

General Policies and Procedures

Arrival and Departure

Transportation to and from the Center is provided by the parents with the exception of bus transportation for the school aged children who are transported between the School Age program and their respective schools.

Parents must accompany their child into the building AND to their classroom where our staff will assume responsibility for care. Please allow adequate time in the morning to check your child in and give any needed instructions to your child's teacher. When a child leaves for the day, please remember to check your child out and inform your child's teacher that your child is leaving.

If a parent/guardian has not picked up their child by closing time or they have not informed the center of their tardiness, the staff will attempt to contact the parents first and then emergency contacts. If unable to reach any of the responsible parties within 30 minutes after closing, the police will be notified of the situation and may pick up your child.

Parent Access at the 605 James Avenue location

- One key fob will be given to all families.
- During operating hours (5:30am – 6:00pm) families will always have access to the entry way. The key fob will be used to open the inner front door.
- If someone does not have a key fob but still needs access to the building they will simply press the call button in the entry way to identify themselves and we can unlock the door for them.
- Each family may get up to two more additional key fobs. We ask for a \$5.00 deposit using either cash or check for each additional key fob. Once the key fob is returned to the Center the deposit will be refunded.
- If a family loses a key fob they need to notify the Center as soon as possible so it can be deactivated.

Schedules – Daily and Weekly

Be sure to communicate, clearly and regularly, your child's anticipated schedule each week. This information is the basis for staffing, meals and supplies. The more accurately parents and teachers can manage each child's schedule helps keep fees and expenses low. Any schedule changes must be made through your child's teacher.

Please notify the Center as soon as possible if you know your child will not be in attendance that day.

Daily Classroom Schedule

The daily classroom schedule supports our goals for children. We want your child to feel secure and independent, to move from one activity to another as easily and confidently as possible. And we want to provide a variety of learning experiences for a well-rounded education. So we plan a daily schedule that takes all these goals into account. Children are happier with a set routine so we try to follow the same schedule each day.

Program Plan

Program plans are posted in each room and available for parents to review.

Site Changes

Due to occasional low attendance, the Center may choose to combine sites. Parents will be given adequate notice of any such changes.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special events when you've only had a few! You are invited to join your child for lunch or snack on the 'special day'. If your child wishes to bring a special treat, it must be pre-packaged and sealed from the store. This requirement is a Minnesota Department of Health regulation.

Field Trips and Special Events

Educational field trips and special events are planned year round. These are planned to coincide with significant events and, at times, with the monthly theme. We try to choose events and/or speakers that are not only fun and educational, but also specialists in their respective fields. Many of these events are free, but some may include a nominal fee. Parental permission will be obtained from each child's parent before the event is to take place.

Occasional walking excursions will take place as follows:

James Avenue and Kids Klub: Academy Park; tennis and basketball courts on James Avenue; Frank Hall Park; Blazing Star bike trail; Public Library; Fire Department, Police Department and the City Pool

St. John's: Lakeview School Park, Shoff Park and St. John's Lutheran Home.

Staff will take emergency information and first aid supplies on all field trips. All staff will be trained in CPR and first aid during these events.

Toys and Personal Items

We encourage the bringing of 'security items' that help your child's transition from home to the Center. However, to prevent broken or lost toys and unhappy children, we discourage the bringing of other toys from home. Please be sure that your child does not have small, potentially dangerous objects in pockets, such as pins, nails, and money. Teachers may set limitations within rooms as to the type of toys allowed.

The Children's Center does not accept responsibility for any lost, stolen, damaged, or broken personal property brought to the center.

Nap Time

The Center's program includes scheduled nap or quiet times each day for children infant through preschool. This provides your child the opportunity to spend time alone to get the needed rest they require. Infants are allowed to nap throughout the day.

Supervision

All children will be supervised by qualified staff at all times while the children are in our care, as per the MN Dept of Human Services requirements. All personnel in direct contact with children are required to pass the Background Study Check by the Department of Human Services.

Staff and Personnel

All teaching staff, head teachers, assistant teachers, aides, and substitute teachers meet or exceed the Minnesota Department of Human Services requirements. In addition to the educational requirements, The Children's Center staff is also required to either meet or exceed additional in-service hours and training.

Outdoor Play

We plan to go outside each and every day the weather permits, even if it's just for a brief time. A child well enough to be at the Center will participate in outdoor play. Please have scarf, mittens, cap, warm jacket, snowpants or suit, and boots available and well marked.

Pets

There may be small pets in the classroom – fish, gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, a canary or parakeet. Pets will be properly cared for and inoculated in accordance with local health ordinances and codes. Any visiting pets will be in a cage or on a leash and will have prior approval.

It is not recommended that children be allowed to participate in pet care or maintenance. In the event a child is bitten by any animal while in the care of the Center, staff will follow our first aid procedures. *See Health Information for more details.*

Clothing

- All children should have an extra supply of clothes available. They should be labeled and changed with the seasons.
- Think of your child's comfort and provide simple clothing that is free of complicated fastenings, especially when your child is in the process of bathroom training.
- Please provide your child with easy to wash and wear clothes.

Infant and Toddler Needs

Diapers and wipes need to be provided by the parent. A package of each can be brought and left in your child's cubby as well as a day's supply of bottles and nipples, if applicable. Bottles, nipples and pacifiers will be sanitized daily.

- The James Avenue site provides a private mommy and me room for breastfeeding mothers that is made possible through a S.H.I.P.(State Health Improvement Plan) grant.

Research and Publicity

The Children's Center may occasionally interview children, photograph or videotape children for publicity or public relations type events. The Children's Center could also be approached to participate in research projects. If you do not approve of your child being part of such publicity materials, please notify the Family Services Coordinator.

United Way of Freeborn County

The United Way funds a sliding fee scale for income eligible families in our care.

Early Intervention and Referrals

If needed, our teachers and Education Coordinator will work directly with Albert Lea School District #241 when a Special Needs Coordinator is needed to observe, screen, or refer children for additional assessment. Individual planning, remedy strategies and implementation of goals are coordinated with the teachers, parents, Education Coordinator and Special Needs Coordinator.

Enrichment Programs

From time to time, The Children's Center is proud to be able to offer our families and children a variety of enrichment programs such as Spanish, swimming lessons, etc. Any information regarding these programs and related fees will be communicated to all parents. We are always open to new and creative suggestions that parents may have.

Year-end Account Statements

By the end of January of each year, The Children's Center will be pleased to provide, upon request, a summarized 12 month statement of each family's child care costs for tax purposes. Contact our Family Services Coordinator at the James Avenue site for more information.

Section 125

The Children's Center will be pleased to provide account information for families who use a Section 125 dependent care plan. Contact our Family Services Coordinator at the James Avenue site for more information.

Parental Visits

Parents are welcome to visit their enrolled children.

Firearms Policy

The Children's Center bans firearms on its property. Possession of firearms on or near property controlled by The Children's Center or at The Children's Center sponsored events is prohibited.