuse and neglect. We need only to *suspect* child abuse or neglect to make a report. The Division of Children, Youth, and Families is responsible for determining if the abuse report is unfounded or indicated. All persons who are mandated to report suspected abuse and neglect are presumed to be acting in good faith. It is our general policy to inform parents after we have made a report, unless we feel that the child may be in immediate danger.

White Birch Center welcomes all children and families, regardless of race, color, sex, age, national origin or disability.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We believe it is our responsibility to provide children with challenging, stimulating, and developmentally-appropriate learning activities and experiences. As a NH Department of Health & Human Services, Child Licensing Department designated Licensed Plus Child Care Center, our highly-skilled teachers develop curricula that address all the domains of a child's development. Our curriculum provides a map of what children should know, understand, and be able to do.

Play, both teacher-directed and child-initiated, provides dynamic interaction and experimentation with objects and materials and becomes more complex with age. When children play, they are able to apply their knowledge and skills in new and challenging ways. It is through play that children integrate their experiences across the learning domains.

Our activity-centered classrooms and playgrounds provide a rich environment of active exploration and hands-on, open-ended experimentation for children to gain competency at their own developmental levels. We also understand that a teacher's moment-by-moment actions and interactions with children are the most powerful determinant of learning outcomes and development. Curriculum is very important, but what the teacher **does** is paramount.

To support each child's optimal development, we also recognize and embrace the partnership formed between White Birch and the family. Together, we can lay a foundation that will create opportunities for each child's success.

WBC MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of White Birch Center is to be a community leader in providing exceptional programs that support learning and active living for children, adults, and families.

PROGRAM STANDARDS AND QUALITY

White Birch Center, located at 51 Hall Avenue in Henniker, New Hampshire, is licensed through the State of NH Child Care Licensing Unit to care for children from 12 months to 14 years of age. Additionally, White Birch operates a Before-and-After School Program and Full Day Camp Programs at The Henniker Community School.

Holding the highest standards of quality, White Birch is recognized by the State of new Hampshire as a *Licensed Plus Program*. *Licensed Plus* is part of a quality rating system that recognizes NH childcare programs for their efforts to improve the quality of care for young children, and rewards those programs that strive to improve their practices and staff qualifications. It also allows families to identify programs with higher quality.

We welcome your questions and comments, and encourage them to be discussed with our Director of Operations. Concerns regarding licensing and safety that are not addressed to your satisfaction may be relayed to: The Child Care Licensing Unit at (603) 271-9025.

CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Toddler Program	12-24 Months Old
TOTS Program	24-36 Months Old
Preschool Program	3 Years Old
PreKindergarten Program	4 Years Old
Before and After School	Kindergarten through Age 14 Before and After School Care
School Holiday/Vacation Full Day Program	Kindergarten through Age 14
Summer Camp	1st Grade through Age 14
Jr. Summer Camp	Entering Kindergarten

YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

At the early childhood level, ongoing assessment of a child's progress in developmental and academic domains is a standard of practice for teachers. Our classroom teachers assess a child's development using various methods. They use the assessment results to make informed decisions about how best to support positive outcomes for each child. More specifically, our center observes, documents and assesses child development through use of the New Hampshire Early Learning Standards, the TS (Teaching Strategies) GOLD assessment tool, and an assessment portfolio.

The New Hampshire Early Learning Standards are a statewide resource for everyone who loves, cares for, and educates young children. The Standards provide essential information to support and enhance a child's development and learning from birth through age five. They also include domains that are meaningful to the respective developmental stages and are aligned with the NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators.

TS GOLD is an authentic assessment tool that is developed for ages birth through Kindergarten. It is based around 38 objectives for development and learning, and is fully aligned with the Common Core State Standards, and Early Learning Standards of NH. This tool is used 3 times a year, between the months of September and June.

A portfolio is created for each child with the intention of gathering documentation to demonstrate various domains and levels of development. These portfolios are living documents that include work samples, photographs, observations, and anecdotal records. The portfolios remain at White Birch Center, and are shared with parents during the annual conference times. The family will receive the portfolios when the child leaves the program.

If at any time you have questions about your child's development, please feel free to discuss them with your child's teacher. Our staff is highly trained in early childhood education and is a valuable resource for you and your family. Supporting children and families is an integral part of our program.

BEHAVIOR POLICIES: PEER AND PERSONAL

White Birch addresses the safety and behavior of all its children through PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)). Positive behavior support is a behavior management system that examines challenging behaviors to understand the reason behind them and then attempts to prevent the occurrence of the challenging behaviors while teaching the child the skills that they need to be successful. The approach focuses on positive methods to redirect and change behaviors

CLOTHING/OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

Each classroom spends a good deal of time outside in all weather conditions. Sunshine and fresh air are very healthy in all seasons.

During the summer, please be sure your child has the following:

- Swimsuit and towel;
- Sunscreen - Lotion Only (labeled with the child's name);
- Insect repellent (labeled with the child's name);
- Hat.

During the winter months, please be sure your child has the following:

- Snow pants or snowsuit;
- Gloves or mittens;
- Hat;
- Boots;
- Extra clothing—especially socks.

Please keep extra clothing in your child's locker/cubby for those "just in case" moments. Please be sure all of your child's outerwear is labeled.

Understand that your child will not always come home clean. It is our belief that a child who comes home spotless is a child who has not had the opportunity to become involved in hands-on activities. We suggest that you dress your child comfortably in "play clothes." Although we use washable paints and other art material, we sometimes find that the products don't live up to their claims.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Our Teaching Staff and Directors are available for a conference at any time. Parents are kept informed of White Birch and classroom happenings via newsletters, bulletin boards, flyers, daily notes, family programs, our website and on Facebook.

Daily communication is very important, and we do hope you take time at the beginning or end of the day to speak with your child's teacher. For a more lengthy or private discussion, our goal is to have two parent-teacher conferences during the school year.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Business Office, located on the second floor in the white building, is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM.

The Child Care Program at 51 Hall Avenue is open Monday-Friday from 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM.

Our Before School Program at Henniker Community School opens at 6:30 AM and ends at 7:50 AM, when children are dismissed to begin their school day. Our After School Program begins at 3:00 PM and closes at 6:00 PM.

REGISTRATION PROCESS

Registration requires the following documentation to be returned to our Director of Children's Program:

- Enrollment Forms
- Financial Agreement
- Immunization Records & Health Form before / on start date
- USDA Child Care Food Program Application and Enrollment Form
- Registration Fee for new families
- Consent to Release Information Form

FINANCIAL AGREEMENTS

White Birch will have a signed Financial Agreement with all parents or guardians for all programs for each child. The Agreement will set the hours that the child will attend White Birch, and the weekly or monthly fee to be paid.

Two weeks' notice must be given if you wish to change your schedule in the Financial Agreement.

The fee in the Agreement must be paid even when your child is absent. It must be paid for holidays when White Birch is closed if your child is normally scheduled for that day.

Sometimes, holiday and vacations can be confusing as to when and what fees apply. At these times, please call the office for clarification.

TUITION SCHEDULE AND PAYMENTS

Tuition Rates are reviewed yearly and approved by the Board of Directors. Please refer to the current Rate Schedule. Prompt tuition payments are expected.

A non-refundable Registration Fee of \$50 is payable once for families new to any of our programs. The fee is per family, not per child.

To help keep overall tuition rates down, White Birch is not able to offer families vacation weeks. If you pull your child from the program for a family vacation, regular tuition rates will still be assessed.

Summer Absence—For families who withdraw their children from child care during the summer AND wish to guarantee their child's place in the fall, a fee of \$1,000 will be charged for the Toddler and Tots classrooms and \$500 will be charged for the Pre-School and Pre-Kindergarten classrooms.

Billing is done one week ahead for service. **If you have any questions regarding your invoice, please contact the Office Manager.**

Payment Methods

Payments may be made by Cash, Check, or Credit Card (Master Card, VISA, AMEX, or Discover Card). Please make checks payable to: WBC. Please indicate who/what the payment is for on the memo line.

White Birch charges a fee for checks returned for insufficient funds.

You can mail your payments (do not mail cash), pay in the Business Office, or use one of the two Secure Payment Boxes in the Red Child Care building (your child's teacher can tell you where they are located).

Late Payments

A Late Payment Fee is assessed when tuition is not received in a timely manner. Please refer to the Financial Agreement for information about fees and payments.

If for some reason you are unable to make a payment, please discuss the issue with the Office Manager or the Executive Director. We do understand that families struggle financially from time to time, and keeping the lines of communication open is the only way we can help resolve those issues.

NAPTME

A scheduled quiet/rest time is held daily after lunch for the Toddler, TOTS, Preschool, and Pre-Kindergarten programs. According to Child Care Licensing, we must provide a minimum of one hour rest time. Children who do not fall asleep after 30 minutes are provided with a quiet activity. Children are allowed to fall asleep and wake as their needs require.

Please supply a crib-sized sheet and small blanket for rest time (be sure to label each item). **Note: Children's bedding needs to go home weekly for laundering, per NH Child Care Licensing.** Children may also bring a small pillow and/or stuffed animal to cuddle with at rest time.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Care Licensing Unit, requires each licensed child care facility to develop an Emergency Operations Plan. The Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) establishes White Birch Center's strategy to prevent, prepare, protect, mitigate, respond and recover from emergencies. It also shall contain procedures for communication and reunification with families and include response actions for natural, human-caused, or technological incidences including, but not limited to evacuation, secure campus, drop, cover and hold, lockdown, reverse evacuation, shelter in place, and bomb threat/scan.

Programs shall practice no less than 2 components of their EOP as described above with all staff and children at least twice per year. Upon enrollment, programs shall provide families with information from the EOP that addresses communication and reunification procedures as specified in above. Specifically, the response actions will be conducted and practiced throughout the year, at various times, announced or unannounced to center employees, families and children. All response actions shall also include accommodations for infants and toddlers, children with chronic medical conditions, and children with disabilities or with access and functional needs.

In addition to the development of the EOP, it's required for programs to develop a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to ensure that essential functions continue to be performed during, or resumed rapidly after, a disruption of normal activities.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

As a participating agency with the **USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program**, White Birch supplies breakfast, lunch and snack for those children enrolled in our Full Day program. After School children receive a snack.

White Birch must follow strict guidelines related to the food groups we serve, the amounts (portion size), as well as the times that meals and snacks are offered. Children may be served second helpings upon request. We do encourage children to try new foods, but never force children to eat. Additionally, we never use food as a reward, nor do we withhold food as a punishment.

Monthly menus are available and each classroom will post the daily menu on their Daily Note Board. **We ask that parents do not send food from home, with the exception of a “special occasion” snack as part of a celebration.**

In accordance with Federal law and US Department of Agriculture policy, White Birch is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to: USDA, Director of the Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington DC 20250-9410. Or you may call them at: (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). *The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

Allergies

If your child has a food allergy or sensitivity, you must indicate this information on the Registration Form and provide a doctor's note.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Parents and families are welcome at White Birch at any times. Please feel free to drop in, share a skill or talent, read to children, or perhaps chaperone an activity or field trip. It is never necessary to announce your arrival. Our staff want every family to feel comfortable visiting and spending time at the Center.

Questions or Concerns?

Please call or stop by to speak with our Program Director
Director of Children's Programs: Leanna Lorden
Phone: (603) 428-7860 **Email:** leannad@whitebirchcc.org

SCHOLARSHIPS/DISCOUNTS

White Birch is not able to offer scholarships itself. However, families may apply for a New Hampshire Child Care Scholarship through the State of NH. Information on how to apply is available at the White Birch Business Office or at: www.nheasy.gov For families with 2 or more children in our programming, a 10% discount will be applied to the rate of the child with the lowest tuition.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

White Birch requests a minimum of two weeks written notice in the event that your child will be leaving our program. In the unlikely event that White Birch must terminate the agreement, every effort will be made to give a minimum of two weeks notice. The Executive Director makes all decisions regarding the termination of enrollment.

PICK UP AND DROP OFF POLICIES

Our Child Care facility is secured and requires the use of a key card. Please do not loan your card to anyone, or allow other people entry into the building when you open the door. If your key card is lost or stolen, or you require a second card for your family, a \$20 deposit will be charged.

We will release children only to parents or to those individuals indicated on the Registration Form as Alternative Pick Up persons. If someone other than a parent is to pick up your child, please notify us by phone or in writing. Our staff will ask for identification if we do not know the individual picking up, so please ask them to bring a form of identification.

If a biological parent is **not permitted** to pick up a child, we **must** have a copy of the court order indicating such restrictions. By law, we cannot restrict a parent's access to his or her child without court documentation.

When picking up/dropping off your child, please be sure to:

- Accompany your child to/from the building;
- **Shut your car engine off and do not leave unattended children in your car;**
- Sign your child in and out of his/her classroom weekly (to comply with Licensing regulations).

LATE PICK-UP

In an effort to discourage the late pick up of children, a Late Fee of \$1.00 *per minute per child* is assessed for all children picked up past the program's closing time.

We understand emergencies do arise, and we ask you to notify us if you have an unusual circumstance that will prohibit you from picking up your child on time.

Please be aware that the Emergency Contact individuals listed on your Registration Form will be contacted should you fail to pick your child up. If for some reason we are unable to reach an Emergency Contact, it is our policy to contact the Henniker Police Department. It is *very important* that we have **current** phone numbers on file.

CLOSINGS AND DELAYS

We understand that families rely on our services to be able to work or attend school, and for that reason we are very cautious about closing or delaying the opening of our child care programs.

Situations do arise, however, and in the event of inclement weather, adverse driving conditions, or other unforeseen circumstances, please watch for Closing and Delay Information on **WMUR (TV CHANNEL 9)** or on the internet at **www.wmur.com**. Additionally, information will be available on our business's Facebook page and through our center's notification system, One Call Now.

Extended Education Program Only

On days when Henniker Community School is closed for holidays, vacation days, teacher workshops, etc., we offer full-day care. WBC-enrolled children are given priority, as classroom size is limited. Additional fees will be charged.

HEALTH AND ILLNESS POLICY

All children and staff are required by NH Child Care Licensing to have physical examinations and immunizations to participate in our programs.

Children may be exempt from the immunization policy due to religious beliefs. A parent or guardian must complete a **Certificate of Religious Exemption in a Child Care Program** affidavit, which must be notarized.

All Health Forms must be updated yearly for children younger than first grade, and every two years for school-age children.

Children should not be allowed to attend the program when they are not well enough to follow the normal routine of the day. The following are indications that you should keep your child at home, or that they may be sent home:

- A fever of 101° or higher;
- Two or more bouts of vomiting;
- Two or more bouts of diarrhea not associated with taking antibiotics;
- Any communicable disease (these may require medical treatment before a child is permitted to return).

We understand families sometimes find it difficult to miss work when a child is ill. Our staff will make every effort to make your child comfortable when ill and will ask that your child be removed or not attend only when absolutely necessary.

If you have any questions about whether or not your child should attend, feel free to call and discuss the issues with your child's teacher or refer to our sick policy, attached to the enrollment form, for further information.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

White Birch staff members are permitted to administer prescription medication provided the following criteria are met:

- Medication must be in the original container with the child's name, dosage information, date, and prescribing physician's name printed on the label;
- Parent/guardian complete and sign an **Authorization to Dispense Medication** form.

Non-prescription medications, excluding cough medicine, may be administered only in accordance with the label instructions. A Medication Order form from a licensed health practitioner is required to administer medication in a manner that does not follow the label's instructions.