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WHITE BIRCH CENTER

CHILD CARE
FAMILY HANDBOOK



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About White Birch Center

White Birch Center began as a cooperative preschool, Crayon College, in 1974. Seven 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.

Our Vision: The vision of White Birch Center is to enrich life and strengthen community.

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

Federal Tax ID Number: 02-0325474

Child Care License Numbers: 00719 (Early Learning Program), 06343 (Extended Education Program)

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

Child Care Administration

Executive Director
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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 and Human Services, Child Development and Head Start Collaboration Designated Step 2 Granite Steps for Quality 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 competence at their own developmental levels. We also understand that a teacher's moment-by-moment actions and interactions with children are the most powerful determinants 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.

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, family resource center programming and senior programming for older adults focusing on Active Living in the Henniker area. Annually, more than 300 children, families, and older adults enroll in our early childhood programs, preschool, enrichment activities, summer camp, and senior programming.

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 6 weeks of age to 14 years of age. Additionally, White Birch operates a Before and After School Program and Full-Day Vacation and Summer Programs at the Henniker Community School.

NH has a voluntary quality recognition system for licensed child care providers, known as Granite Steps for Quality (GSQ). Granite Steps for Quality (GSQ) supports NH's Early Childhood and Out-of-School Time programs on their path to enhanced quality so that children thrive and succeed in school and beyond. GSQ is designed to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in a program. The future prosperity of the next generation rests in large part on how well caring adults foster development to build strong foundations for health, development and learning. GSQ uses a systemic approach, recognizing quality practices that meet a set of defined standards and supports programs on a path to Continuous Quality Improvement.

Our Child Care Programs

White Birch Center for Early Learning

White Birch Center for Early Learning is made up of 5 classrooms and operates out of the main building, located at 51 Hall Avenue, in Henniker, NH. Transitions between classrooms are based primarily on each child's developmental readiness and secondarily on their age. The listed ages are approximate and reflect typical enrollment and waitlist availability. Depending on classroom capacity and individual developmental needs, some children may not enter a classroom at the listed starting age and may remain in their current classroom beyond the listed age range until an appropriate opening becomes available.

Infant 1 Classroom
Starting at 6 weeks old.

Infant 2 Classroom
Starting at 9 months old.

Toddler Classroom
Starting at 2 years old.

Preschool Classroom
Starting at 3 years old.

Pre-Kindergarten Classroom
Starting at 4 years old.

White Birch Center for Extended Education

White Birch Center for Extended Education is made up of 3 programs and operates out of the Henniker Community School, located at 51 Western Avenue, Henniker, NH.

Before and After School Program
Kindergarten to age 14

School/Holiday Vacation Program
Kindergarten to age 14

Summer Camp*
Entering 1st grade to age 14
**this program occurs only during HCS Summer Vacation*.

Hours of Operation

The **Business Office**, located on the second floor in the white building at 51 Hall Avenue, is open:

Monday – Friday ❖ 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM

The **White Birch Center for Early Learning** located at 51 Hall Avenue location is open:

Monday – Friday ❖ 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM

The **White Birch Center for Extended Education Programs** located at the Henniker Community School is open:

Before School Program
Monday – Friday ❖ 7:00 AM – beginning of HCS school day.

After School Program
Monday-Friday ❖ Dismissal from HCS – 5:30 PM

School/Holiday Vacation Program and Summer Camp Program*
Monday-Friday ❖ 7:30 AM – 5:00 PM
**only during HCS summer vacations*

Annual Calendar and Vacations

White Birch Center provides all families with an annual calendar (July through June) at the time of enrollment and each year thereafter. The calendar outlines all scheduled closures, including most federal holidays and additional days designated for professional development and teacher workshops.

The Center closes annually for winter break from Christmas Day through New Year's Day. During this scheduled closure, tuition is billed at 75% of your regular weekly rate, based on your child's standard enrollment schedule. The 75% tuition rate will be applied to either the week of Christmas or the week of New Year's, depending on how the holidays fall on the calendar.

Enrollment and Schedules

Enrollment Requirements

The following is required to be completed prior to your child's first day at White Birch Center:

- Enrollment Contract and Agreement Form
- Registration Fee – $50.00 due with Enrollment Contract and Agreement for new *families* only
- Child Health Form and Immunization Record
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Enrollment Form
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Income Eligibility Form
- Child Intake Form
- Brightwheel Account Setup

Schedules

Families may select from the following standard full-time and part-time schedules:

Full-Time Enrollment:

- Monday through Friday (4–5 days per week)

Part-Time Enrollment:

- Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
- Tuesday and Thursday

Requests for schedules outside of the standard options listed above will be considered on a case-by-case basis, based on classroom capacity. Any approved non-standard schedule will be billed at the full-time tuition rate.

Infant 1 Scheduling

The Infant 1 classroom offers full-time enrollment only. In certain circumstances, families may be permitted to begin with a part-time schedule; however, all children must transition to a full-time schedule within 60 days of their start date.

Contracted Hours

Families must select contracted care hours of no more than nine hours. Children must be dropped off and picked up within the nine contracted hours. Anything beyond nine hours must be approved by the Child Care Programs Director.

Contracted hours can be changed, pending classroom ratios, staffing, and NH Child Care Licensing regulations. Any family wishing to change their contracted hours must have prior approval from the Child Care Programs Director.

Termination of Enrollment

White Birch requests a minimum of two weeks' written notice if 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 Chief Operating Officer and Child Care Programs Director make all decisions regarding the termination of enrollment.

Tuition Policies

Financial Agreements

At the time of enrollment, all parents/guardians are required to sign a Financial Agreement for each enrolled child. This agreement, included within the Enrollment Contract and Agreement, outlines the child's scheduled days of attendance, tuition rate, and terms of enrollment.

Tuition Schedule and Payments

Tuition Rates are reviewed on an ongoing basis and approved by the Board of Directors. Please refer to the current Rate Schedule to determine tuition rates. Payments may be made by Credit, Debit, or ACH Transfer through your Brightwheel Account. You may also pay by cash or check if preferred by visiting our Business Office. Please make checks payable to: White Birch Center. Please indicate who/what the payment is for on the memo line.

Tuition charges are posted through Brightwheel each Friday and reflect the current week of care. Payment is due within three (3) days of posting and must be received by the following Monday. If you have any questions regarding your statement, please contact the Office Manager at administration@whitebirchcc.org.

Enrollment Changes and Holding Fees

Any requested changes to a child's schedule must be submitted with a minimum of two (2) weeks' notice and are subject to approval by the Child Care Programs Director.

Families who choose to withdraw their child temporarily or reduce their scheduled attendance for any reason (such as summer break, maternity leave, or an extended absence) will be required to pay a holding fee to reserve their child's space. Holding fees may be applied for absences or schedule reductions

lasting a minimum of 4 weeks and up to 12 weeks. After 12 weeks, full tuition will resume in order to maintain the child's enrollment.

The weekly holding fee is 75% of the child's current tuition rate or the applicable part-time tuition rate, whichever is greater. Holding fees must be paid on a weekly basis for the duration of the extended absence. If a holding fee is not paid, the child's space cannot be guaranteed. Any requests to change enrollment for the summer months must be submitted to the Child Care Programs Director no later than the last week of May.

Discounts and Credits

Tuition is not subject to reduction, credit, or refund for holidays, planned closures, emergency closures, or child absences. Closures may occur for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:

- Holidays
- Scheduled professional development or teacher workshop days
- Weather-related conditions (e.g., snow, ice, or other severe weather)
- Utility outages (including loss of electricity, water, or sewer services)
- Increased staff illness or absences that impact required ratios (see Staffing Shortage and Program Closure Policy)
- Public health concerns, including communicable diseases or illness outbreaks
- Environmental or safety hazards, including unsafe outdoor conditions or air quality concerns
- Building or facility maintenance issues that impact safe operations
- State or local licensing requirements, recommendations, or emergency orders

We make every effort to remain open and minimize disruptions to families; however, the health, safety, and well-being of children and staff remain our top priority in any closure decision. Any extended closures may be assessed for tuition discounts and are at the discretion of the Chief Operating Officer.

White Birch Center does not offer families unpaid vacation weeks. If you pull your child from the program for a family vacation, regular tuition will still be expected.

Sibling Discount

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.

Only one discount may be applied per family at a time, unless otherwise specified by the Chief Operating Officer. Eligible families may choose to use either state-funded tuition assistance *or* a sibling discount; however, these discounts cannot be combined.

Late Payments

Tuition is due as outlined in the Tuition Schedule and Payments section. Failure to make timely payments may result in temporary, or permanent, suspension of care.

If you are unable to make a payment as scheduled, please contact the Office Manager or the Child Care Programs Director as soon as possible. We understand that families may experience financial challenges from time to time, and open communication allows us to work together toward a solution.

When an account reaches two weeks of unpaid tuition, a formal written notice will be sent to the family. If the balance remains unpaid and no communication or payment arrangements have been made, child care services will be suspended at that time. The suspension period may last up to two weeks, during which the family has the opportunity to resolve the outstanding balance or enter into an approved payment arrangement. If the account remains unresolved after this suspension period, services may be terminated.

Care may be reconsidered once the outstanding balance has been paid in full. However, if a family re-enrolls and continues a pattern of late or missed payments, services may be terminated indefinitely.

Scholarships and Tuition Assistance

White Birch Center is not able to offer scholarships. 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 Center Business Office or at: www.nheasy.gov. Families receiving a scholarship from the State of New Hampshire are responsible for paying the difference, if any, between the state's reimbursement and White Birch's rate and any other fees incurred, often referred to as the copayment and/or cost share.

Please contact the Office Manager with any questions regarding eligibility or discount options.

Additional Fees

Registration Fee

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. This is a one-time fee upon enrollment. Families are not charged an additional registration fee if their child(ren) have been enrolled in the Early Learning Program and are now enrolling in the Extended Education Program.

Late Pick-Up Fee

A late pick-up fee of $1.00 per minute, per child, will be charged for any pick-up that occurs after the program's scheduled closing time.

Returned Payment Fee

A fee of $35 will be assessed for any returned or bounced check. Families with two or more returned payments will be required to move to a "cash in advance" payment status.

Communication and Family Engagement

Brightwheel

Brightwheel is a platform that assists teachers in the management of their classrooms. The Brightwheel app is used to document observations, communicate with families, log children's daily activities including meals, diapering, and naps, and share videos and photos in real time. In addition to all these great things, Brightwheel also manages your accounts and billing with White Birch Center.

Brightwheel is our main form of communication between classrooms and families. We will use Brightwheel to communicate with you regarding important upcoming events, programming, your child's progress, and more. When you enroll, you will be sent an invite to sign up for Brightwheel. Once you are signed up you can manage your billing account, send and receive messages, and view your child's daily activities log. We will also use Brightwheel to notify you of closures and delays within the program.

Because of the high use of Brightwheel, we ask that all families download the app upon receiving your invitation, so you do not miss important information or messages regarding our center and your child's classroom.

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 Brightwheel, E-newsletters, Newsletters, Bulletin Boards, Flyers, our website and on Facebook.

Daily communication with your child's teacher is very important. For a more lengthy or private discussion, our goal is to have two parent-teacher conferences during the school year.

Open Door Policy

Parents and families are welcome at White Birch at any time throughout the day. 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. If you are planning to visit to breast feed or use freshly pumped milk for your child's meal, we ask that you give the classroom teacher a heads up, so we don't prepare anything prior to your arrival. Our staff want every family to feel comfortable visiting and spending time at the Center.

Parenting Support and Guidance

Open communication with families is a key to success in strengthening relationships to ensure positive outcomes for children in your care. We have many resources, most of which are free, available for families to utilize. We encourage families to head to our website at www.whitebirchcc.org for more information on family resources.

We welcome and appreciate any feedback from families and individuals involved in our programming. Our goal is continuous growth and improvement to maintain our mission and vision. If you have questions, concerns, or feedback, please feel free to contact a member of our administration.

Parenting Plans and Approved Pick-Ups

If someone other than a listed parent/guardian or authorized pick-up will be picking up your child, you must notify staff in advance. For the safety of all children, we will not release a child without prior authorization.

If a parent/guardian will not be picking up as expected, please inform us ahead of time. All authorized pick-ups are required to present a valid photo ID before a child is released to them.

If there is a parenting plan or court order that restricts a parent/guardian or other listed individual from picking up your child, a copy of the official documentation must be provided to the office. In the absence of court documentation, a written and signed statement from the primary parent/guardian must be submitted, clearly outlining the restriction and the reason for it.

Please note that without appropriate documentation on file, we are unable to deny a parent/guardian access to their child.

It is the responsibility of the family to notify the office of any updates or changes to pick-up authorizations or legal arrangements as they occur.

Daily Procedures

Pick Up and Drop Off Policies

Our Early Learning 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 $10 replacement fee will be charged.

Parent/guardians are expected to drop off and pick up their child within their child's contracted hours, as outlined in the Enrollment Contract and Agreement. Any drop-off or pick-ups happening outside of the child's contracted hours must have prior, written approval by the Child Care Programs Director.

We will release children only to parents/guardians or to those individuals indicated on the Registration Form as Alternative Pick-Up persons. If someone other than a parent/guardian 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 at any program, 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*.**

Additionally, our Early Learning Program is not a daycare or a drop-in service. Therefore, we ask that all children participating in the day arrive prior to 10:30am as it can often be disruptive to the group or the said individual, when he/she arrives later than that. If there is a need for a mid-day drop off, it'll require prior approval from the classroom teacher and/or program director.

Extended Education Drop Off and Pick Up

When dropping off at the Extended Education Program, parents/guardians must walk their child into the building to release their child to the Extended Education Staff. During pick up, parents/guardians must come into the building to pick up their child, or if the program is on the playground, must exit their vehicle and approach an Extended Education staff member. The Extended Education Program staff is not permitted to dismiss children to parents waiting in vehicles.

If your child is participating in an after school activity and will be arriving late to the program or needs to leave the program for this activity, please notify the Extended Education Program teachers in writing of the dates and times. We are unable to dismiss children from our program to after school activities without written authorization from parents/guardians.

Late Pick-Up

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.

Clothing and Outside Activities

Each classroom spends a good deal of time outside.

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

- Swimsuit and towel
- Sunscreen - Lotion Only (labeled with the child's name)
- Insect repellant (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 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."

Nap and Rest Time

A scheduled quiet/rest time is held daily after lunch for the Infant 2, Toddlers, Preschool, and Pre-Kindergarten programs. The Infant 1 classroom will follow individual rest schedules for each child. According to NH 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 over 12 months may also bring a small pillow and/or stuffed animal to cuddle with at rest time.

White Birch Center practices safe sleep guidelines. Teachers will place children under 12 months on their backs on a firm crib mattress to sleep. Cribs will be kept empty with no blankets, stuffed animals, or other bedding/items. White Birch Center will provide crib sheets for the Infant 1 classroom, to avoid ill-fitting crib sheets.

Swaddles and Sleep Sacks

Children over 3 months of age, or those showing signs of rolling over, whichever comes first, will not be swaddled or put in a sleep sack with arms tucked in. Due to NH Childcare Licensing regulations, once children reach 12 months old, sleep sacks will no longer be accepted.

Health, Wellness, and Nutrition

Wellness Exams and Immunizations

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. These are available upon request.

Children's health forms must be kept current and updated whenever there are changes to a child's health or immunization status. Immunizations are required to remain up to date in accordance with recommended schedules. In addition, health forms should be reviewed and updated in alignment with the child's regularly scheduled wellness exams.

Child Illness Policy and Treatment

The following illness policies will be strictly enforced for the health, well-being, and safety of all concerned. In the event a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up, the parent/guardian will be called and is expected to come pick the child up **within one hour**. If the parents/guardians cannot be reached, or have not arrived within an hour, the emergency contact person(s) will be called and asked to come pick the child up.

White Birch Center utilizes the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services *Disease Handbook for Childcare Providers* as a guiding resource in the development of these policies. It is unreasonable and inappropriate for White Birch Center administration and teachers to attempt to determine which symptoms are serious or contagious. We will not attempt to diagnose or rationalize illness symptoms or medical conditions. In most cases, we will advise that children be evaluated by a medical professional to rule out potentially contagious illnesses. If you are unsure if it is okay to bring your child, please ask us. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Under no circumstances may a parent/guardian bring a child for child care to White Birch Center with the following signs, symptoms, or conditions:

ILLNESS	DESCRIPTION	WHEN CHILD CAN RETURN
Cold/Flu-like/Virus Symptoms (2 or more) or Flu, COVID, RSV diagnosis	Cough, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, fatigue/lethargy, muscle or body aches, chills, nausea, headache	• Symptoms are improving **OR** • Physician's note approving the return to child care **and s**ymptoms are improving
Fever	Fever is defined as a temperature at or above 101°F taken by a tympanic (ear) thermometer	Fever free for a minimum of 24 hours without the aid of Tylenol® or any other fever reducing medication
Ear, nose, and throat infection	Ear infection, sinus infection, or Strep throat diagnosis	• Antibiotics for an ear infection: children may return to child care immediately provided other symptoms are improving • Sinus infections, strep throat, or any other illness that is prescribed an antibiotic: a physician's note approving the return to child care is required **OR** • 24 to 48 hours after the first dose of the antibiotic
Diarrhea	An increase in the number or consistency of stools over what is normal for that child and/or loose, watery, or bloody stools	48 hours after the condition has returned to normal
Vomiting	2 or more times within a 24-hour period, or if they have vomited the prior night	• Vomit-free for 24 hours • If a child vomited at any time during the 24-hours prior to a school day, they must remain out for the entire following school day, regardless of the time of vomiting. The only exception is when vomiting occurs on a Friday. In this case, the child may return to care on Monday.
Rash	Rash or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases such as ringworm or MRSA	• Physician's note indicating whether the rash is contagious or non-contagious and confirming the child is approved to return **AND** • Your child is outside of the contagious period
Hand, Foot, and Mouth	Sores or blisters in the mouth, tongue, cheek, and gums. Sores or blisters can also occur on the palms, fingers, soles and buttocks.	• Child may return if they do not have open sores **AND** • Are fever free for 24 hours without the aid of Tylenol® or other fever reducing medication **AND** • Can be comfortable for the day
Breathing trouble	Wheezing, rapid breathing, shortness of breath	• 24 hours after the condition has returned to normal **OR** • Physician's note approving the return to child care
Frequent scratching of body or scalp	Lice, fleas, or rash (see "Rash" below)	• Child may return after treatment, provided no lice or fleas are found
Conjunctivitis	Red, goopy eyes that have been wiped 2 times within 1 hour	• 24 hours after the condition has returned to normal **OR** • 24 hours after the first dose of an antibiotic *(if prescribed)*
Not themselves, out of sorts, temperament changes	Unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, other unusual behavior	• Symptoms are improving **OR** • Physician's note approving the return to child care

Treatment Procedures

Medication Administration

White Birch Staff cannot administer any medication (prescription or over-the-counter medications) without written consent from a parent/guardian. When medication is required to be administered at White Birch Center, parents must complete a Medication Administration Form.

- *Symptom Reducing Medication*
    - Symptom reducing medication can mask illness symptoms that could be potentially contagious. Children taking symptom reducing medication including, but not limited to, ibuprofen, acetaminophen, and cough suppressants, may not attend child care unless it is accompanied by a physicians note stating the reason for the use of the medication and that the child is no longer contagious.
- *Over the Counter Pain Relievers and Topical Substances (this includes diaper cream)*
    - Must be in the original packaging and labeled for proper age and weight of child it is being administered to.
    - Will be administered in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or written instructions from the child's health care practitioner.
- *Cold and Cough Medication*
    - Cold and cough medications that are prescribed by a healthcare professional can be administered by White Birch Staff with a Medication Administration Form. (Medication bottles must have a pharmacy label).
    - Over the counter cold and cough medicines can NOT be administered by White Birch Staff.
- *Prescription Medication (this includes inhalers and EpiPens)*
    - Prescription medication can be administered at White Birch Center under the following conditions:
        - Medication is in the original box/bottle with the entire physician's label visible and legible.
        - A Medication Administration Form is completed and on file prior to the medication being administered at White Birch Center.
        - The first dose of the day needs to be at home.

Other

- Ticks/Splinters
    - If a child has a tick/splinter imbedded in their skin, White Birch Center staff can take out the tick/splinter *only* with signed consent from the parent/guardian (within enrollment agreement). If the child does not have signed consent allowing for the removal, the following actions will be taken:
        - Re splinters: A band aid will be placed over the splinter, and a phone call will be made to the parent/guardian notifying them of the splinter.
        - Re ticks: A phone call will be made to the child's parent/guardian, notifying them of the need for removal. The parent or guardian must come and remove the tick within 1-hour.

How We Measure Temperatures

Tympanic (ear) thermometers are digital thermometers that use infrared technology to measure temperature within the ear canal and will serve as the program's primary method for temperature screening, as they are considered more accurate than axillary (under-arm) readings.

Children's temperatures will be taken using a tympanic thermometer and may be rechecked two or more times to confirm accuracy. When appropriate, readings may be verified by more than one staff member. If additional confirmation is required, a contact temporal (forehead) thermometer will be utilized.

When used correctly, contact thermometers are highly accurate. Due to differences in thermometer methods, any reading of **101°F or higher** on any thermometer will be considered a fever, and the child will be sent home in accordance with our health policies.

Food and Nutrition

As a participating agency with the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), White Birch Center supplies breakfast, lunch and snack for those children enrolled in our Early Learning Program. Extended Education Program children receive snack at the After School Program and breakfast and snack at Vacation Day and Summer Camp Programs. Monthly menus are available.

White Birch must follow strict guidelines related to the food groups we serve, the portion sizes, 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. Per NH Childcare Licensing Regulations, we may not require children to eat specific components of their meal before getting seconds of another. Additionally, we never use food as a reward, nor do we withhold food as a punishment.

We ask that parents do not send food from home, except for a "special occasion" snack as part of a celebration.

Infant Feeding

We acknowledge Infants develop readiness for solid foods at different times. Since our center participates in the USDA Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP), we are required to follow the infant meal patterns set forth by them. Solid foods are introduced at 6 months of age, or when a child is developmentally ready. Foods begin with one- to two-ingredient purées and iron-fortified infant oat cereal. Upon enrollment, families will receive an infant menu. This menu differs from the menu for children 12 months and older but includes a variety of similar fruits and vegetables.

Families are required to introduce new foods at home before they are offered in the program to monitor for potential allergic reactions. If a child has not yet been introduced to a purée included on the menu, a substitution will be made using an alternative purée already listed on the menu.

If a family chooses to follow an alternative approach to introducing solid foods, such as Baby-Led Weaning, they may opt out of participation in the CACFP. In this case, families are responsible for providing all food for their infant until the child has been introduced to and is able to tolerate all items included on the 12-month-and-older menu.

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 and Medical Conditions

If your child has a food allergy or sensitivity, you must indicate this information on your child's Enrollment Contract and Agreement and provide any supporting physician's documentation. Children with allergies will need an Allergy Action Plan as well as any supporting medications (epi pen, Benadryl, inhaler, etc.) with a Medication Administration Form that will be kept on site.

Children with medical conditions that will need to take medication during program operating hours will need to have their medication as well as Medication Administration Form kept on site. All medications need to be in the original packaging with the prescription label. Medication will be checked monthly for expiration dates, but we ask that parents please try to keep track of medication expiration dates as well,

as we cannot administer any expired medications. Please see the *Illness Policies and Treatment Procedures* for more information regarding medication administration.

Breastfeeding Friendly Environment

White Birch Center encourages and supports mothers who continue to breastfeed after returning to work. In recognition of the well documented health advantages of breastfeeding for infants and mothers, White Birch Center provides a supportive environment to enable breastfeeding mothers to continue to breastfeed or express milk after returning to work. White Birch Center provides the following lactation supports.

A Supportive Environment

We provide an atmosphere that welcomes breastfeeding families. We support mothers who continue to breastfeed their infants/children as they return and continue to work and have an open door policy for all families. We have a private, designated Lactation Room for mothers to breastfeed their children or express milk. This space includes a privacy curtain for up to 2 mothers to breastfeed or express milk. We welcome mothers to breastfeed in the classroom as well.

White Birch Center maintains a breastfeeding supportive environment through posting and providing culturally appropriate breastfeeding support materials (e.g. pictures, posters, etc.).

Our educators check in with mothers for feedback and ways to continue providing support. Educators communicate the infant's changing schedule (i.e., feeding, napping, etc.) so a mother can adjust her schedule for pumping and/or visiting to feed her infant.

Initial Contact

We discuss breastfeeding support with all potential new families and share this policy and breastfeeding resources with them. We will work with parents prior to their first day in child care to transition the infant to bottle or cup feedings.

Feeding and Handling Milk

Educators follow storage and handling of breast milk as defined by US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We discuss with all families how expressed milk is handled at our center and have adequate freezer space for milk storage.

Educators coordinate with parents about the quantity of milk remaining in containers to avoid waste and fill bottles with less breast milk than necessary for a feeding, so as not to waste milk, and have additional breastmilk available to add to the bottle as needed.

We develop a sustainable feeding plan with each family including feeding infants on demand as we observe hunger cues and coordinate the last feeding of the day to meet the mother's feeding needs (either to feed or await mother's feeding). Infants are fed by the same caregiver as often as possible, and all caregivers hold infants when feeding them.

Breastfeeding Support Training

Educators that work with infants who are breastfeeding receive training on feeding breast milk, breastfeeding policy, and supporting exclusive breastfeeding. This training and policy are reviewed annually and updated to incorporate new evidence-based research and practices.

Weather, Closures, and Emergencies

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 check your mobile device for Brightwheel notifications as well as WMUR.

Staffing Shortage and Program Closure Policy

The safety and well-being of the children in our care is our highest priority. In the event that more than 20% of scheduled teaching staff and/or available substitute staff are absent, the Center will carefully assess whether safe and appropriate staffing levels can be maintained.

If there are not enough qualified staff members available to meet state licensing ratio requirements and ensure proper supervision, White Birch Center may delay opening, close early, consolidate classrooms, or close for the day—either center-wide or for individual classrooms. All decisions related to staffing shortages will be made thoughtfully and intentionally, with careful consideration of safety, licensing regulations, and the needs of children, families, and staff.

Tuition will remain due during closures resulting from staffing shortages, as staffing costs and operational expenses continue regardless of attendance. Families will be notified as soon as possible if a closure or classroom adjustment becomes necessary due to staffing levels.

Extended Education Program Closings and Delays

In the event that Henniker Community School closes for a snow day or weather-related closure, there will be no Extended Education Program care provided. When Henniker Community School calls for a delayed opening, there will be no Before School Program, the After School Program will operate as normal on delayed start days.

Please check Brightwheel and WMUR for updates on White Birch Center closures.

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.

Curriculum and Child Development

Emergent Curriculum

Emergent curriculum is built around the interests that emerge from children's ideas. It is curriculum that develops from exploring what is socially relevant, intellectually engaging, and personally meaningful to children. This type of curriculum connects learning with experience and prior knowledge. It responds to children's immediate interests and is typically implemented after an idea emerges from a group of children.

Emergent Curriculum in the Classroom

The teachers in each classroom believe that young children learn best through play. Young children learn the most important things by constructing knowledge for themselves, through interactions with others. When observing children at play, the teachers learn about the developmental progress of each child and what skills they are working on. The teachers listen to the children's ideas and planning emerges from the children's interests. Teachers observe ways to extend each child's thinking and learning within child-initiated activities.

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 Teaching Strategies (TS) GOLD checkpoints and assessment tool and portfolios.

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 electronic documents that include work samples, photographs, observations, and anecdotal records. The portfolios are created through Brightwheel and "published" for sharing with parents during the annual conference times. The family will have an opportunity to print their child's portfolio directly from Brightwheel.

If you have questions about your child's development at any time, 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.

Center-wide standards of practice and regulations

White Birch Center is a Licenses Child Care Center and follows all requirements and regulations set forth by the Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing Rules and Regulations. For more information, or to review the NH Child Care Licensing Unit regulations, please scan the code below or visit https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/programs-services/childcare-parenting-childbirth/child-care-licensing.

Child Care Licensing Unit Contact Info

Phone: (603) 271-9025

Email: CCLUoffice@dhhs.nh.gov

Transitions

Your child's transition into child care should be a positive, exciting, and supportive learning experience. We are committed to partnering with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition as they become familiar with new routines, environments, and relationships.

Transition from Home to WBC

Prior to your child's first day, you will have the opportunity to tour the center and schedule a solo visit for your child. Solo visits typically occur within two weeks of the start date and provide an opportunity for your child to begin building comfort and familiarity with their teachers, peers, and classroom environment. This time also allows you to share important information, discuss any anticipated concerns, and help us learn more about your child's individual needs. During this visit, please also let us know your preferred methods of communication so we can stay closely connected.

Transition between Early Learning Classrooms

Children transition to the next classroom based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. Most transitions occur in August, following the transition of our Pre-Kindergarten children to Kindergarten. Additional transitions may take place throughout the year as space becomes available and children are developmentally ready.

Occasionally, transitions may be delayed due to classroom capacity or to ensure that a child is fully prepared for the expectations of the next classroom. Readiness considerations may include factors such as toileting independence, as well as physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development. All transition decisions are made by the Child Care Programs Director in collaboration with classroom teachers, with the goal of supporting each child's success.

To promote a smooth and positive experience, children transition gradually. They will visit their new classroom for increasing periods of time, allowing them to build comfort and familiarity with their new teachers, peers, and environment before moving permanently. Current and receiving teachers work closely together throughout this process to ensure continuity of care and support.

Transition to the Extended Education Program

School-age children may continue their time with us through our Extended Education Program. Many of our Extended Education teachers have previous experience in our Early Learning Program and are familiar faces to the children. Prior to the start of the school year, Pre-Kindergarten children transitioning into the Extended Education Program will have opportunities to visit the program, meet their teachers, and become comfortable in their new environment.

Holidays in the Classrooms

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.

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.

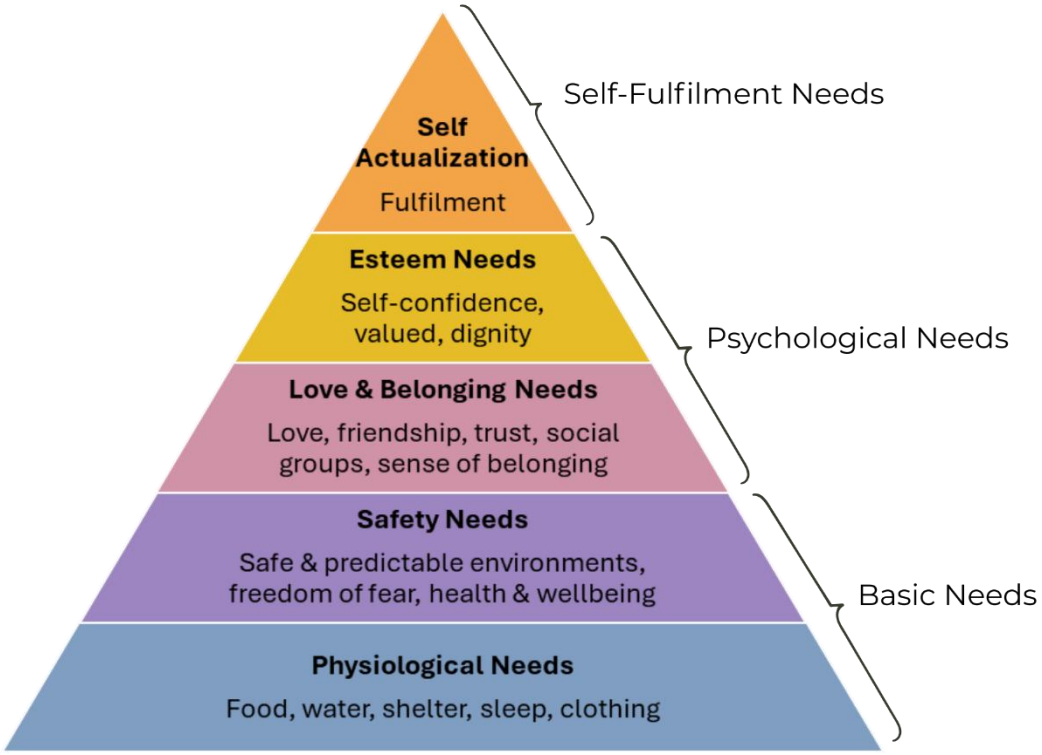
Behavior Guidance

White Birch Center addresses the safety and behavior of all its children through a combination of approaches aimed to best fit each child and family's needs. Each approach is based on a foundation of relationship building, connection, social and emotional skill building, and an understanding of children's needs and developing skills.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Our program uses a positive, relationship-based approach to behavior guidance based on the work of Abraham Maslow and his Hierarchy of Needs. This approach recognizes that children's behavior is often a form of communication and reflects their underlying needs.

According to this theory, children must have their basic and psychological needs met—such as feeling safe, well-rested, nourished, and emotionally secure—before they are able to fully participate in learning and social interactions. When children feel safe, connected, and confident, they are more likely to demonstrate positive behaviors.



Our teachers focus on:

- Creating predictable routines and clear expectations
- Building strong, supportive relationships with each child
- Ensuring children's physiological needs are met
- Helping children learn to identify and express their feelings appropriately
- Teaching problem-solving and social skills

When challenging behaviors occur, our goal is to understand the cause of the behavior and support the child in developing appropriate skills, rather than using punishment. We work closely with families to ensure consistency and to support each child's social and emotional development.

Our priority is to help every child feel safe, valued, and successful within our learning community.

Approaches and Strategies

Low and Slow

The "low and slow" approach is a behavior guidance strategy that helps children regulate and feel safe during moments of emotional escalation. When a child is experiencing strong feelings, adults respond by keeping their **voice low, their body calm, and their movements slow and intentional**.

Young children rely on adults to help regulate their emotions. Responding calmly helps prevent the situation from escalating and models appropriate ways to manage feelings. By remaining calm and supportive, teachers help children feel safe, learn to regulate their emotions, and develop positive coping skills.

Good Inside Approach

The **Good Inside** approach, based on the work of Becky Kennedy in her book *Good Inside*, is grounded in the belief that all children are inherently good, even when their behavior is challenging. This mindset recognizes that behavior is a form of communication and that children may struggle when they lack the skills to manage their feelings or meet expectations.

In our early childhood setting, we use the Good Inside approach by:

- Viewing challenging behavior as an opportunity to teach, rather than punish
- Responding with calm, empathy, and clear boundaries
- Helping children identify their feelings and learn appropriate skills
- Separating the child's identity from their behavior (for example, "You are a good kid having a hard time")
- Maintaining strong, supportive relationships with each child

This approach helps children feel safe, valued, and understood, which supports their emotional development, builds resilience, and promotes positive behavior over time.

Proactive/Preventative Strategies

- **Environmental Structure:** Designing safe spaces with clear, engaging, and age-appropriate activity centers to minimize boredom.
- **Consistent Routines:** Predictable schedules that help children feel secure.
- **Clear, Positive Rules:** Stating expectations in positive terms (e.g., "Use walking feet" instead of "Don't run").
- **Active Supervision:** Teacher proximity to prevent conflicts before they escalate.

Positive Guidance Techniques

- **Redirection:** Moving a child to a different, appropriate activity when they are struggling.
- **Modeling/Coaching:** Demonstrating appropriate social behavior and language.
- **Natural/Logical Consequences:** Related, reasonable consequences that help children understand the results of their actions.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Praising, encouraging, and rewarding desired behaviors to build self-esteem.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Helping children use words to resolve disputes and identify their feelings.
- **Giving Choices:** Offering limited, acceptable options to foster independence.

Prohibited Practices (Zero Tolerance)

The safety, dignity, and emotional well-being of every child is our highest priority. Our program uses positive, respectful guidance strategies, and certain practices are strictly prohibited.

We do not use any form of corporal punishment, including hitting, shaking, or any physical force. Staff will never shame, humiliate, threaten, frighten, or yell at children. We do not withhold food, rest, or toileting, and children are never disciplined for toileting accidents or for not sleeping during rest time.

Children are not isolated, forced to face walls or corners, or confined to cribs, highchairs, or other equipment as a form of discipline. Staff do not use rough handling, inappropriate language, or any practice that could harm a child's physical or emotional well-being.

Procedures for Challenging Behavior

When a child exhibits unexpected behaviors, child care teachers will respond to the child immediately and actively by taking the following steps.

1. Identify the behavior and intervene using positive guidance techniques and using simple, consistent language.
2. Attempt to redirect behavior or seek an alternate space to support emotional regulation. At this time, teachers may provide support or reassurance to other involved or uninvolved children, if affected by the behavior.
3. The child who is upset or angry may need privacy and time for regulation before being able to discuss the situation in a calm and productive manner. White Birch Center does not use "time out" with children but will offer the child a place for privacy or encourage a quiet walk through the building or grounds with a teacher as renewal time. Per NH Childcare Licensing Regulations, child care staff shall use separation from the group only as a method to enable a child to regain control of themselves, and not as a disciplinary technique.
4. Once the child is calm, teachers will take time to talk with them about what happened and why and will help guide them through problem-solving so they can learn strategies for emotional regulation in the future. These conversations are conducted using simple, clear language that is appropriate for each child's individual developmental level.

White Birch teachers will regularly communicate with families regarding behavior through the families preferred communication method (e.g. Brightwheel, email, phone call, verbal, communication notebook, etc.).

Expectations

<u>Teachers and Directors will provide</u>:

- Staff training in all policies and behavior support techniques
- Extra time for planning, preparing, and collaborating
- Readiness to accept and include the child
- Readiness to collaborate with related therapists (i.e., special education teacher, speech therapist)
- Access and information regarding Early Intervention screening (0-3 years) and Child Check for children 3 years and older
- Documentation of incidents

<u>Parents should provide:</u>

- Availability to meet and communicate with staff outside of class time
- Willingness to follow through on the mutually agreed upon plan

Outside resources, if needed, should provide White Birch teachers with:

- Support, training, and consultation
- Suggestions for appropriate modifications in the environment and physical setting
- Adaptation of curriculum and use of materials

Unacceptable Behaviors

Occasionally, children may exhibit behaviors that raise more serious concerns. At White Birch Center, we believe that parents and teachers must work collaboratively to address and reduce these behaviors, especially those that pose a risk to the child, other children, or staff. Examples of such non-peaceful or otherwise unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Repetitive pinching or biting
- Intentional hurting of another
- Exclusion/hurtful teasing
- Aggressive physical contact
- Threatening gestures
- Intentional destruction of property
- Repetitive leaving of assigned area
- Refusal to follow directions

Staff will choose from the following appropriate actions when consequences and redirection for unacceptable conduct have been used but are not effective:

- When a child's behavior poses a risk to the safety of others, a staff member will remove the child from the classroom. In more serious situations, it may be necessary to remove the other children instead to ensure everyone's safety.
- When a child is unable to calm down, the child will go to a safe space (with staff). For example, another classroom, the hallway, the office, or outdoors.
- When staff determine that a behavior is severe and the child is unable to be deescalated within a developmentally appropriate amount of time, parents will be called to take the child home for the day.
- When disruptive and/or repetitive behaviors are continually observed and documented, the teacher will schedule a meeting with the parents and the Director to establish a written plan and develop next steps. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled.
- If unacceptable behavior continues, a formal behavior referral may be initiated. A behavioral referral requires input from staff, parents and a 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.
- Parents may be tasked to seek outside services or resources for the child.
- Staff will factually and impartially document the actions in all cases of unacceptable behavior incidents.

If all above steps have been done and challenging behaviors continue to persist and escalate to the point that the child, or other children, cannot be kept safe, it is at the discretion of WBC to terminate the child care contract for the child. Families will receive a two-week written notice for termination.

Behavior Documentation and Tracking

Classroom teachers will factually, objectively, and impartially document the actions in all cases of unacceptable behavior incidents. This documentation will be available for review by the parents, teachers, Directors, and the NH Child Care Licensing Unit. White Birch Center utilizes Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence (ABC) data tracking sheets and Behavior Frequency charts.

ABC data tracking sheets help teachers and administrators understand the purpose behind a behavior so that we can respond effectively and support the child in developing more appropriate skills. These forms are used to identify what occurs before the behavior (antecedent), clearly and objectively describe the behavior itself (behavior), and document what happens immediately after (consequence). This information helps staff determine the function of the behavior and implement appropriate support strategies.

Behavior Frequency charts help teachers identify times of day when behaviors may be more frequent or more escalated. Rather than documenting every detail of the behavior itself, these charts focus on tracking how often behaviors occur and when they occur. This information allows staff to identify patterns, determine possible triggers, monitor progress over time, and implement appropriate supports to help children be successful in the classroom.

Child Care teachers will document children's behavior using objective, factual language. This means recording only what is directly observed, rather than personal opinions, assumptions, or interpretations. Documentation will include specific, observable actions. Objective documentation ensures accuracy, helps staff understand and respond appropriately to children's needs, and allows for clear and professional communication with families when needed.

Bullying

Bullying is NOT the same as conflict. It is a pattern of intentional behavior that puts down a child or children to give the child bullying power. Sometimes children lack appropriate social skills and need help to treat others appropriately - lack of skills can look like someone acting rude or mean but is NOT bullying. Directors work closely with all staff and field reports of any concerning behaviors to address them appropriately.

If there are suspected behaviors of bullying, families will be communicated to, in collaboration to create an appropriate solution. Patterns of behavior will be shared with families and school administration (if appropriate) and if it is not resolved, the child may be terminated from the program. Again, staff will have some training and are always encouraged to seek additional support if there are any incidents that they are not comfortable with and so they can be properly documented for directors to observe patterns and assist with future planning.

Safety and Additional Policies

Your child's safety is a top priority at White Birch Center. The doors to our facility remain locked throughout the day and can only be opened with assigned key cards. Children must be signed in and out upon arrival and departure. Children may be released onto to those persons authorized in writing by the parent/guardian. Identification will be required when someone other than the parent or guardian is picking up your child. Video surveillance cameras are located on the exterior of the facility to increase the safety and security of all children.

Reporting Abuse and Neglect

Under New Hampshire law (RSA 169-C:29), every person who has "reason to suspect" that a child has been abused or neglected is **required to immediately report** that suspicion to the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). The requirement to report is not dependent on whether there is proof of the abuse or neglect, nor is it dependent upon whether the information suggests the abuse or neglect is continuing or happened in the past. Any doubt regarding whether to report should be resolved in favor of reporting. Failure to report may be subject to criminal prosecution, while a report made in good faith is entitled to both civil and criminal immunity.

White Birch Center employees are professional mandated reporters and are required **by law** to report any suspected abuse or neglect. Under advisement from DCYF, White Birch Center employees who make a report are not obligated to share with families that a report has been made.

The White Birch Center employees will receive training concerning child abuse and neglect on an annual or bi-annual basis.