



FAMILY HANDBOOK

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Vision:
Rutland County – A community of people living their best lives.

Mission:
Partnering with families and individuals to encourage education and connection in the community.

We welcome you and your child to the Rutland County Parent Child Center (RCPCC). While your child is with us they will be provided with safe, developmentally appropriate, consistent and loving care.

Families are always welcome to visit and spend time at the center. We encourage family involvement and participation. We welcome any ideas or suggestions, which may help us to create a more interesting and fun atmosphere for you and your child.

Throughout this handbook we will outline RCPCC programs, philosophy, policies and procedures. Please take the time to read this handbook and feel free to ask any questions you may have.

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to “family” as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

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WELCOME

Congratulations!

You have chosen an early childhood program for your child that provides developmentally appropriate education and care in a safe and loving environment. Our teachers hold qualifications in the education field, including degrees in related content knowledge and licenses to teach Early Education through the state of Vermont. We provide new educators with on-the-job training combined with secondary education, ensuring a well-rounded pedagogy for best outcomes for children and families. We also participate in STARS (STep Ahead Recognition System), Vermont's quality initiative program accredited through the Vermont Child Development Division. STARS recognizes accomplishments and activities of child care and education programs that go above and beyond the state regulations for these programs. Qualifying programs earn stars in recognition of their efforts. We are continuously examining our programs and practices in order to refine and improve them.

What is a high-quality early childhood program?

A high-quality early childhood program provides safe and nurturing surroundings while promoting the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of young children. In high-quality programs you will see:

- Frequent, positive, warm interactions among adults and children
- Planned learning activities appropriate to children's age and development
- Specially trained teachers
- Many varied, age appropriate materials which provide a healthy and safe environment
- Nutritious meals and snacks
- Regular communication with families, who are welcome visitors at all times
- Effective administration
- Ongoing program evaluation and improvement

About the Parent Child Center

RCPCC offers support and education to families in a variety of ways. In addition to our Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs, our services include home visiting, playgroups, classes, support groups, workshops, and a host of programs aimed at encouraging positive parenting choices. RCPCC does not discriminate based on gender, age, race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.

Our mission at RCPCC is to nurture children and families through supportive, positive, educational experiences that enhance their success in our community. We are part of a network of fifteen Parent Child Centers across the state. At each of Vermont's 15 Parent Child Centers, families find many of the services that are right for them - along with referrals to other resources

and a chance to build their own connections to the community. Children can play, learn, and socialize in a stimulating environment, where basic developmental strengths and challenges can be recognized and supported. Many Parent Child Center services are available to all families, while others are aimed at serving the needs of children and families in vulnerable circumstances.

RCPCC values learning and growing in everyone at the ECE center; we view learning as a continuous process that everyone goes through. Our staff is available to all families for questions and support. We also have several distinct programs through the center:

- The Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) supports the RCPCC to provide nutritional meals to the children who participate in the program free of charge. We are currently serving breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack at all of our ECE sites. We are a nut-safe facility.
- Children's Integrated Service (CIS) and Family Support: CIS is available to help with Early Intervention (EI) for children birth to 3 years showing measurable developmental delay. We evaluate and coordinate services with other providers, such as Kids on the Move and Rutland Mental Health. Our workers ensure appropriate services for families. We receive referrals from area agencies and pediatric physicians. Our staff helps with the transition process to preschool and provides follow up family support for 3 months after transition. Family Support is available to families with children aged birth to 6 years in need of support concerning health, nutrition, transitions, budgeting, housing, networking with other agencies and more. These services are provided to all families, regardless of enrollment status in our ECE programs.
- Parenting Education and Support is available to support families in their children's growth and development that covers a broad range of topics.
- Playgroups are free weekly gatherings for children birth to 5 years of age and their families to promote social skills and literacy.

This list is not comprehensive, and RCPCC is continuously developing programming to best meet the needs of the community.

RCPCC welcomes all, but does not participate in religious programming.

Opportunities for Family Involvement

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals. Events may include scheduled Family Nights, family-centered activities after hours and themed weekend events. We encourage families from all RCPCC programs, including after-school, to participate.

Statement of Philosophy

Within our program, we believe our role as early childhood educators is to:

- 1) Promote a feeling of positive self-esteem in each child.
- 2) Encourage children to regard other people with respect and appreciation of their individuality.
- 3) Provide a variety of materials and activities, which promote and enrich all aspects of a growing child's development.
- 4) Facilitate a pleasant, productive, and safe atmosphere with the group while empowering children to take as much responsibility as possible for themselves, each other and their materials.
- 5) Serve as a resource for parents and work in partnership with families in our mutual effort to make a child's early learning experience a positive one.

Caregivers

The children at RCPCC are divided into groups based on several factors including age, developmental level, and group dynamics. Each group is under constant supervision by a core group of staff members. Other adults in your child's room in addition to our early Childhood Educators may include Foster Grandparents, Vermont Associate Trainee's, college or high school students, professionals working with individual children, and occasional observers.

Family Communication

We strive to communicate with families as often as possible. Families are always welcome into the program. Please look for our information boards for each classroom that provide information on the program, such as activities for the day and/or announcements. Please be sure to check it regularly. We also intermittently hold conferences each year, and will gladly schedule additional conferences at a family's request. Questions or concerns about your child should be directed to the lead teacher.

Confidentiality

We keep all information about families confidential. Information is not shared without your written consent. You may have access to any information or file we have on your child at any time. We cannot share information about other families, such as if another child is sick, behaviors of another child, telephone number, etc. Please remember this is to protect each family's privacy. If you do want to set up playdates or invite children to a party we can pass out the information you provide.

Orientation

We feel that all new children in our ECE programs would benefit from one or more visits to the center before their first full day. New experiences and places are often scary for children. In order to assist your child with his/her transition, we would encourage families to take a tour with their child prior to enrollment, schedule a time to meet with their child's new teacher, and begin to implement routines which will allow children to ease into new schedules.

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed prior to your child's first day of attendance. Enrollment forms include:

- *Admission Form/Application (includes Current Emergency Info)
- *All About Me
- *Care Plan for Children with Special Needs/Copy of IEP/One Plan (if applicable)
- *Child Care Agreement
- *Permission Form/Parental Agreement
- *Medical Authorization
- *Immunization Records or Immunization Database Authorization
- *General Health Examination Form or Copy of Last Well Child Visit
- *Prevention of Child Neglect/Abuse Policy
- *Drop-Off Policy Acknowledgement
- *Photo/Video/Interview Permission
- *Walking Field Trip Permission
- *Food Program Enrollment and Eligibility Forms
- *Head Lice Policy and Inspection Consent Form
- *Scholarship Form (if applicable)

Code Policy

Families agree to keep the code for entry into the building confidential. If this code to any of your child's authorized pick-persons or anyone else who has been given permission to either drop off or pick my child up, it will be explained to them that this code must be kept confidential. Families understand that if a code is issued to someone who is not authorized to drop off or pick my child up, my child's enrollment could be terminated. Families understand that the codes are there as an additional measure of protection for the staff and children from dangerous or unauthorized people.

Fees & Payment Policy

Current Tuition Rates: Full Time, Weekly	
Infants (6 weeks through 23 months)	\$402
Toddlers (24-35 months)	\$350
Pre K (3-5 years)	\$345

ALL FAMILIES QUALIFY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS. PLEASE TALK TO YOUR DIRECTOR.

Part time schedules may be available depending on availability.

We encourage all families to apply for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program, which may help offset the cost of tuition. Please ask the Director for more information upon enrollment and they can assist you.

Payment plans will be established with admission. Tuition/gap payments are expected prior to services rendered. Failure to make payments may result in termination of care. RCPCC makes every effort to work with families, and the agency has support staff on hand to assist families in times of need. If you are experiencing hardship, please speak to us. We may be able to help.

ECE Program Hours

Our ECE centers provide a full day, full year program for children 6 weeks to 5 years. Currently our hours in Rutland are 7:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Pittsford's hours are 7:30 AM to 4:30PM. Our centers are open Monday through Friday, year around.

Please note enrolled families have access to the center and their children at any time without prior notice.

RCPCC observes the following holidays: Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Indigenous People's Day, Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving and the day after. There will also be a break between Christmas Eve and New Years Day. Additionally, there will be in-service days periodically throughout the year. Notice of these in-service days will be made in

advance and may vary year to year. During the winter weather, please stay tuned to WCAX, Catamount Radio and Facebook for delayed openings and closings. These days are subject to change.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Policy

Children will be signed into their assigned groups upon arrival by staff. Although we have a rolling drop-off time, we ask all families to arrive prior to 9:30 AM, unless otherwise specifically specified depending on the center. Children who are not present before the specified cut-off time will be marked absent for the day and may not be able to participate. If you plan on arriving after your scheduled drop-off time, please let us know immediately and preferably ahead of time. Please note we do not accept any drop-off, with or without prior notice for appointments, after 11:00 AM.

Children will only be released to their legal guardians and anyone named on the authorized pick-up list (on admission form). If someone new is picking up your child, we need written permission from you before releasing your child. We ask that anyone who the staff has not seen before bring photo identification with them, for the protection of your child. If there are any changes to the authorized pick-up list please let us know. If there is a current court order forbidding contact or pick-up of your child, we will need a copy of this document for our files.

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child.

Late Pick-Up Policy

Every child enrolled in our programs has a set of contracted hours scheduled at the center. If you are going to be late picking up, we ask you please call us in advance to let us know. Our centers are only regulated between our opening and closing times. To stay compliant, we must operate within those timeframes. Please note a call letting us know will not negate the late pick-up.

If you need to change your contracted pick-up or drop-off times, a request must be made in writing to the Director with at least 2 weeks' notice. Please note we will do our best to accommodate requests, but a request may be initially denied pending staffing needs. You will receive a new contract to sign when approved. If not approved, you will be placed on a waiting list until a spot at the requested times becomes available.

First Warning

Families will be issued a First Warning when they pick up after their contracted pick-up time.

Second Warning

Families will be issued a Second Warning for continued late pick-ups. If a family is receiving a Second Warning, their contracted time MAY be changed to a pick-up time 30 minutes earlier if the issue is not rectified and late pick-ups continue to occur.

Third Warning

Families receiving a Third Warning will be asked to change their contracted pick-up time. Additionally, a report MAY be made to the Vermont Department of Children and Families.

Final Warning

Families receiving a Final Warning will automatically result in a report to Vermont Children and Families. Additionally, if the late pick-ups continue, RCPCC evokes its right to discontinue services.

All warnings will be kept on file and considered throughout a full calendar year. If you receive a warning, and have no warnings following, the warning will become null after 365 days.

In the event a family is late for their contracted pick-up time, and we have not received prior notification, a call will be made to the guardians initially. If we do not hear back within a 15-minute period, we will try to contact the guardians again and begin contacting the listed emergency contacts. If we are unable to get in contact with guardians or authorized emergency contacts after 30 minutes following the contracted pick-up time, the police will be notified.

We strongly suggest families ensure contact information is always up to date. Please do this in writing through the center Director. If you know you may be late picking up your child, we recommend having a trusted person who can be available to pick up your child; this may alleviate late pick-ups in general.

If a family is facing challenging circumstances, please contact the Director. We are here to support the best we can.

Schedule Changes

If you would like to change your child/ren's current scheduled hours please contact the Director for a schedule change form. We ask that you please give us at least two weeks' notice before implementing a change in hours. We may not be initially able to make your request, but we will do our best to accommodate.

Our Early Childhood Programs

Our early childhood curriculum is based on emergent, play based curriculum practices. We are a child-centered program in which play is valued as the most effective way children experience and socialize, and in turn, learn and grow. Staff acts as facilitators and resources for children. Staff takes the children's interests and needs and shapes the environment accordingly.

Through play, children are provided ample opportunities to develop cognitive, physical, social, emotional and executive functioning skills. With many of the children, this philosophy is organized by developing secure, healthy attachments through holding, rocking and snuggling. Most importantly, we work alongside families to ensure wholesome growth and positive developmental experiences for all children enrolled.

Infant Program

The primary goal in the infant room is to provide each child nurturing and individualized attention to enhance the infant's feelings of security in their environment. Our program focuses on the following areas of child development: physical growth, fine and gross motor exploration, object permanence, sensory motor stimulation, language skills, exploring one's own creativity, self help skills, feeding skills, and self awareness skills. These goals are encouraged through play tailored to each child's interests and readiness. The classroom is set up to encourage independence while minimizing use of the word "no" through redirection. Feeding and nap time occurs during the day according to each child's own schedule. Sleeping children are checked continuously. Parents should speak with the Lead Teacher if they have a preferred method for assisting a child to sleep.

Toddler Program

This is a busy program, where the curriculum is designed to meet the individual needs of each child. The children present a wide range of abilities, so the schedule of activities accommodates a range of child development. Activities are planned that are open ended, so children can be successful at whatever they attempt. The space is broken up into interest areas that change depending on the needs of the children, including but not limited to: Art, Blocks, Quiet/Reading, Dramatic Play, Sensory, and Manipulatives. A typical toddler schedule may look like this:

Arrival Free Play/ Gross Motor
Breakfast
Choice Time
Art Activities
Playground/Walk
Song/Story Time
Lunch Rest/Quiet Play
Snack/Outdoors/ Free Play/Dismissal

Pre-K Program

The Pre-K program is set up as a "hands-on" learning environment. Teachers working in the program provide a balance of developmentally appropriate activities, which promote physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. The philosophy of the program is to provide a safe, educationally sound, child-oriented program which allows each child to express their own individual needs and interests. The Pre-K classroom is divided into a variety of centers with the materials at the child's level for easy access and independent choice. Centers may include Arts, Science, Reading, Quiet, and Dramatic Play. A typical Pre-K schedule may look like this:

Arrival/Welcome Activities
Breakfast
Morning Meeting
Skill Work/Theme Activities/Free Play
Playground/Walk/Gross Motor
Gathering Time/Story Time
Lunch
Nap Time/ Quiet Play
Snack/ Gross Motor /Free Play

What to Bring

We ask that you bring for your child:

- A change of clothes
- Seasonal clothes
- Diapers/wipes
- Blanket and Sheet
- Inside Shoes/Slippers
- Winter: boots, snow pants, warm coat, mittens, and hat
- Summer: sunscreen, bug repellent, water shoes/ sandals, and swimsuit
- Families may provide clean naptime bedding, although the center will provide this

If your child does not have the appropriate items, you may be asked to return home and bring the requested items back to the center. If we have to make a second request for these items, we may not allow you to leave your child until the appropriate articles are received. Please speak with your child's teacher if providing us with these required items is a hardship for you.

General Program Information

- Diapers are checked and changed every two hours (or as needed).
- Proper hand washing is the best preventative measure to reduce the spread of germs and illness. We ask that you please wash your child/ren's hands immediately upon entering the program.
- We disinfect and sanitize objects/surfaces according to the current regulations.
- For the safety of the infants and pre-toddlers, they are not allowed to walk around with bottles or cups.
- Children go outside every day, weather permitting.

Transitions

We will take as long as necessary to make sure your child moves comfortably throughout our programs. Generally, a staff member from the classroom your child is in will be available to help move your child from one classroom to the next so that they have a familiar person with them. As your child becomes accustomed to new staff and becomes familiar with their new surroundings, the staff member will return back to their classroom. Transitions can take anywhere from 2 weeks to 6 weeks and are individualized based on your child's needs. Before we begin any transition, we will discuss the transition plans with you and your child.

Meals

We participate in the Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). We currently serve breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack to participating children in our ECE programs, and snack and dinner in our Saplings afterschool program. We follow the federal guidelines set forth from the USDA by following specific meal requirements. Meals are prepared on-site by staff trained in food safety. There is no cost to families for participation in this program. You will find more information and forms to be completed in your enrollment packet. We are a peanut and tree nut free center. Please see a staff member for further clarification if needed.

Please supply enough formula and clean bottles for your child for the day. As part of CACFP, we are able to provide formula for infants under 12 months of age. Please see the Director for a specific brand served, as it may change. You may opt to bring your own if you do not want your child to have the one provided. Please label each bottle with your child's name with a permanent marker. Breastfeeding is strongly encouraged. There are private spaces available for mothers who prefer privacy or you may breastfeed in the rooms with the children. We also have freezer space for any frozen breast milk.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

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

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

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

RCPPC Civil Rights Complaint Procedure

Individuals and groups are never discouraged from submitting a complaint of discrimination. Complaints may be written or verbal. Complaints may be anonymous. The Rutland County Parent Child Center instructs program participants to send complaints of discrimination directly to the USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR). The complainant must file within 180 days of the alleged act of discrimination. The superintendent or appointed designee is responsible for implementing the Civil Rights Complaint Procedure. The complainant can file on their own directly with the USDA or report the complaint to the School Food Authority (SFA) or sponsor.

The contact information is found on the “And Justice for All” nondiscrimination posters which are prominently displayed in all required areas.

1. All complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), or disability will be forwarded to the USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights immediately.

mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442

email:

Program.Intake@usda.gov

Complaints should be put into writing, by the complainant, using the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint>.

The [complaint form is available in a number of languages](#) on the same website as the translated nondiscrimination statements, in the column titled “AD-3027 Complaint Form” found online at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cr/fns-nondiscrimination-statement>.

2. In the event that a complainant makes the allegations verbally or in person and refuses or is not inclined to place such allegations in writing, the person to whom the allegations are made must record the details of the complaint for the complainant. Every effort will be made to have the complainant provide the following information:
 - a) Name and contact information for the complainant.
 - b) The date(s) during which the alleged discriminatory actions occurred or, if continuing, the duration of such actions.
 - c) The specific location and name of the entity delivering the service or benefit.
 - d) The nature of the incident or action that led the complainant to feel that discrimination was a factor.
 - e) The basis on which the complainant feels discrimination exists within any of the protected classes.
 - f) The names, titles, and business addresses of persons who may have knowledge of the discriminatory action.
3. If the USDA determines that a civil rights complaint warrants an investigation, it will occur based on established FNS policy and procedures, and then finalized into a report. They will investigate the complaint and this is the sole responsibility of the USDA.
4. In addition to submitting the complaint to the USDA, the SFA will keep a Civil Rights Complaint Log on site. Maintaining confidentiality is crucial. As much information as possible will be documented, including:
 - Name and contact information of complainant
 - Description of incident including date, time, location, and persons present
 - Relevant Protected Base(s)
 - Name of organization and individuals alleged to have engaged in discrimination
 - Date of referral to USDA
 - The findings of any investigation conducted
 - Description of the final disposition of the complaint including any corrective action planned or taken
5. The SFA will also notify Child Nutrition Programs at Vermont Agency of Education of any complaints of discrimination. The State Agency maintains the information in a confidential database with limited access. Child Nutrition Programs does not investigate complaints of discrimination, but ensures complaints are received by the USDA and will cooperate in the tracking, processing, and resolving of complaints of discrimination.
6. The Vermont Agency of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, marital status, sex, disability, age, gender identity, or sexual orientation in its programs and activities. Complaints alleging discrimination related to the Vermont Agency of Education protected bases of religion or marital/civil union status, will be sent to Emily Simmons, General Counsel, at emily.simmons@vermont.gov or (802)-828-1518.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Rest & Safe Sleep

We provide mats for rest time. We will store sheets and blankets for your children during the week and send them home to be washed on Friday (if supplied). For your child's comfort, please do not forget to return them on Monday morning. Children may also want to have a small pillow, special blanket, stuffed animal or whatever they may need to feel secure and comfortable at rest time. Children are not required to sleep, but are encouraged to rest and engage in quiet activities.

Infants under 12 months are required by VT Child Care Regulations to sleep in a crib. Infants will be allowed to sleep whenever they are tired. Infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep. Soft items, loose bedding or garments (like hoods), bibs, toys and bottles are not permitted in infant sleep areas. We recommend attire meant for sleeping, such as a "sleep sack". Pacifiers are allowed with parent permission.

Toys

We have a growing supply of enjoyable toys at the center, and we ask that children not bring in their own toys from home. It is a tragedy when that special toy is misplaced or broken at school, and we can't always keep track of all items. If your child forgets and leaves home with a toy, they are welcome to store it for the day in their cubby. We do welcome books which teachers often read during story time. If this gets to be a real challenge for your child/ren, please let us know. A "special things from home day" is a good way to share important things from home without the threat of having to give up ownership.

Field Trips & Off-Site Activities

Walking field trips into the community happen on a regular basis. We ask that parents sign a general permission form for these trips upon enrollment in the programs. The infant group uses strollers and buggies, while the toddler and Pre-K groups often walk holding onto a rope or staff hands. We maintain a three to one ratio on field trips and always welcome families as an extra hand. The children enjoy these outings, and they are excellent-learning experiences; they are also expanded upon in the classroom. Whenever either group takes a field trip that requires use of vehicles, the staff will notify parents in advance, and a specific permission form will be used. We ask that parents provide car seats for these trips. Drivers will be required to pass a background check and have a clean driving record, and vehicles will be insured, registered, and well maintained.

Photographs and Publicity

Photographs and videos of the children at the center may be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures or other publicity materials. Your permission for photographs, videos and interviews is included in your enrollment paperwork.

In Case Of Illness

We have developed the following policy in consultation with the Vermont Department of Health, nurse practitioners and a physician. If a child has the following symptoms, they should not come to the childcare because they may be infectious to the other children and adults:

- Child that is very hot, irritable and shaky
- Cough that interferes with activity or eating
- Vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain or loss of appetite
- Any rash with or without fever
- Presence of head lice/nits, scabies
- Pinworms- untreated
- Eyes red with discharge
- Listlessness, fussiness with fever
- Heavy nasal discharge (greenish in color)

A child may not attend school with the following conditions until medication has been administered for at least 24 hours:

- Ringworm
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Impetigo, yeast infection, thrush
- Strep throat (sore throat) with white patches of pus on the back of throat and tonsils
- Swollen neck glands, fever

A child can come back when they have no fever, no vomiting, and no serious diarrhea for a 24 hour period (with no medication), when cough is manageable and/or when normal activity may resume. We go outdoors nearly every day, and children who are too ill to go outside are probably too ill to be at the center.

It is ok to come back to school if the child:

- Has no fever for 24 hours
- Has a cold but no fever, no problems breathing
- Has a runny nose with no symptoms
- Can participate in normal activities and routine

RCPCC has established a nit and head lice free policy. If a child is found with nits or head lice, they will be sent home for treatment or removal. Upon re-entering the program, the child will need to be checked by a program staff before they can be admitted back into the program.

Feel free to call your child's teacher with any questions about our illness policy, and if your child

can come into the center while they are sick. We recognize the changing landscape of how programs, medical providers, and the Department of Health handle and advise varying illnesses, and often RCPCC's return to school policies go above and beyond for the health and wellbeing of all.

The Signs and Symptoms Chart can be found at the back of the regulations. Regulations for both Early Childhood and Afterschool can be found here:

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/laws-rules/licensing>

RCPCC will always follow current guidelines put forth by the VT Department of Health.

Medication

If your child requires medication during their time at the center, it must be given DIRECTLY to the teacher. Please do not leave it in a backpack, cubby, lunchbox, etc. Medicine may not be put in the child's bottle or sippy cup. The medication sheet in your child's classroom needs to be completed and signed. Any medication needs to be put in the original container, clearly labeled with the child's name, dosage, medication name, and schedule. Many pharmacies will fill prescriptions into two containers when requested.

Medication will be stored in a designated place in the classroom away from children. In the event of medication leaving the site for off-site activities, the medication will be kept with a staff person at all times.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of an accident or medical emergency, we will attempt to contact you or others you have listed as appropriate to contact in an emergency. If we are unable to contact anyone on your emergency list, we will contact your doctor directly or go straight to the emergency room.

Immunization Records

Vermont Child Care Regulations require that all children in childcare are immunized, excluding those that are not immunized due to medical or religious reasons. We ask that upon enrollment into the childcare program we have a copy of your child's immunization records in their file. We can either copy this from your files or you can have the pediatrician's office fax us a copy to our administration building: (802) 775-5473. Please provide us with updated proof of immunizations as your child receives them.

Inclusion & Nondiscrimination

RCPCC believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on their individual capabilities and needs. At RCPCC, equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Positive Guidance

The goal of positive guidance is to assist children to develop their own inner controls. This will help them become self-disciplined, which means developing a sense of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. We believe positive guidance is a way of being supportive and helpful to the child as they navigate new feelings and experiences. Children hear more often what is expected of them, rather than what they are not supposed to be doing. An example may sound like “walking feet” and “gentle hands”. We know that many persistent behavior challenges in a classroom can occur from aspects of the program that need to be changed. We consistently monitor the classroom and work towards the following preventative goals:

- 1) We make sure that children have plenty of interesting and constructive activities that keeps them engaged.
- 2) We make sure that we provide lots of attention and support to children throughout the day.
- 3) We make sure to notice and support positive interactions and behaviors often.

Again, undesirable behaviors in children are often caused by factors (like above) that are within the control of the adults present (family or care provider). It is important to have realistic expectations of children's behavior. It helps to think about what the child is trying to tell us through their behavior.

Some of the issues that occur in childcare settings depend on the age of the child. The ability for a child to share is learned very gradually and it parallels their mastery of other developmental tasks.

Boredom is frequently another cause of undesirable behaviors in children, and it is extremely important that children are challenged and provided with a variety of exciting and interesting experiences throughout their day. That is why we pay so much attention to creating interesting activities that keep children engaged.

As adults we need to understand that we all are models for children and they learn from us. As staff, everyday we model appropriate behavior amongst ourselves. The staff illustrates appropriate behaviors when addressing concerns with the children. We make sure that children understand that it is a specific behavior that they are engaging in that is unacceptable. We work hard to help children understand that we don't like the behavior, but we still like the child.

Finally, and most importantly, children are not allowed to hurt themselves or other children. They are not allowed to destroy materials or the environment. Staff works to guide and limit certain

behaviors of children. The techniques we use are redirection, intervention, and teaching problem-solving skills. If a child is harmful to themselves or others, we will help the child to go to a different place, supervised by a Lead Teacher, the Director or another designated staff. On rare occasions, we need to call a parent and request that they come and pick up their child early. If that does happen, please be assured that the staff has tried all the resources and strategies available to them. A pick up call means that a child is experiencing a need for a lot of one-on-one supervision that we are not able to offer at that time.

Often we will have our CIS coordinator observe a child that is experiencing difficulties or challenges. She sometimes has met with both the staff and the family to give support and brainstorm suggestions. She can have objective "eyes" and might be able to see a different perspective on a behavior and what the child is trying to tell us through that behavior. Again, we believe that children enter our program with many, many strengths. We celebrate those strengths and focus on them. They come with their strengths first and their challenges second. We value all children, gifts and challenges alike. Our goal is to provide opportunities for children to belong, to share their gifts and to gain mastery in their environment. Challenges are a necessary piece in reaching this goal, as they provide rich opportunities for growth and learning.

Expulsion Policy

To ensure we can effectively meet your child's needs, open communication between families and RCPCC is essential. Sharing relevant information, observations and wondering questions will allow us to develop understandings with strategies that can help. As early childhood professionals, we are committed to implementing what is considered best practice in the field of early education and care by providing nurturing and responsive relationships within a supportive environment for all children. The goal is to provide the best care for all enrolled children. At times, we may need to contact local resources to help in problem solving and developing strategies to support all of us working through a developmental need.

*Staff of the program are adequately supported and prepared to help all enrolled children excel.

*Families are aware of all policies of the program, have received and have read the family handbook.

*Families and staff will communicate regularly, as well as participate in individual conferences when requested by either party.

*Families and staff agree that should a situation arise where a need is identified community resources, such as CIS, will be accessed.

*Exclusionary measures will be used as a last resort where there is a determination that RCPCC is not the appropriate setting for a specific child.

*In the case that the program cannot meet the needs of a child, families and staff will work together to develop a seamless transition plan.

From the Vermont Child Care Regulations:

6.2.8.4 The licensee shall support continuity of care and education. In the event that a child's continued enrollment is at risk, the following shall apply:

6.2.8.4.1 The program director shall consult with the child's parent(s) and professionals, as appropriate, to develop and implement a plan to address concerns, with the goal of continuing the child's enrollment.

6.2.8.4.2 In the event that the concerns cannot be resolved, written notice to the child's parent(s) is required with at least five (5) days' notice prior to expulsion.

6.2.8.4.3 When a child is expelled from the program, a full copy of the child's file must be provided to the child's parent(s) on or before the child's last day in the program. The CBCCPP shall retain documentation that the file was provided to the parent.

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

Smoking is NOT PERMITTED on RCPCC property. Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations require us to restrict smoking on the property. We ask that any families please leave any tobacco products in their vehicle when dropping off/picking up their children.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Parent Questions and Concerns

Even in the best of circumstances, questions and concerns arise. Our staff follows a concern resolution policy that is based on open and honest communication. We would like to model that process with parent concerns as well.

Please know that we value families as highly as we value children in our program. We want to hear from you and will actively recruit your thoughts, ideas and talents throughout the year. We need to share goals and wishes for your children in partnership with one another.

We will do our best to keep you informed about our programs through newsletters, conferences, and informal chats. We also need your help in keeping lines of communication clear and open. If at any time a concern or question surfaces, please direct it initially to the most immediate staff member involved or the program's on-duty supervisor. Sometimes issues can be easily resolved through open communication. If direct communication does not address the concern or answer the question, please contact the Director. If your question is a financial one, please see the Chief Financial Officer or Director. If all of these avenues fail, please contact the Executive Director. Any concerns can also be voiced to the Child Care Consumer Line, where a licensing specialist will investigate your concerns. The phone number is 1-800-649-2642. Also, you can access the State of Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations, Vermont After School Regulations and other early childhood program information through the internet at this site:

<http://www.state.vt.us/srs/chidcare/license.htm>.

Policies and Procedures for Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect

RCPCC policies and Vermont State Law forbids any form of child abuse (including both physical and sexual) abuse or neglect, corporal punishment or excessive restraining forces are also prohibited at the center.

Our childcare procedures protect children from abuse and neglect in the following ways:

- We carefully screen all new employees and volunteers to be sure no one with a history of abuse or neglect is working with children.
- We allow teachers to attend to children in the bathroom only after receiving notification from the Department of Children and Families that their background screening meets state and federal standards. We welcome unannounced visits by families or other concerned individuals at any time. We have established procedures for backing up teachers who are attending to children in the bathroom by having other staff members checking in with them frequently.
- We rarely have children at the center when only one staff member is present, with those very rare exceptions occurring at very early and very late hours of operations. We maintain an open classroom atmosphere where teachers, volunteers, families, office staff, and supervisors circulate freely throughout the building. As mandated by law, we report any suspected case of child abuse or neglect that comes to our attention.
- We support children in their attainment of personal power, respecting their right to question adult authority and to share information openly with staff members. Child abuse and neglect are issues of great concern for families, teachers, social workers, law enforcement

officials, and everyone in our society who cares about the welfare of our children. Current regulations for licensing child care providers require that we formally advise parents and staff members about our policies concerning abuse and neglect and that we keep on file signed statements that they have been informed of the policies.

Lead Water Testing

All schools and child care providers are required to test for lead in drinking water and fix any issues when lead is found above an established action level. The intent of the law is to protect children, students, and staff from lead in these settings. Any tap that tests at or above the action level will be taken out of use for consumption. Once we fix the issue, and follow-up testing shows the lead level is at or below the action level, the tap can be used again.

We want lead levels in drinking water to be as low as possible. We will find the most effective means of fixing the problem. There are many easy and low-cost fixes to reduce lead in drinking water, including removing seldom-used fixtures or encouraging the use of filtered and properly maintained bottle fill stations.

For more information on lead water results, you can visit <https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/environmental/lead-testing-drinking-water-schools-and-child-care-facilities>.

Use of Pesticides

Regulations state programs use pesticides only when all other pest control measures and control measures fail. Pesticides used shall be applied only by commercial applicators who only use products certified by the Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food and Markets. Families of children and staff will be notified when such applications need to be made, and applications will be done without children present. Pesticides will be used that are at least risk to children.

Emergency Response Plans

Evacuations

In the event that the building needs to be evacuated for an emergency, everyone present should follow the map by the doorways to find the route to the nearest and safest exit, and meet at the site's designated meeting area:

Rutland: "Grassy Area" between staff parking area and playground.

Pittsford: Pavillion near preschool playground.

If the evacuation is for an extended amount of time, everyone will meet at the secondary shelter location:

Rutland: Hudson's Garage

Pittsford: Pittsford Public Library

In the event of inclement weather, children may be placed in cars with at least one adult at all times. Only in extreme circumstances will vehicles be used for relocation purposes.

Once at a safe location, staff will contact families or others listed on emergency contact sheets, as well as local authorities. Cribs with wheels and red buggies will be available for babies, toddlers and children with special needs. Children who can walk will use walking ropes with staff at both ends. All staff cars should be parked near the playground and keys should be kept in or near the emergency bags. For all emergencies, families will be notified and children kept safe until they are picked up.

Staff responsibilities: Assigned classroom staff will gather children, emergency bags including first aid kits and emergency medication and sign-in sheets. Children will immediately be accounted for upon exiting the building by lead teachers or designated leads, and again once at the designated meeting place. Any staff not directly assigned to a group will be directed to support infants. Staff will call families using emergency contact sheets located in emergency bags. The Director or acting director will assure the building is completely clear, will grab extended care supplies, close all doors, call 911 or other necessary authorities, will check with lead teachers to confirm everyone is accounted for, and will okay the return to the building. The Director or acting director may approve the use of personal vehicles as shelter. Children shall be kept calm by staff, and may participate in activities which will keep them in close proximity while in designated meeting areas.

Emergency Supplies: To meet the needs of the children and adults in an extended evacuation period, there will be water, food, diapers, wipes, radios, flashlights, emergency medicines, umbrellas, blankets and other items which will help people be clean, dry and comfortable.

Responding to Sick or Injured Children

All staff working with children are trained in pediatric CPR and First Aid. In the event a child becomes sick or injured at the program, staff will tend to the child immediately. Families will be notified as soon as possible and when safe to do so.

Allergy Response

Children with allergies, food or otherwise, must submit an allergy action plan from their children's physician at the time of enrollment or as soon as an allergy is identified. Allergies are taken very seriously, and our center addresses them in a variety of ways:

- *Staff working with or around the child are informed about the allergy.
- *Action plans are kept confidentially in the classroom easily accessible by staff.
- *Epi pens or other allergy specific medication is kept securely and moves with the child (inside and outside).
- *Every classroom has a confidential allergy list which includes all children in the center, which is updated whenever there is a change.
- *The allergen name is displayed in the classroom near the allergy list, so staff can easily see what, if any, allergens they should be aware of in that classroom.
- *If there is a food allergy, we will make appropriate substitutions to meals which meet the requirements for our food program.
- *Staff are informed about allergies during the orientation process, learn how to manage specific reactions during various required trainings such as First Aid, and a review of policies and procedures is done at the required annual food program training.

In the event of exposure, staff will do the following:

*Staff are trained to look for signs of allergic reactions, which include but are not limited to: sneezing, watery eyes, runny nose, wheezing, coughing, stomach pain, hives, itchy mouth or ears and swelling.

*Staff will immediately report exposure and/or symptoms of an allergic reaction to the Director or supervisor on duty.

*Staff will immediately contact the child's family.

*Staff will review the child's action plan and follow steps to ensure the wellbeing of the child. This may include calling 911, administering medication, or observing symptoms if applicable for non-life-threatening allergies.

*If an exposure occurred to a known allergen at the center, administration will conduct an investigation to determine how the exposure occurred and how to prevent future exposure.

Our center's are "nut safe", but do not exclude nuts or other foods as food items. However, as a general rule, we ask families not to provide nut containing products in food items provided to the classroom in birthday treats, celebrations and events, in efforts to minimize exposure to those with known and unknown nut allergies.

Despite our diligent efforts, it is impossible to eliminate all risks for children with food allergies. Some allergies are so severe that the presence of the allergen in proximity of the child causes a reaction. Similarly, it is impossible to prevent children from sharing food or for an allergen to be brought into the program by a family member or child, despite our best efforts to educate families and raise awareness. Ultimately, families will need to decide whether group care is appropriate for their child with allergies in light of the risks that cannot be eliminated.

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within a reasonable time, but not to exceed 5 minutes, the family, childcare licensing, and the police will be notified.

Lockdown or Sheltering In Place

In the event of a lockdown, children and staff will remain in the classrooms. The Director or acting director will notify individual rooms directly, by cell phone or by radio. If the lockdown is due to a dangerous person or situation, the acting director will notify 911 and other necessary authorities immediately, and give the all-clear when appropriate. Families will be notified as soon as possible.

If sheltering in place for an extended period of time at the center, staff will be given access to necessary items, such as food and water, to remain comfortably in their classrooms. Staff will remain in contact with families regarding the current situation, and when safe, will release children to their families or authorized pick-up person.

Specific Location Concerns

Although there are no concerns related directly to our locations, such as power plants or flood zones, Vermont's weather can be unpredictable. Power outages may occur, and if a plan to address a power outage in a reasonable amount of time cannot be made, families will be notified to pick up their children.

Staff Emergencies

In the event there is not enough staff to meet the staff-to-child ratios as defined in the Vermont Child Care Regulations and Vermont After School Regulations, families will be contacted immediately to pick-up their children. Ratios are implemented by the state so children can be directly and effectively cared for. Sometimes situations may occur where staff cannot be present, and therefore we cannot operate. We appreciate your understanding in these rare but possible circumstances.

Working with Local Authorities

Specific emergency response procedures are evaluated annually. RCPCC works with local authorities, including the police department, fire and safety, fire department, and local emergency planning committees to establish best practices for the safety and well-being of everyone at the center.

Changes or Updates to the Handbook

RCPCC reserves the right to change and/or update any of the policies in this handbook at any time. Our policies will always be in compliance with Vermont Child Care Regulations. If there is a change or update, we will provide families and employees with a copy of that change. If an event occurs which requires additional guidelines, RCPCC will adhere to all legal guidelines set forth by the State of Vermont and/or other legal authorities.