

FAMILY HANDBOOK



MYERS PROUTY
CHILDREN'S CAMPUSES
— AND PARTNER PROGRAMS —

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Definition Of Family

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

Mission

Myers Prouty Children’s Campuses, Inc. & Partners works to ensure that all children and their families have the opportunity and support to develop to their unique potential and share meaningful bonds within our educational community.

Philosophy

Our philosophy stems from the knowledge that children learn and grow in predictable stages throughout childhood. At each developmental stage, new skills and understandings are emerging. At the same time, we also know that despite this sequence, all children are individuals and have individual characteristics from birth which make each child special and unique. Development always occurs within the context of each child’s unique potential. Our program functions on the belief that all children shall be provided enhanced connections and therefore we believe that every family is our partner. We partner with families to ensure each child develops their optimal ability within a responsive and nurturing learning community. Throughout the daily operations of the program, we value highly qualified and well-trained early care and education staff to provide exceptional learning experiences in a responsive environment.

Primary Goal of the Program

To create a setting in which children will find warmth, comfort, and gentleness as well as an abundance of opportunities for movement, exploration, and self-discovery per individual needs, interests, and abilities.

To assist each child to grow to his fullest potential by recognizing each stage of development and fashioning an environment (i.e. curriculum, facilities, staff) designed to nurture and facilitate growth during each stage.

To help children achieve independence, self-discipline, social competence, self-knowledge, enthusiasm for learning, positive attitudes, intellectual growth, and an organized approach to problem solving.

To assist parents in understanding the developmental stage of their child, enabling them to contribute most effectively to their child's growth.

STARS

Myers Prouty Children’s Campuses, Inc. & Partner Programs participates in the Quality Rating system established by the State of Vermont called STARS. (Definition: STARS is Vermont’s quality recognition system for childcare, preschool, and after school programs. Programs that participate in STARS are stepping ahead — going above and beyond state regulations to provide professional services that meet and or exceed the needs of children and families. For more information, please visit <http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/stars>.)

Mandated Reporters

Our programs recognize the Vermont Department of Children and Families definition of an “abused or neglected child,” as: a child whose physical health, psychological growth and development or welfare is harmed or is at substantial risk or harm by the acts or omissions of his or her parent or other person responsible for the child's welfare, including with death resulting; or who is sexually abused or at substantial risk of sexual abuse by any person. Sexual abuse also includes the Grooming process used by abusers to select a child, win the child’s trust (and the truth of the child’s parent or guardian) manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse. Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to ‘groom’ a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report ‘grooming’ behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a supervisor.

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may investigate. It then becomes the role of the agency to

determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our program will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

Our staff have all taken the Mandated Reporter Training: Protecting Vermont's Children and will uphold all local, state, and federal guidelines this entails. This includes but is not limited to reporting all suspicions and allegations of abuse. When reporting, staff will notify the supervisor on duty (Executive Director or Assistant) and then contact the Vermont Agency of Human Services.

TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT CALL 1-800-649-5285.

Childcare Regulations & Consumer Hotline

You can find a copy of the Vermont State Childcare Licensing Regulations in each classroom. You can ask a staff for a copy or access it online at:

http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/CDD/Docs/Licensing/CBCCPP_Regulations_FINAL.pdf.

If you have concerns about childcare call the Childcare Consumer Hotline at 800-649-2642.

Child Development Information & Resources

For information on child development, parenting and illness please go to the Program for Disease Control website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/index.html>.

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

All programs comply with all Vermont IRC Compliance Practices. (Inspect, Repair & Cleaning) Laws AKA: Vermont Lead Law and Essential Maintenance Practices. All programs are required to test lead levels in drinking water every three years, as well as Lead testing water supplies.

Program Philosophy

Our philosophy stems from the knowledge that children learn and grow in predictable stages throughout childhood. At each developmental stage, new skills and understandings are emerging. At the same time, we also know that despite this sequence, all children are individuals and have individual characteristics from birth which make each child special and unique. Development always occurs within the context of each child's unique potential. Our program functions on the belief that all children shall be provided enhanced connections and therefore we believe that every family is our partner. We partner with families to ensure each child develops their optimal ability within a responsive and nurturing learning community. Throughout the daily operations of the program, we value highly qualified and well-trained early care and education staff to provide exceptional learning experiences in a responsive environment.

Annual Program SPARQS & CLASS Assessment

All Campuses use The Classroom Assessment Scoring System, referred to as CLASS, is a program observation tool used to support quality improvement with the specific goal of improving child outcomes. Class is nationally recognized and equitable since it supports a variety of curricula and philosophies and can be used in any program type.

Teaching Teams

Our staff are hired in compliance with Vermont state childcare regulations. Staff participate in an orientation class and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism. Staff are required to complete a minimum of 24 continuing education hours per year with a focus on specialized care.

Learning Environment

MPCC & Partners provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible daily routine that allows children to advance at

their own developmental pace. We strongly believe that **learning** happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in all learning domains. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play safely with others.

TS GOLD

Our PreK classrooms implement Teaching Strategies GOLD. As part of this developmental assessment tool, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress, so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. These evaluations are called checkpoints. We use our daily observations to make sure all children are at their age level in TS Gold to assure they are on track and ready for the next BIG step. Kindergarten! The outcomes will be discussed with families twice per year during your parent child conference.

ASQ Questionnaire

ASQ's will be sent home with new students after 8 weeks in care. These are just another way to make sure we are meeting each child's needs. Once the parent returns their form a classroom staff prepares theirs. Once both are scored, we take the average score between both and use those numbers to assure children are at the age-appropriate level.

Curriculum

Creative Curriculum balances both staff-directed and child-initiated learning, with an emphasis on responding to children's learning styles and building on their strengths and interests. This curriculum applies the latest theory and research on best practices in teaching and learning and the content standards developed by states and professional organizations. It features goals and objectives linked directly to our valid and reliable assessment instrument.

Please check out our Facebook page and your child's Brightwheel feed to see many of the great activities your child is participating in.

Child Care Financial Assistance Program

If you are interested in applying for Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFAP), please reach out to our Family Support Manager Taylor to assist you in navigating the application process. The CCFAP application can also be found on our website MPCCVT.ORG.

CCFAP income guidelines will increase again on October 1st of 2024, we strongly encourage all families to apply. The new CCFAP has been restructured to support all families with accessing quality childcare. Every amount helps pay your child's tuition.

Weekly Rates

Effective September 1, 2024

Infant ~ 6wks~12m	Rate
Full Time Care ~ Up To 42 Hours	\$471 per week
Part Time Care ~ Up to 8 Hour	\$95 per day
Extended Care ~ Over 42 Hours	\$127 per day
Toddler ~ 12m ~ 2.9yrs	Rate
Full Time Care ~ Up To 42 Hours	\$443 per week
Part Time ~ Up To 8hrs Per Day	\$88 per day
Extended Care ~ Over 42 Hours	\$120 per day
Preschool 2.9~5yrs	Rate
Full time Care ~ Up To 42 Hours	\$439 per week
Part Time Care ~ Up to 8 Hour	\$86 per day
Extended Care ~ Over 42 Hours	\$118 per day
School Age ~ 5~12yrs	Rate
School Closed Full Time up to 42hrs	\$439 per week

School Closed Part Time up to 8hrs	\$76 per day
School Closed Full Time over 42hrs	\$100 per day
School Age ~ School Open	Rate
School Open ~ AM & PM Care	\$48 per day
School Open ~ AM Care Only	\$24 per day
School Open ~ PM Only Care	\$24 per day

Tuition Payments

Families will be billed their parent share or weekly tuition through their families Brightwheel account. All full and part time slots are billed a week in advance and due within seven (7) days of the receipt of invoice.

Part time slot: Any two (2) to three (3) day slot. Part time slots are billed at the prorated full-time tuition and based on a full day rate.

Full time slot: Any four (4) to five (5) day slot. Full-time slots are billed at the full-time weekly tuition and cannot be prorated. All part and full time slots are billed (52) fifty-two weeks per year regardless of child's attendance and Campus closings.

Vacation Credit

Full-time slots: Families will be allotted Fifteen (15) "vacation" days (3 weeks) per calendar year January 1st through December 31st.

Part-time 3-day slot: Families enrolled part-time (3 days per week) will be allotted seven (7) "vacation" days per calendar year January 1st through December 31st.

Part-time 2-day slot: Families enrolled part-time (2 days per week) will be allotted five (5) "vacation" days per calendar year January 1st through December 31st.

Use of Vacation Days: Allotted vacation days can be used for Campus closures, illness, appointments, or vacations. Vacation days cannot be used if a child has attended that day.

How to Request Vacation Days Credit

Please notify us by email jmyers@myersproutycc.org if you would like to request the use of your vacation days. When requesting the use of your vacation credits, please allow us up to 7 days to apply for the vacation credit. While you are waiting for credits to be applied you can make a partial payment on your Brightwheel account. If you are signed up for auto pay you can pause the auto pay until you receive the credit or make a full payment. The credits will then go towards the next payment. Please note: On occasion the credits will go directly to your family's credit bank within Brightwheel if this happens and you are unable to transfer the credits, please send an email and we will transfer the credits for you.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program routines and events. Families are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. The infant room welcomes parents/guardians to nurse or feed their infants. Families always have access to their children without delay. We do ask if you are visiting frequently that we have a background check processed for you through the State of Vermont Child Development Division. In addition, we ask that you be respectful of your child's classroom schedule.

Inclusion and Non-Discrimination

Our program provides equal educational opportunities 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. Our program is designed to meet the varying needs of all children. If your child has an identified special need, please provide our program with all required information. This will help our staff assure your child's needs are being met without delay.

Family Communication

MPCC & Partners believe that a child's family is their first staff. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children at our children's programs. We encourage family members to be involved,

visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in our community.

Daily Communications

Each family will be assigned a Brightwheel Account. Brightwheel accounts are used throughout your child's day by their staff to keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences. Brightwheel is used for notes to families, weekly menus, incident reports, pictures, toileting, medication, newsletters and so much more. Parents can message their child's staff or Campus administrators with questions, concerns or to just check in. We try to keep all communications between families and the classroom in Brightwheel to assure everything is documented and in one place.

Classroom Door Bulletin Boards

Located on each classroom's door, these bulletin boards provide a weekly menu, curriculum for the week and the room's daily schedule.

Family Volunteers and Visits

Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, read a story, share a special skill or eat a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. Any family member who wishes to visit their child's classroom more than two times in a calendar year is required to complete a record check through the state of Vermont Child Development Division.

Family Events

Family events are scheduled on a regular basis. These events may include snacks, drinks and fun filled age-appropriate activities for families. Family events allow families and children time to share, learn, and have fun in the child's educational setting. Families have an opportunity to be a part of their child's learning experience and connect with other families.

Conferences

Family & staff conferences occur twice a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns immediately with your child's staff or campus Director.

Community Resources & Family Support

When needed or requested, family meetings may be scheduled with MPCC's Family Support Manager to support a family in identifying any barriers they may be facing and accessing community support and resources. If a family is experiencing homelessness or food shortages they are encouraged to talk with, email or call Taylor Zimmerman (Family Support Manager) or speak to a trusted Administrator or Staff within their child's Campus. Families may request a meeting at any time with Taylor. Please find her contact information on Page 2 & 3.

Multiculturalism & Celebrations

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

We encourage an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff, and community.

Minimum Staff to Child Ratios

(per Child Development Division regulations)

Age Group	Ratio	Group Size
6 weeks to 18 months	1:4	8
18 months to 30 months	1:4	10

24 months to 32 months	1:5	10
32 months to 42 months	1:6	15
3 years to Kindergarten	1:10	20
Kindergarten to Sixth Grade	1:13	45

MPCC Staff to Child Ratio Policy

MPCC & Partners takes pride in our ability to overstaff classrooms. Overstaffing not only prevents staff burnout, it also eliminates the need for unfamiliar substitutes in classrooms when a member of staff is out. Most importantly overstaffing allows our staff to quickly meet the needs of a child at the time of need. Overstaffing allows staff to take the extra time when a child needs comforting, rocking or feeding. MPCC has found that the quality of care provided to children in our classrooms is exceptional due to “overstaffing”.
MPCC Staff to Child Ratio

Age Group	Staff	Children
6 weeks to 18 months	Minimum 3	8
18 months to 30 months	Minimum 3	10
24 months to 32 months	Minimum 3	10
32 months to 42 months	Minimum 3	15
3 years to Kindergarten	Minimum 3	20
School-age	Minimum 3	45

At times a classroom may require additional staffing based on children’s ages and needs within the class.

Holidays and Program Closures

Yearly calendars are sent home, posted in classrooms, and uploaded to Brightwheel every August. Families will be reminded in advance of upcoming closings. Please look for closing reminders in your Brightwheel calendar, Campus newsletters and posted on classroom doors.

Inclement Weather

We prefer not to make any decisions; to delay school or close too early as we all know the weather is unpredictable.

All delays and closures will be posted on Brightwheel & on The School Closing Networks on channels 6, 10 and 13.

1. If we open with a delay, we will notify families by 6am
2. If the delay turns into a closure, we will make that decision no later than 8:00am
3. Transportation will be closed if we delay our opening time

Daily Health Checks Prior to Arrival

Please take a minute to do a quick daily health check on your child prior to leaving for school/childcare. This would be looking for skin rashes, elevated temperatures, itchy scalps, lethargy, and changes from usual behavior. These are quick checks to protect the well-being of all children in the program. Please understand these are not physical and do not substitute for proper routine pediatric care. Please notify your child’s staff at drop off if you noticed any signs or symptoms of illness or injury during your health check. Please reach out to our Health Manager Desiree Myers Rn, BSN if you are unsure as to whether your child should attend care. Desiree will support you in making this decision and then notify your child’s staff and put a note in Brightwheel.

Drop Off and Pick Up

When dropping off and picking up your child, always make sure to communicate with the staff to ensure staff are aware of your child’s presence and departure. Staff are responsible for signing children in on Brightwheel. Please help your child start their morning routines by assisting them with putting away their belongings, using the toilet, washing hands, and daily question (if applicable) Once your child has been greeted by their staff and accounted for, we ask that you don’t stay more than a few minutes. Although we enjoy having parents in the classroom it can become overwhelming for the children to have multiple adults in the classroom. We ask that if you would like to stay for a few minutes during drop off or pick up that you please stay focused on your child and interact with them and not distract the staff from the other children.

If you need to discuss something with them about your child, it should never be discussed in front of children or families also dropping off or picking their child up. Please ask your child's staff if you can schedule a time to discuss your concerns or ask questions.

Late Entry or Absences

A phone call or message on Brightwheel is necessary if you are going to be late dropping off, picking up or your child will be absent. If a child does not arrive as scheduled, a staff member will check for a message and reach out to the family to inquire about your child's absence. We ask that children arrive before 9:00. When picking up your children from the Program we ask that you make every effort to arrive at your scheduled time, this is the time that families agreed to at registration. These times are set in advance to ensure that we are always properly staffed. When you arrive to pick up, we ask that you gather your child, their belongings and **always keep your child with you**.

If you need to make your child's appointments during their school day we would appreciate it if you could make the appointment for the end of the day. When a child has a morning appointment and arrives to school late it not only throws your child off, but it is also very disruptive for other children and staff when they are engaged in learning activities.

Children have no concept of time and depend on their daily school schedule to support them through their day. When a child enters and has missed breakfast, circle etc. it often causes behaviors and disruptions in everyone's day. We completely understand that sometimes it is impossible to avoid a late entry, this is when we will ask you to discuss with your child that they have missed breakfast ect and work with a staff prior to arrival to ensure there is no disruption in the classroom's routine.

Behavior Management

MPPC & Partners believes in a positive approach to discipline and are committed to providing an environment where children feel safe, comfortable and most of all welcome. Behavior management policies are put in place to protect the safety of all children and staff. Staff will ensure that each child is provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior. Children are encouraged to practice those skills that will allow them to resolve conflicts and have their needs met without the use of aggressive or destructive behaviors. This is seen as a means of preventing behavioral difficulties between children and lessens the need for disciplinary action on the part of Staff. When situations occur which require intervention, staff will provide children with clear explanations as to why specific behavior is inappropriate and help them find an alternative behavior that fits within classroom guidelines.

These behavior guidelines revolve around the safety of all children, staff and for the materials within the program. Classroom rules are tailored to the developmental level of the children in attendance, are short and simple, are stated in a positive way and are used consistently. Older children are encouraged to set rules together. If a child is displaying persistent, unacceptable behavior, the staff will take steps to help the child gain self-control. A staff will first attempt to help the child understand the gravity of the behavior. Staff will then redirect the child to activities that hold the child's attention (the choice is made with the child). If the behavior continues, the staff will consult with fellow staff and/or the director to develop alternatives for helping the child gain acceptable control of his/her behavior. If the behavior persists, the Staff or Director will contact the child's family for suggestions on measures to take to extinguish the behavior. The goal is to help the child strengthen his/her skills of self-control. Separating the child from the group is a final step that would be taken after other measures have been tried. If the child cannot resort to behavior that ensures his own and the safety of others in the program, and/or the smooth operation of the program; the family will then be called and asked to pick the child up from the program.

Separation from parents often causes young children to have difficulty adjusting to a new environment. Therefore, we prefer to start children on a half day schedule until they have found a sense of belonging and can begin to separate from their family. Staff are particularly sensitive to this issue and will work closely with families for a smooth transition from half days to full days. Staff will update families of newly enrolled children throughout the morning on Brightwheel. At the same time the staff will offer comfort and try to engage the child in an activity. If the child continues to be upset and cannot be consoled within a reasonable time or refuses to participate in the program, the parent will be called and asked for suggestions

on how staff might help the child. In some cases, especially with infants and toddlers, the parent may be asked to come to the program to calm the child. The goal is to help the child adjust, have a good time, and have a successful day.

Staff members must adhere to the following policies:

- No child shall be subjected to emotional abuse, which includes but is not limited to name calling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about a child or the child's family, and using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child.
- No child shall be subjected to cruel discipline. Physical restraint is prohibited, unless necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or other people. • No child shall be subjected to the use of mechanical restraints, such as tying.
- No child shall be subjected to corporal punishment, which includes but is not limited to rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting, and spanking. • No child shall be force fed or denied food as a punishment for unacceptable behavior. Neither will food be given as a reward for good behavior.
- No child shall be denied light, warmth, clothing, or medical care as a punishment for unacceptable behavior.
- No child shall be punished or criticized for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet. • No child shall be separated from the group as a means of behavior management.

If staff are unable to come up with a solution to a child's behavior, they will then reach out to MPCC's Behavior Interventionist for support. Alyssa will always reach out to families before observing any child. If you would like to discuss any behavioral concerns you can contact Alyssa Snyder (Behaviors & Disabilities Manager) Alyssa's contact information is listed in the MPCC Directory on page 2.

Hand in Hand Policy

The safe transportation of children to and from the program is of the greatest importance to us. When your child is being loaded or unloaded from vehicles they should always be held by hand and escorted by an adult. **AT NO TIME** should children be without the proper escort of an adult. All children shall be transported with an appropriate car seat in accordance with Vermont law.

What To Bring To Care

Infants: bottles, diapers, and at least 2 changes of clothes per day. Formula (generic brands only) and baby foods will be provided as part of our CACFP Program. (Child Adult Care Food Program. MPCC is not able to supply any special formulas or ones prescribed by your child's pediatrician.

Toddlers: diapers and at least two changes of clothes per day

Diapers: MPCC can provide diapers if a family shows a need. If you would like us to provide diapers for your child's diapers while at school, please speak to your Campus Director. Please note MPCC is on able to provide Parents Choice or Mama Bear Diapers.

Preschoolers: at least two changes of clothes or more per day if going through the toilet training process.

School Age: Extra clothes as needed.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost.

Clothing and Shoes

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the program, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits. Children always wear shoes in case of an emergency.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for program play and make it difficult for children to participate in some activities. Please ensure your child has comfortable close-toed shoes and extra clothes each day.

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the program unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity. Please note that MPCC is not responsible for lost personal property.

Check your Child's Cubby Daily

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a cubby. Cubbies are labeled with your child's name. Please check your child's cubby daily for items, artwork and important flyers that need to be taken home.

Daily Classroom Schedules

Classroom schedules are posted in each classroom. Infant needs are met on demand. Daily schedules in the infant room are individualized depending on the needs of each infant. Throughout a typical day, infants are doing the following:

- Hellos
- Diapering
- Belly Time
- Nap Time
- Reading Time
- Bottles/Individual feedings
- Outside walks
- Snack
- Free Play
- Goodbyes
- Preschool & PreK Schedules include
- Arrival/Hand washing/Free Play
- Morning Meeting/Wash Up
- Breakfast
- Small Groups/Free Play
- Circle/Music & Movement
- Outside/Gross Motor Play
- Meeting/ Wash Up
- Family Style Lunch/Wash Up
- Rest/Quiet Activities
- Snack
- Outside/Free Play
- Free Play
- School Age Schedule includes
- Active physical play
- Individual, small group and large group activities
- Open ended play and activities
- Quiet activities
- Staff and child-initiated activities
- Homework time

Schedules are subject to change due to the individual needs of children within the group.

Transitions

Your child's transition in childcare should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with your family and child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced. Transition schedules vary depending on the individual needs of each child.

- Introduction to the Program
- Family Orientation Visit
- Visit with Family to Classroom
- Child attends half day
- Child attends full day

Children Transitioning to a New MPCC Partner Classroom or Campus

Children are transitioned to the next program/school based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements and space availability. During the transition, current and future staff will meet with families to propose a plan to introduce the child to the new program/school.

Introduction to New Classroom

- The staff discusses transition plans with family.
- If the child and family are ready for transition, the child visits the new classroom.
- Child visits new classroom for a half day
- When child is ready the child will visit new classroom for full days
- Family Transition Meeting (upon request)

Meals Prepared on Campus

Meals prepared at each Campus will be properly planned, prepared, and portioned according to the Child

and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) as well as the state requirements for food service. Weekly menus will be posted to Brightwheel and hanging on classroom doors.

Meals Served

Weekly menus are posted for viewing by parents/caregivers and copies are available upon request and are accessible on Brightwheel. We enjoy family style dining at mealtimes. The tables are set with plates and flatware, and the food is placed in small bowls from which the children are encouraged to serve themselves as food is passed around each table. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged.

Breastfeeding Parents

We support breast feeding and will provide comfortable accommodations for mothers who breastfeed their child.

Infant Feeding

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

Bottle-fed infants are fed while being held or sitting up. Infants are fed “on demand” to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly). Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. Fresh breast milk must be used within 48 hours. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child’s name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for up to 3 months. Formula must be brought to the premises in a factory-sealed container in a ready-to-feed strength or powder or concentrate. Formulas will be diluted according to the instructions provided by the manufacturer or from the child’s health provider, using water from a source approved by the local health department. Formula brought from home must be labeled with the child’s name. Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child’s family.

Outside Food

We request that children do not bring food from home per our CACFP guidelines. Children may bring special treats for birthdays and other classroom events. These special treats should be perishable; be store-bought and in its original package. Prior to bringing in any special treats please talk to your child’s staff to ensure there are no allergies in the classroom.

If your child has a food or environmental allergy, you must provide a doctor’s note so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually. Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician. A list of the children’s allergies will be posted in the kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Childhood Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every January, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

All caregivers, staff, and staff are required to be current with all immunizations routinely recommended for adults by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Programs for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

If your child is unvaccinated due to a religious or medical exemption, please discuss this with our Health Manager Desiree Myers RN. BSN. prior to your child’s first day in care. You can find Desiree’s contact information on page 2 of this handbook.

Physicals & General Health Forms

Routine physicals or GHF are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org and Vermont State Childcare Licensing Regulations. A copy of your child's physical or GHF should be received before your child begins the program. Families are responsible for ensuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the program. The program has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable, but he/she may be excluded from activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Fever (with behavior change)
- Respiratory Virus symptoms
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting, green or bloody, and/or 2 or more times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 48 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.

Returning to Care After an Illness

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours without the assistance of a fever reducing medication.
- They have been treated with antibiotics for 24 hours.
- They can participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
- The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and.
- The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.

Communicable Disease

If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and when the child may return to our care may be requested.

MPCC & Partners will notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments.

Medication Administration

Our staff are trained in medication administration and will ensure that the medication is administered. Families are able to track medication administered on your child's Brightwheel feed. Most prescriptions need to be required by your child's doctor to be administered while in care. All medication MUST be in the original container and include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. You may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a doctor's note is received.

Outdoor Play

All Campuses use the Weather Channel app to determine whether it is a safe temperature for children to be outside. All Campuses use the “REAL FEAL” Temperature to determine the actual temperature prior to preparing children to play outside.

Child Injuries

All staff maintain current Pediatric First Aid and CPR certifications. Safety is a major concern in childcare and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside of each Campus area to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver if your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report on Brightwheel outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations. In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while families are contacted.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once. When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting. All biting incidents will be documented in Brightwheel to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter’s family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Safe Sleeping Practices

Infants sleep according to their own schedule. The safest position for infants to sleep is on their backs. Putting an infant to sleep on their back decreases the chance of sudden infant death syndrome. The program requires the following guidelines be strictly followed:

- Infants 12 months and younger are always placed on their backs to sleep.
- Blankets, stuffed toys, pillows, or other soft objects are not allowed in infant sleeping equipment.
- Infant sleep positioners are only allowed with a doctor’s written authorization.
- If an infant falls asleep in equipment not specifically designed for infant sleep the infant is moved at the earliest reasonable time frame to infant sleep equipment on their back to continue sleeping.
- After an infant is placed on their back for sleep, infants may then be allowed to assume a comfortable sleep position when they can easily turn themselves from the back position.
- All linens and crib sheets meet mandatory and voluntary safety standards.

After lunch, all children participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities. Children are provided with their own mat and bedding for rest time. A blanket from home is welcomed.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/staff partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child’s physical and emotional abilities and your family’s concerns.

Positive Guidance & Redirection

Staff and staff are committed to each child’s success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. To ensure wholesome growth and positive developmental experiences for children enrolled, our staff work to ensure that all students have the

opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the program community. Thoughtful direction and planning are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving helps children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions. Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place.
- Be treated with respect.
- Receive the help and support of caring adults.

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intercede immediately. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When redirection is necessary, it is clear, consistent, and understandable to the child.

Attendance for Public Pre-K

If your child is enrolled in one of MPCC & Partners qualified SVSU public PreK classrooms their attendance is required unless they have been by a medical professional, or a family has notified the program ahead of time that their child will be absent. The school district takes PreK attendance seriously and excessive absences could be cause for an attendance contract. If your child is continuously absent for two or more consecutive days our Family support Manager will reach out to discuss possible solutions prior to the school district becoming involved.

Our Family Support Manager will work with families in meeting their child's required ten hours of public PreK. This support could be transportation, access to a laundry mat or even a wakeup call. Please remember we are here to support you and your children.

Non Pre-K Attendance

All attendance is equally as important as the public Pre-K attendance. It is important that children learn early the importance of attending care every day. Please message us on Brightwheel if your child will not attend. After two consecutive days of your child not attending and families not calling, we will have our Family Support Manager reach out.

If a family is working with DCF Licensed Child Cares are required to report all absences of two or more days with no contact from the family to the caseworker. This makes it even more important for you to report your child's absence to us.

Transfer of Child Files

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally. If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

Court Order

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation. In addition, we will not take on the responsibility of knowing whose day it is to pick up your child. We solely rely on the parents to ensure that they are in fact the parents required to be picked up. We have no way of knowing if schedules have shifted the weeks of visits so again, we rely on the family.

Parent and Staff Communication

The time you spend in the program dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time staff must communicate with you about your child. To make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you limit the use of your cell phone while visiting the Campus.

Safe Release of Children

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance through Brightwheel. Your child will not be released without prior permission. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child, if possible, but if after 2 hours we have not been able to reach you, or a person listed as an emergency or authorized pick-up contact, we will call the local Department of Children and Families.

By law we can't 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 and Release Contact pick-up the child, or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child.

Lost or Missing Children

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. The family and the police will be notified immediately.

Fire Safety & Evacuation Drills

Each program is fully equipped with fire safety systems including alarms and lights. Our fire and emergency evacuation plans are practiced and reviewed with children and staff monthly. Children must always wear shoes or slippers in case of emergency. Slippers with waterproof bottoms are preferred. One fire and emergency evacuation drill are practiced during rest/nap time annually.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

Emergency Response Plan

There are no specific concerns related to the location of the program such as the location of the program in an area prone to flooding, but in the event of a natural or man-made emergency an emergency response plan will be followed. The complete plan includes how we will address and manage emergencies at the program.

Grievance Procedures

MPCC & Partner's aim is to ensure that families with a grievance relating to the program can use a procedure which can help to resolve grievances as quickly and as possible. If you have a concern, please speak to your child's staff. If you do not feel comfortable addressing a concern, you can speak with the program director.

MPCC Inc. and Partners Photographs

All photographs of children enrolled at MPCC Inc & Partners and posted on our Brightwheel, Social Media Platforms or Website are the property of MPCC Inc & Partners. The publication of photos, images, or artwork of children enrolled within MPCC Inc. & Partner Programs, whether online or otherwise, is prohibited without prior approval from the Program and family. Some families at the Program have chosen to restrict photograph permissions of their child(ren), and it is expected that all staff will be aware of, and abide by, those restrictions. Although most Families have granted permission for their children's images to be posted on Brightwheel, Facebook and our Website they have not granted permission for those photos to be used

on any other social media platforms without prior consent.

Social Media Guidelines

At MPCC Inc. and Partner Programs, we value a supportive and positive community among our staff and their families. To maintain a harmonious environment, we ask that all family members of children attending MPCC and Partner Programs refrain from making negative or disparaging comments about our company on social media platforms, including Facebook.

We encourage open communication and constructive feedback, and we are always here to listen to any concerns or suggestions you may have. If you have any issues or feedback regarding the company, please reach out directly to our administration, as we believe that addressing concerns privately is the most effective way to foster understanding and improvement.

Thank you for your support in helping us create a positive atmosphere for everyone involved in our company.

Family Behavior Policy

To foster a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment for all children, families, and staff at MPCC Inc. & Partners we ask that all families review this policy and understand that a breach of the policies set forth within the MPCC Inc. & Partners Family Handbook could be cause for loss of services. MPCC values the involvement of families in the education and care of their children. To maintain a positive atmosphere, we ask that all parents adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Respectful Communication**
 - Communicate respectfully with staff, other parents, and children.
 - Use appropriate language and tone in all interactions. Address any concerns or issues directly with the staff or Director in a timely manner.
- **Confidentiality**
 - Respect the privacy of other families by not discussing their children or personal matters in public settings. Maintain confidentiality about any sensitive information regarding children, families, or staff.
- **Constructive Feedback**
 - Provide feedback or suggestions in a constructive manner. If there are concerns about the center's policies or practices, speak directly with the designated staff or Director.
 - Participate in surveys or meetings intended for feedback in a positive and respectful manner.
- **Behavior Standards**
 - Model appropriate behavior for children by demonstrating kindness, patience, and understanding.
 - Avoid any form of aggressive or inappropriate behavior, including but not limited to yelling, physical altercations, or derogatory comments.
- **Safety**
 - Comply with all safety policies and procedures, including sign-in/out protocols.
 - Always supervise your child(ren) when on the premises, particularly in outdoor play areas.
- **Attendance and Punctuality**
 - Make every effort to arrive on time for drop-off and pick-up. Notify the center if you will be late for any reason.
- **Conflict Resolution**
 - Approach any conflicts with a willingness to listen and understand different perspectives.

Failure to Adhere to Family Behavior Policies

Verbal warning: Initial discussions about the behavior in question.

Written warning: A formal notice regarding repeated or serious infractions.

If a family's behavior poses a risk to the safety and well-being of children or staff, they may be asked to leave the premises. In severe cases where inappropriate behavior persists, the enrollment of the child may be terminated. By adhering to this Family Behavior Policy, we can work together to create a supportive and enriching environment for all children and families. Thank you for your cooperation!

Prohibited On Campus Property

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor program environment and vehicles used by the program are non-smoking areas. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the program's premises. There shall be no firearms or other weapons, including hunting knives at the Program. 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.