

**West Branch Community
Early Learning Center
4 Year Old Preschool
Program**

Program Policies and Procedures

**West Branch Community Early Learning Center
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Preschool Policies and Procedures

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West Branch Community Early Learning Center 4 Year Old Preschool Program Policies and Procedures

WELCOME TO WBCELC 4 YEAR OLD PRESCHOOL

The program's goal is to provide a high quality preschool program meeting each child's needs, including children with disabilities and those from a diverse background. The preschool provides a rich learning environment that encourages each child's natural curiosity and supports them to take risks that lead to new skill development. It is a setting where children feel safe, respected, and cared for. This is an opportunity for all preschool age children to take part in planned, active learning experiences to build their readiness skills. The preschool program has adopted and meets the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The Iowa Early Learning Standards are used to guide expectations for the children and instructional practices.

MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND GOALS

Mission:

The mission of WBCELC's 4 Year Old Preschool is to improve the quality of learning today for the lifelong learners of tomorrow. This will be accomplished through a partnership of preschool staff, parents, and community to prepare students to become successful, productive future citizens. We will recognize the value of each individual and promote academic and personal growth in a challenging and caring environment.

Philosophy of Education:

We believe:

- Students learn best in a safe and connected environment.
- Innovative learning activities and various teaching strategies enhance learning.
- Respect for diversity develops tolerance within the school and our society.
- Effective learning produces life-long skills.
- Leaders embrace and utilize best practice.
- Teaching the importance of character education.
- Improve interpersonal relationships by fostering respect for all.
- School, home and community cooperation facilitates and reinforces learning.

Goals for Children:

- Children will show competency in social/emotional/behavioral, cognitive, language, and physical development skills.
- Children will be enthusiastic and curious learners.
- Children will be safe and healthy.
- Children will be independent and self-confident learners.

Goals for Families:

- Families will feel welcome in the classroom and school.
- Families will work with the school in a meaningful partnership to help their children be better prepared for the learning environment.
- Families will advocate for their children.
- Families will be committed to having their children consistently attend the preschool program.

III. ENROLLMENT

Equal Educational Opportunity

It is the policy of the WBCELC not to discriminate in its education programs or educational activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, age, socioeconomic status, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Students are educated in programs, which foster knowledge of, and respect and appreciation for, the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups, as well as men and women, to society.

Eligibility

Children must be four years of age prior to September 15th of the current school year. Pre-registration will begin in the spring of the year. Registration materials are available from the Center's administrator. Final registration will occur in the fall.

Hours

Classes meet for 3 hours on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8:15-11:15. The Preschool program will not run during Christmas break (December) and Spring Break as per the public school's schedule.

General Information

Within six weeks after a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The maximum class size is 20 children based on square footage of the current location. A teaching staff-child ratio of at least 1:10 will be maintained at all times to encourage adult-child interactions and promote activity among children. Teaching staff-child ratios within group size are maintained during all hours of operation, including indoor time, outdoor time, and field trips.

Inclusion

The preschool program provides services for all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs. Adaptations are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff are aware of the identified needs of individual children and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. It is our belief that inclusion in our program will enrich the experience for teachers, students, other children and their families. The preschool facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements.

IV. A CHILD'S DAY

Who Works In The Preschool

Program Administrator: The elementary principal is designated as the program administrator supervising the preschool programs. The principal meets all qualifications described in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards.

Center Director: The Center Director meets all the qualifications required by the Department of Human Services and is a teacher licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and holds an early childhood endorsement.

Teacher: A full-time teacher licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and holding an early childhood endorsement is assigned to the preschool classroom.

Teacher Assistant: A teacher assistant in the classroom implements activities under the direct supervision of the teacher. The teacher assistant will have specialized training in early childhood education.

Support Staff: Grant Wood AEA 10 support staff provide resources and assistance to the teacher and classroom upon request to help all children be successful in the preschool setting. Such staff may include: early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, psychologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist or others.

Daily Activities

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal. Play is planned for every day. Listening is balanced with talking, group activities with solitary time, indoors with outdoors, quiet play with noisy play. Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities every day:

- Large and Small Group Activities
- Learning Center Activities: Art, Toys and Games, Library, Blocks, Dramatic Play, Music and Movement, Sand and Water, Computers, Cooking, Discovery
- Outdoor Learning
- Snack
- Read Aloud
- Self-directed Play

Lesson plans for each week are posted in the classroom showing how these activities are incorporated into the daily schedule. Teachers will use the *Creative Curriculum* to develop lesson plans that create an environment where all children's development is supported through daily planning and learning experiences. Weekly notes will be sent home to families.

Community Service

The children are taught the importance of giving back to their community through service projects throughout the year. Some of these include a food drive for the local food pantry, saving pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, visits with the residents at the local Nursing and Care Center and other activities that become available.

Curriculum

Curriculum is a framework for learning opportunities and experiences. It is a process by which learners obtain knowledge and understanding, while developing life skills. It is continually revised and evaluated to make learning fun and exciting.

It is the policy of the Center that the curriculum content and instructional materials utilized reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles, and life styles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, and physical disability. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a multicultural nonsexist society.

The preschool program uses *Creative Curriculum*, a research based comprehensive curriculum designed for preschool age children. It addresses all areas of early learning: language and literacy, math, science, physical skills, and social skills. It is based on studies of topics that are developed through the child's interests. It provides children an opportunity to learn in a variety of ways - through play, problem solving, movement, art, music, drawing, writing, listening, and storytelling. Suggestions for modifications and adaptations are an integral part of the curriculum. We believe that parents have a central role in their child's education. We strive to make families feel welcome through ensuring that the curriculum is adapted to reflect our families unique values, beliefs, experiences and language.

Child Assessment

Guiding principles:

It is the Center's belief that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. The results will be used for planning experiences for the children and to guide instruction. Assessment will never be used to label children or to include or exclude them from a program. A family's culture and a child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important piece of the child's growth and development. All results will be kept confidential.

Children are assessed using the GOLD Assessment System. This system is aligned with the Iowa Early Learning Standards. It records student progress in all developmental areas at the beginning, middle and end of the year. Observational data provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child's progress during daily activities. Child portfolios are organized by the teaching staff and include the assessments, observational data, and child work samples collected on an on-going basis. Families are asked to contribute information about their child's progress. Young children often show different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a complete picture of a child's growth and development.

The information from the above is used in the following ways:

- To provide information about children's needs, interests, and abilities in order to plan developmentally appropriate experiences for them;
- To provide information to parents about their children's developmental milestones;
- To indicate possible areas that requires additional assessment.
- To arrange for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated.

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Parent Teacher Conferences twice a year. The preschool teacher will communicate weekly regarding children's activities and developmental milestones. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

If, through observation or information from the GOLD Assessment the teacher feels that there is a possible issue related to a developmental delay or other special need, she/he will communicate this to the family, sharing documentation of the concern. Suggestions for next steps may include the following, with the knowledge and consent of the parents:

- The teacher requests assistance from GrantwoodAEA personnel. The team engages in problem identification, planning interventions, provide support, and make outside resources available.
- The preschool teacher would assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated.

If a child is determined to need special accommodations, those accommodations are included in the materials, environment, and lesson plans for that child. Examples include sign language and visuals for children with hearing impairments or language delays and behavior plans for children whose behavior does not respond to the typical strategies used by teaching staff in the classroom.

Program Assessment

WBCELC's 4 Year Old Preschool is State Certified as an Iowa Quality Preschool Program and implements the Standards set by the Iowa Department of Education.

Supervision Policy

- Before children arrive at school, the preschool teacher will complete the following daily safety checklist indoor and outdoor:
- All safety plugs and electric outlets covered, heat/AC, water temperature, toilets, etc. in working order.
- All cleaning supplies/poisons out of children reach and stored properly.
- Classroom and materials checked for cleanliness/broken parts, etc. including playground.
- Supplies checked - first aid kit, latex gloves, soap, paper towels, etc.
- Daily monitoring of environment - spills, sand, etc. Other serious problems reported to Center Director or maintenance person.
- Upon arrival, each child is observed by the teacher for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate in the daily activities.
- No child will be left unsupervised while attending preschool. Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every two to three minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently, who are in the library area, etc.)

Child Guidance and Discipline

Teaching staff will use Positive Behavior Instruction Supports (PBIS) as a guideline for teaching children solutions for interacting with others. They will use positive guidance, redirection, and planning ahead to prevent problems. The use of consistent clear rules will encourage appropriate behavior, Children will be involved in problem solving by using the solution wall to foster their own ability to become self-regulated. Teaching staff will use child guidance techniques that are consistent clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking.

Challenging Behavior

The teaching staff in the preschool are highly trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful. The teachers anticipate and take steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors teachers promote pro-social behavior by:

- interacting in a respectful manner with all children.
- modeling turn taking and sharing as well as caring behaviors
- helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials.
- engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group.
- encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed

Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff, parents, and AEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior.

Prohibited Practices

The program does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

1. harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children nor make threats or derogatory remarks.
2. physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.
3. any punishment that would humiliate, frighten, or subject a child to neglect.
4. withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Water Activities

We have access to water play in the classroom for children to stand and play with their hands in the water. Children wash their hands before and after direct contact with the water play. During water play children are involved in active experiences with science and math concepts. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the water table to ensure that no infectious diseases are spread, an individual water tub would be provided to them. Children are not allowed to drink the water during water play activities. When the activity period is complete, the water table is drained and refilled with fresh water before a new group of children comes to participate. Outdoor water play is limited to tubs and buckets or containers as well as a water table. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff supervise all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and water tables.

Snacks/Foods and Nutrition

Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their well-being, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, to enjoy a variety of foods from their own culture and others, and to help them begin to appreciate that their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form.

All students are served a snack at a regularly scheduled time. All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Foods brought from home for sharing among the children must be fresh fruits/vegetables or commercially packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. All menus are kept on file for review by a program consultant.

Clean, sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day. Staff discards any foods with expired dates. Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach. Foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served.

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and specialist involved in the child's care. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, the program posts information about the child's allergies in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day. Program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes when any child with a disability has special feeding needs and provide parents with that information.

High risk foods, often involved in choking incidents, will not be served. For children younger than four years, these include hotdogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas and hard pretzels; spoonfuls of peanut butter; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

The Center does not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment, nor will teaching staff ever threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Outside Play and Learning

We have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits and provided the weather air quality and environmental safety conditions do not pose a threat. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. We use the Child Care Weather Watch guidelines produced by Healthy Child Care Iowa to determine if the Wind Chill Factor or Heat Index is safe for outdoor play.

In cases when we cannot go outside (due to weather conditions) children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities inside and are supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment.

To protect against cold your child should wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather. Appropriate clothing includes a warm coat, snow pants, mittens or gloves, and a hat (all labeled with your child's name). In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside it is important to dress him according to the weather.

There are areas on the playground for children to be in the shade and still be active. We encourage you to bring a hat or other clothing for your child to wear as another protection from the sun. Sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher will be applied to your child's exposed skin (only with your written parental permission to do so).

When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellent due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellents containing DEET will be used (only with your written permission) no more than once a day.

Program staff will complete the National Program for Playground Safety's Suggested General Maintenance Checklist on a monthly basis.

Clothing

Your child will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. Your child should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as closed-toe shoes (no flip flops) to school. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an "accident" or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

Toilet Learning

Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the following procedures are in place:

- Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Programs Standards:
- Disposable diapers or pull-ups will be used unless the child has a medical reason that does not permit their use (a health provider must document the medical reason).
- For children who require cloth diapers, the diaper has an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering will be changed as a unit.
- Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.
- Staff check children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces at least every 2 hours. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
- Staff change children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility.
- At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child if being changed on an elevated surface.
- Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding.
- Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a

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hands-free device (e.g., a step can).

- Containers are kept closed and are inaccessible to children.
- Changing procedures are posted in the changing area. These procedures are used to evaluate teaching staff who change diapers.

Objects From Home

Children should not bring toys from home except on specified "Show and Tell" days. Weapons or war toys are not allowed at the Center.

Classroom Animals and Pets

Animals kept on site or being brought in for a visit, shall be in good health with no evidence of disease, be of such dispositions as to not pose a safety threat to children, and be maintained in a clean and sanitary manner.

Documentation from a veterinarian or animal shelter of current vaccinations shall be available for all cats and dogs. No ferrets, reptiles, including turtles, or birds of the parrot family shall be kept on site. Pets shall not be allowed in kitchen or food preparation areas.

The teacher will ensure staff and children practice good hygiene and hand washing when coming into contact with the animal and after coming into contact with the animal. Teaching staff supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals.

Any children allergic to the pet will not be exposed to the animal. The classroom teacher is responsible for checking requirements have been met.

V. COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

The program will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations or e-mail. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. Teaching staff will write notes for families no less than weekly. Staff will use these notes to inform families about the child's experiences, accomplishments, behavior, and other issues that affect the child's development and well-being. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, on-going, two-way communication with the teaching staff in a manner that best meets their needs - email, in person, notes, or phone calls.

Open Door Policy

Parents and legal guardians are always welcome to visit the preschool classroom. Photo identification will be required for any unknown visitor to the classroom.

Arrival and Departure of Children

All motor vehicle transportation provided by parents, legal guardians or others designated by parents or legal guardians will include the use of age-appropriate, and size-appropriate seat car seats.

Parents or legal guardians dropping off or picking up a child should sign the child in/out on the sign in computer, accompany children to or from the classroom and make sure teaching staff are aware of his/her actions. This will help staff ensure the safety of the children. No child will be permitted to leave the building without an adult.

Other than parents or legal guardians, only persons with prior written authorization (Pick-up Permission Form) will be allowed to pick up a child from the Center. Anyone who is unfamiliar to teaching staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present photo identification before a child is released to them.

When all children have arrived, the preschool teacher will record attendance for the day. Throughout the day each time children transition from one location to another, i.e. classroom to outdoor, the teacher will be responsible for counting the number of children whenever leaving one area and when arriving at another to confirm the safe whereabouts of every child at all times.

Transportation

Parents are responsible for their child's transportation to and from the Center. For children who have special needs for transportation, the Center will work with the West Branch Schools using a plan based on a functional assessment of the child's needs related to transportation. This plan will address special equipment, staffing and care in the vehicle during transport. Any accommodations indicated in the child's Individualized Educational Plan will be implemented as described by the School District.

Field Trips

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. The WBCELC contracts with the West Branch Schools for a bus and a driver for these field trips. Parents will be informed of each field trip through a newsletter and/or email. A parent or legal guardian must sign an informed consent form for trips for each child before each trip. Adult family members are asked to volunteer to go on these trips to provide increased supervision and adult/child ratios. Each child will be assigned to an adult for every part of the trip.

A first aid kit, emergency contact information/medical consent forms for the children in the group will be taken on all trips. Children will be under direct supervision of a staff person at all times.

Attendance

Students who are enrolled in the 4 Year Old Preschool are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure. Students are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of your child and others as teachers find themselves taking class time to repeat information and make adjustments for those students who have been absent. Please call the Center with the reason for an absence. If the absence is due to illness, we request that you tell us the type of illness, since it is necessary to monitor contagious diseases.

Ethics and Confidentiality

Staff use ethical conduct to guide their involvement with children and families. Information about the children and their families is to be kept confidential. Maintaining a professional attitude includes being responsive to the needs of children and their families while balancing the need for confidentiality. Children and families deserve to be respected. We can demonstrate this respect by being non-judgmental about the children and their families, by being accepting and providing quality care for all our children. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for other adults.

Parents or guardians will be asked to sign a release of information form should they or the Center request information be shared with another agency, stating to whom the information is to be released, the reason or purpose for the release of information, when it expires, and ways the parents can withdraw permission if they choose to do so.

Grievance Policy

Open and honest communication between families and the preschool program is an essential component of a high quality early childhood program. We want you to be confident that your child is being well cared for and is having a quality experience. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we want to encourage you to address your concern to your child's teacher. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for the assistance from the Center administrator.

If you have a concern regarding some aspect of the program or policy, please contact the Center administrator. If you remain dissatisfied, you may contact the President of the Board of Directors.

VI. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

WBCELC encourages families to be involved in their child's education. Family members are welcome to visit at any time during class sessions.

Teachers and administrators use a variety of formal and informal ways to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure and their preferred child-rearing practices; and information families wish to share about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds. Families are surveyed in enrollment paperwork and through other questionnaires during the year regarding their family, beliefs, and preferences.

Program staff communicate with families on at least a weekly basis regarding children's activities and developmental milestones, shared care-giving issues, and other information that affects the well-being of their children. Although in-person daily contact cannot be replaced, preschool staff also rely on notes home, emails, phone calls, newsletters and bulletin boards as alternative means to establish and maintain open, two-way communication.

WBCELC values the time spent talking and interacting with families and developing strong, reciprocal relationships. As the teacher learns from the families' expertise regarding their child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs, goals for your child's growth and development can be incorporated into ongoing classroom planning. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences or questions with the preschool teacher or administration at any time.

The Center will, to the extent possible, provide full opportunities for meaningful participation of the families with children with limited English proficiency, families with children with disabilities, including providing information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats on request, and, to the extent possible, in a language families understand.

The Center believes that families should be supported in making decisions about services that their children may need. The teaching staff will provide information to families about available community resources and assist as requested in helping the family make connections.

Home Visits

Home visits are made prior to the start of school. This is an opportunity for the preschool teacher to get to know you, your child, and your family and for you to begin to create a partnership between home and school in order to best meet your child's needs. This is a great time for you to share what makes your family unique, how you prefer to communicate with the teacher, and share your knowledge about your child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs. You can help the teacher understand what your goals are for your child and whether you have any concerns you'd like addressed. Parents are encouraged to share these preferences, concerns, and questions at any time with either the classroom teacher or administrator.

Family Teacher Conferences

Family teacher conferences are held twice a year, as well as when either party requests. The teacher will send home a sheet before the conference asking you to consider what new skills you see your child developing at home or in the community, to think about what you'd like more information about the classroom, and whether you have new or different goals for your child. During the conference the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of your child's work. Together you can make a plan to continue to encourage your child's growth and development.

Family Night

At least one Family Night is held during the year. Family night is an opportunity for you and your family to come to school to participate in fun as well as educational activities. The night will be planned to meet the needs of the children and families in the classroom.

Transitions

Home-school connections are crucial to the transition to kindergarten or any other program, such as special education. The child's family provides the consistency and continuity necessary for a young child to be successful. Making a change from one program to another can sometimes be difficult for a young child whether the transition is within the same building or in another location. Teaching staff will partner with the family to make the transition as smooth as possible by connecting family members with the next program's staff. Preschool staff will provide information about enrollment policies and procedures, program options, and arrange for a classroom visit whenever possible.

VII. HEALTH AND SAFETY

WBCELC is committed to promoting wellness and to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

Health and Immunization Certificates

Within six weeks after a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, except for immunization for which parents are using religious exemption.

Children's Records

Student records containing personally identifiable information are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have a legitimate educational interest are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents may access, request amendments to, and copy their child's records during regular program hours.

Parents or guardians will be asked to sign a release of information form should they or the Center request information be shared with another agency, stating to whom the information is to be released, the reason or purpose for the release of information, when it expires, and ways the parents can withdraw permission if they choose to do so.

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in the office. Files are kept current by updating as needed, but at least quarterly. The content of the file is confidential, but is immediately available to administrators or teaching staff; the child's parent or legal guardian; and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Child Health and Safety Records will include:

1. Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency;
2. Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results;
3. Current emergency contact information for each child, that is kept up to date by a specified method during the year;

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4. Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child;
5. Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes);
6. Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs. Staff implement a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program; and
7. Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support.

General Health and Safety Guidelines

All staff must be alert to the health of each child, known allergies, or special medical conditions.

- Under the supervision of the preschool teacher, all staff must be alert to the whereabouts of all children. Systems are in place for accounting for children at regular intervals, especially during periods of transition.
- All staff are to follow proper procedures for hand washing, using disinfectant, and following universal precautions to prevent infections.
- All staff are familiar with evacuation routes and procedures.
- All teaching staff complete "Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens" annually.
- At least one staff member who has a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid training, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for infants and children, is always present with each group of children. One staff person who has successfully completed training in CPR is present in the program at all times.

Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children

For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children not be brought to school. If your child has any of the following symptoms during the night, he or she will not be admitted the following morning for the safety of the other children:

- An oral temperature of 100 degrees. Note: the child's temperature must remain below 100 degrees for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications before they can return to school.
- Vomiting or diarrhea.
- An accident requiring medical attention.
- Communicable diseases. Note: If antibiotics are prescribed they should be given for 24 hours (longer for some illnesses) before returning to school.

Upon arrival at school, each child is observed by teaching staff for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate comfortably in the daily activities. Children will be excluded when a child is not able to participate comfortably; if the illness requires more care than staff are able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group; or if keeping the child at school poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.

When a child develops signs of an illness during their day at preschool, parents, legal guardians, or other person authorized by the parent will be notified immediately to pick up the child. For this reason, please be sure that we have current, accurate phone numbers for you, your authorized emergency contact person and your child's pediatrician. In the meantime, we will provide the child a place to rest until the parent, legal guardian or designated person arrives under the supervision of someone familiar with the child. If the child is suspected of having a contagious disease, then until she or he can be picked up, the child is located where new individuals will not be exposed.

Reporting Communicable Diseases

Staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that the families should implement at home. The program has documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities and has, at least annually, made contact with those authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of communicable disease occur.

Medication Policies and Procedures

Medications will not be administered during preschool hours. Parents are asked to make sure necessary medicines are given before or after preschool hours. For any exceptions, the Center will work out arrangements with the West Branch Community School District's nurse to assist in giving medications.

Safeguards are used with all medications for children:

- Both prescription and over-the-counter medications are given to a child only if the child's record documents that the parent or legal guardian has given the program permission;
- The child's record includes instructions from the licensed health provider who has prescribed or recommended the medication for that child; alternately, the licensed health provider's office may give instructions by phone to the Center;
- Any person who administers medication has (a) specific training and (b) a written performance evaluation updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration;
 - (1) verifying that the right child receives the
 - (2) right medication
 - (3) in the right dose
 - (4) at the right time
 - (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given.
- The person giving the medication signs documentation of items (1) through (5) above.
- Medications are labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider, the name of the medication, or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, and instructions on how to administer and store it;
- Both prescription and nonprescription drugs shall be stored in a locked medicine box so they are inaccessible to children and the public.
- Medications will be kept at the temperature recommended for that type of medication.

Cleaning and Sanitation

The facility will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area will be cleaned immediately.

Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion will be removed immediately and disinfected after they are cleaned with soap and water. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom. Toys and surfaces will be disinfected using a commercial disinfectant. To disinfect, the surfaces will be sprayed until glossy. The solution will be left on for at least 2 minutes before it is wiped off with a clean paper towel, or it may be allowed to air dry. Machine washable cloth toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion must be laundered before another child's use. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.

Staff will be trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers such as gloves, proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials.

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Routine cleaning will be supervised by the preschool teacher and will follow the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table in Section III, page 47 of the QPPS manual. A checklist will be completed as indicated in the table.

Hand Washing Practices

Frequent hand washing is key to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Teachers teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink. The program follows these practices regarding hand washing:

- Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored.
- Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when hand-washing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.
- Staff assists children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.

Children and adults wash their hands:

- upon arrival for the day;
- after diapering or using the toilet;
- after handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or any touching of mucus, blood or vomit);
- before meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry);
- after playing in water that is shared by two or more people;
- after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals; and
- when moving from one group to another (e.g. visiting) that involves contact with infants and toddlers/twos.

Adults also wash their hands

- before and after feeding a child;
- before and after administering medication;
- after assisting a child with toileting; and
- after handling garbage or cleaning.

Proper hand-washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include

- using liquid soap and running water;
- rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, or a dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g., by using a paper towel to turn off water).

Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement, but not a substitute, for hand washing in any situation listed above.

- Staff must wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur.
- Staff do not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or removing smeared fecal material.

used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

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First Aid Kit

A first aid kit is readily available to the preschool classroom. It is fully equipped according to guidance from Dept. of Human Services licensing regulations. The First Aid kit will be inspected monthly. A first aid kit is taken to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.

Fire Safety

A fire extinguisher and carbon monoxide detector is installed in the preschool classroom and is tagged and serviced annually. A fully working fire alarm system is installed in the building and is serviced bi-annually. Smoke detectors, fire alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly and a written log of testing dates and battery changes is maintained and available upon request.

Emergency preparedness

The West Branch Community Early Learning Center has written and posted disaster preparedness and emergency evacuation policies and procedures. The procedures include:

- Plans that designate how & when to shelter in place or evacuate, and location for the evacuation.
- Lost or missing children
- Security threats
- Utility failure
- Nature disasters
- Evacuations
- Fire/tornado drills (monthly) (Other emergency procedures - yearly)

If the Center director is not on site during an emergency, the assistant director will assume authority to take necessary action.

These procedures are included in the staff Orientation Handbook and will be reviewed by each staff member at the beginning of each school year and when changes are made to it.

Medical Emergencies

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during their time at preschool, our teacher will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water and bumps will be treated by applying ice to the injured area. Any injuries will be documented on an "Accident" report form and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

If a more serious injury occurs, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.

Upon enrollment in the Center, parents will be asked to complete an emergency medical/dental consent form.

This form allows the Center to transport a child to the hospital if necessary.

Included on this form will be:

- Necessary information for parents/guardians
- Persons who can be contacted if parents/guardians cannot be reached
- The child's Doctor and Dentist
- Hospital preference if child needs to be transported to a hospital
- Health insurance information

The telephone numbers of the Fire Department, Police Department, Hospital, and Poison Control will be posted by each phone with an outside line. Emergency contact information for each child and staff member will be kept readily available. The list of emergency telephone numbers and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport will be taken along anytime children leave the facility in the care of facility staff.

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Inclement Weather

In the event that the WBCELC must be closed due to bad weather, this information will be available on KCRG TV9 (on line), KWQC TV 6 (on air), KGAN TV 2 (on air), and KZIA 102.9 Radio (on air). If the Center closes early for weather (or any other reason), parents will be called and notified.

Protection From Hazards and Environmental Health

Program staff protect children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock, burns, or scalding, slipping, tripping, or falling. Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from tripping.

The preschool classroom building has been tested for lead, radon, radiation, asbestos, fiberglass, and other hazards that could impact children's health with documentation. Water safety will be confirmed with the City of West Branch. Custodial staff or contractor's maintain the building's heating, cooling, and ventilation systems in compliance with national standards for facility use by children.

Smoke Free Facility

The WBCELC building and grounds are smoke free. A "No Smoking" sign is posted at the entrance of the center to inform people that they are entering a "smoke-free" environment. No smoking is allowed on the school grounds or within sight of any children.

Child Protection Policies

The health and well-being of every child in our care is of the utmost importance and the protection of children is our responsibility.

Hiring procedures require that all employees (and/or volunteers) in the preschool program (including cooks, clerical and maintenance persons) who come into contact with or have responsibility for children in the program:

- Have passed a criminal records check;
- Are free from any history of substantiated child abuse or neglect
- Are at least 18 years old
- Have completed high school or the equivalent;
- Have provided personal references and a current health assessment staff files

The program has written policy for reporting child abuse and neglect as well as procedures in place that comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws. The policy includes requirements for staff to report all suspected incidents of child abuse, neglect, or both by families, staff, volunteers, or others to the appropriate local agencies. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious. All teaching staff complete "Mandatory Reporter: Child and Dependent Adult Abuse" at least every five years and within six months of employment.

If a staff member believes a child has suffered abuse, which shall include sexual, verbal, or physical abuse, by a Center employee in the course of his or her employment, it shall be reported to the Director or Assistant Director immediately. The Director shall be the designated investigator for child abuse complaints against Center employees and shall investigate the complaint in a timely manner, no later than five days after the receipt of a complaint. This Director's role is not to determine the guilt or innocence of the staff member but to determine whether it is likely that an incident took place between the child and the staff member and whether it is considered abuse. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. If the complaint is lodged against the Director the Assistant Director shall be the designated investigator.

Volunteers

West Branch Community Early Learning Center policy:

A volunteer is a person who assists on an occasional basis at the Center. In order to serve as a volunteer in the Center, the volunteer must complete a Volunteer Statement to be placed on file in the office, complete a DHS Criminal History Record Checks & Child Abuse Information Check, have a National Record Check and submit fingerprints. The Center encourages the use of volunteers to assist with field trips and special events or projects at the Center .

Use of volunteers at the Center is not to conflict with or replace any regularly authorized personnel. To ensure the safety of the students, volunteers, and staff, all volunteers must adhere to volunteer guidelines outlined by the Center. Volunteers shall work under the direct supervision of staff members .Volunteers must follow the same guidelines for confidentiality as Center staff.

VIII. Staff

General Information

The West Branch Community Early Learning Center has written personnel policies that define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and specialized training required of staff and volunteer positions. The policies outline nondiscriminatory hiring procedures and policies for staff evaluation. Policies detail job descriptions for each position, including reporting relationships; salary scales with increments based on professional qualification, length of employment, and performance evaluation; benefits; and resignation, termination, and grievance procedures. Personnel policies provide for incentives based on participation in professional development opportunities. The policies are provided to each employee upon hiring.

Hiring procedures include completion of the following checks: criminal-record check, free from history of substantiated child abuse or neglect check, education credentials, verification of age, completion of high school or GED, personal references and a current health assessment.

Health Assessment

The preschool program maintains current health information from documented health assessments for all paid preschool staff and for all volunteers who work more than 40 hours per month and have contact with children. A current health assessment (not more than one-year-old) is received by the program before an employee starts work or has contact with children. The health assessment is updated every two years. Documented health assessments include:

- Capacities and limitations that may affect job performance
- Documentation by a licensed health professional of TB skin testing using the Mantoux method and showing the employee to be free from active TB disease. For those who have a positive TB skin test and who develop a persistent cough or unexpected fever, immediate assessment by a licensed physician is required. For those who have increased risk of TB according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), documentation is required annually by a licensed health professional showing that the employee is free from active TB disease.

Confidential personnel files, including applications with record of experience, transcripts of education, health-assessment records, documentation of ongoing professional development, and results of performance evaluation, are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Center's office.

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Orientation

Employees must know their role and duties. New preschool teaching staff will be required to participate in an initial orientation program that introduces them to fundamental aspects of the program operation including:

Program philosophy, mission, and goals;

- Expectations for ethical conduct;
- Individual needs of children they will be teaching or caring for;
- Accepted guidance and classroom management techniques;
- Daily activities and routines of the program;
- Program curriculum;
- Child abuse and reporting procedures;
- Program policies and procedures;
- Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and Criteria;
- Regulatory requirements.

Follow-up training expands on the initial orientations.

The employee's immediate supervisor should provide the new employee with a review of the employee's responsibilities and duties. The Center director will explain payroll procedures and employee benefits.

Staffing patterns and schedule

The preschool program is in compliance with staff regulations and certification requirements. Our program follows requirements for staffing for Iowa's Quality Preschool Program Standards of maintaining an adult/child ratio of at least 1:10 at all times.

Staff are provided space and time away from children during the day. Should staff work directly with children for more than four hours, staff are provided breaks of at least 15 minutes in each four-hour period. In addition, staff may request temporary relief when they are unable to perform their duties. Upon request, staff will be referred to service that supports them in wellness, prevention, and treatment of depression and stress management.

Staff development activities

All teaching staff continuously strengthen their leadership skills and relationships with others and work to improve the conditions of children and families within their programs, the local community, and beyond. Teaching staff are encouraged to participate in informal and formal ways in local, state, or regional public-awareness activities. They may join an early childhood group or organization, attend meetings, or share information with others both at and outside the program.

Teaching staff will be informed of professional development activities provided by Child Care Resource and Referral, the local Empowerment areas, and the area education agency. Staff are expected to attend all staff trainings and meetings throughout the year. Trainings will focus on early childhood topics relevant to the program and community.

Evaluation and Professional Growth Plan

All staff are evaluated at least annually by an appropriate supervisor or, in the case of the program administrator, by the board of directors. Staff also evaluate and improve their own performance based on ongoing reflections and feedback from supervisors, peers, and families. From this, they develop an annual individualized professional development plan with their supervisor and use it to inform their continuous professional development.

