


Parent Handbook

Updated
June 24, 2025

The Children's House
150 Wiecking Center/MSU
Mankato, MN
56001

<https://ed.mnsu.edu/centers-offices-college-of-education/the-childrens-house/>

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CONTACT INFORMATION 

Main Office

The Children's House Main Line: 507-389-1645

Director: 507-389-1646

Classroom Phone Numbers

Infant Room: 507-389-1766

Toddler Room: 507-389-5468

Preschool 1: 507-389-5467

Preschool 2: 507-389-1647

Emergency & Campus Resources

Campus Security

From Off Campus: 507-389-2111

From On Campus: Dial 2111

College of Education: 507-389-5445

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

At The Children's House, we believe that children grow and learn best in an atmosphere of care, trust, and mutual respect. We strive to create an environment that honors each child's unique abilities and supports them in reaching their fullest potential.

Our program is built on the understanding that learning happens best through active, hands-on experiences. We provide rich opportunities for children to explore, create, and problem-solve, with a strong focus on learning through doing. We also recognize that each child has a unique learning style, and we tailor our approaches to support individual growth and development.

The Children's House is a model for an early learning program that serves young children, their families, and university students preparing for careers in early childhood education. By working together, we foster a community of learning and care.

Program Goals:

We support children in building on what they already know and in expanding their skills across all areas of development. Our program goals include:

Helping children achieve success and pride as they develop skills in math, science, literacy, creative arts, and physical development.

Encouraging children to develop curious, inquiring minds and to practice problem-solving.

Supporting children in learning to take personal responsibility and work independently.

Guiding children in developing positive social relationships with peers and adults.

Fostering language and communication skills is essential for group interaction and expression.

Helping each child develop a positive self-concept as a capable, valued, and active participant in the learning community.

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Assessment:

Assessment is a key part of our program. It helps us understand each child's development and adjust our teaching to meet their needs. We use a variety of methods, including:

- Observations
- Work samples and photos
- Conversations with families
- The Teaching Strategies GOLD Online Assessment Tool

Family Engagement:

We view parents as their child's first and most important teacher. Families are respected and valued partners in our work. The Children's House is committed to supporting and strengthening families. We encourage parents to:

- Spend time in the classroom
- Explore their child's favorite activities
- Read stories or share cultural traditions with peers

University Collaboration:

The Children's House also serves as a learning site for undergraduate and graduate students at Minnesota State University, Mankato. These students gain valuable hands-on experience and develop their skills in teaching and classroom design. In turn, their presence enriches our program and supports high-quality care.

We proudly align our work with the university's mission of excellence in teaching and learning, preparing future professionals who will continue to support the development of young children.

Because of these strong collaborative partnerships, children at The Children's House have the unique opportunity to explore and engage with the broader university campus environment. These connections enrich the children's experiences and bring unique learning opportunities into our program. Highlights from past collaborations include hearing and speech screenings conducted by university students, visits from MSU sports teams, a trip to the traveling Bell Museum Planetarium, and summer swimming lessons—all helping to create a vibrant and joyful connection between The Children's House and the broader university community.

Program Licensing:

The Children's House is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) to serve up to 90 full-time equivalent children daily in a group childcare setting. We welcome children from six weeks through kindergarten age, with the following licensed capacity:

- 12 infants
- 21 toddlers
- 57 preschoolers

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The Children's House is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all children, families, staff, and university students.

We follow the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Policy (1B.1), which strictly prohibits discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, marital or familial status, or public assistance status.

We value the dignity and worth of every individual and are dedicated to providing equitable access to our services in an environment grounded in respect and fairness. To read the full policy, visit: <https://www.minnstate.edu/board/policy/1b01.html>

MN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP) CIVIL RIGHTS STATEMENT

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

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

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD-3027) or write a letter including all the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

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

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

Email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

LICENSURE

The Children's House is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families – Licensing Division and is nationally accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) through its National Academy of Early Childhood Programs.

MEMBERSHIP

The Children's Households active memberships with the National Coalition for Campus Child Care (NCCCC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

STAFFING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

Background Study:

All employees must pass a Background Study conducted through the Department of Human Services licensing division.

Full-Time Staff:

The Children's House full-time staff are bargaining unit, civil service employees of the University. Salaries for civil service and bargaining unit staff are determined by compensation plans developed by and agreed upon by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. Full-time teaching staff are educated and experienced in early childhood education, holding undergraduate or graduate degrees and/or teaching licenses.

Part-Time Staff:

Part-time staff are referred to The Children's House by Student Financial Services and are university students. The Children's House Director screens, orients, trains, and supervises student employees.

Professional Training and Instruction:

Each year, the Director and teaching staff are required by state law to participate in relevant training equal to 1 to 2 percent of their annual hours worked. Additionally, teaching staff holding current Minnesota licensure must complete 125 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) every five years for license renewal, as well as ongoing training to maintain and sustain NAEYC National Accreditation.

The Children's House provides ongoing professional staff development opportunities including lead staff meetings, special workshops, professional workshops, and conferences. Staff also participate in pediatric first aid and CPR, Abusive Head Trauma training, Sudden Unexpected Infant Death training, a "Risk Reduction Plan" mandated by MN DCYF Licensing, and NAEYC accreditation training on standards, processes, and procedures.

ENROLLMENT

Children from the ages of 6 weeks until they begin kindergarten, whichever comes first, are eligible to attend The Children's House. We welcome children and families without regard to race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

Waiting List Policies/Eligibility:

Priority is given equally to students, staff, and faculty of Minnesota State University, Mankato. Community children are welcome if the center does not fill with university affiliated children.

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Waiting List Order of Priority:

THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE maintains a computerized waiting list. The date of application, preferred start date, and the age of the child determine a child's position on the external waiting list. As openings at THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE occur, enrollment of a child in any one of our three age groups is determined by these criteria of priority:

1. Sibling of a child currently enrolled.
2. Child of a parent affiliated with Minnesota State University, Mankato either as a current student, staff or faculty member
3. Child of general public

Note: A lot of time for infants, date of birth is the biggest factor when looking at enrollments.

ADMISSION POLICIES

Acceptance:

Parents are notified when a space becomes available and have 24 hours to accept the offer. At the time of acceptance, a non-refundable registration fee equivalent to one week's tuition is charged and applied to the first parent billing. Enrollment of a sibling also requires a registration fee of one week's tuition, which will be added along with other charges to the parents' existing account.

Pre-Admission:

To enroll, parents meet with the Administrative Assistant to review enrollment forms and The Children's House policies. An intake conference with the child's Lead Teacher is required. It is preferred that the child not attend this conference, as it allows the teacher to ask questions and get to know the family without distractions. We understand this is not always possible but encourage parents to arrange alternate care if feasible. During this conference, a visit will be scheduled for the child to become familiar with the classroom environment.

ENROLLMENT FORMS:

Upon enrollment, families receive this handbook, which includes health policies, along with several required admission forms. Parents must read, understand, and agree to abide by all policies outlined in the handbook. A signed and dated acknowledgment form confirming this agreement is required.

Minnesota Department of Child, Youth and Family licensing rules prohibit enrollment without a signed physician's statement verifying the child's health status and immunization schedule in accordance with current medical standards. The Enrollment Agreement Form, Emergency Card and other necessary forms must be completed and submitted prior to enrollment. The Emergency Card must be kept current by each parent.

Children cannot begin attending The Children's House without a current, signed Immunization Record and a completed Emergency Card. The Children's House is required to track immunizations and files an annual immunization report.

In cases of separated or divorced parents, The Children's House enrollment agreement is with the legal guardian responsible for fulfilling all obligations of the enrollment agreement.

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As part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, The Children's House complies with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. Written privacy rights statements are provided when collecting private or confidential information from parents or children. These statements include the reason for data collection and are included with all forms requesting such information.

Disenrollment:

If you plan to discontinue your child's enrollment at The Children's House, a written notice must be submitted to the Administrative Assistant at least two weeks in advance of your child's final day. Parents are financially responsible for two full weeks of tuition starting from the date the written notice is both signed and received by the Administrative Assistant.

This advance notice provides our program the opportunity to offer your child's space to another family. If you are aware of your plans more than two weeks in advance, we encourage you to notify us as early as possible. Regardless of early notice, tuition will be billed for the two-week period following the official date of the withdrawal notice.

Grievance Procedures:

The following procedure applies when a parent has a concern or complaint about any aspect of The Children's House child development program:

1. If applicable, the parent should first discuss the concern directly with the Lead Classroom Teacher involved.
2. If the outcome of that discussion is unsatisfactory, the parent may request a meeting with the Director to share their concern.
3. The Director will address and respond to the grievance within two weeks.
4. If the matter remains unresolved after meeting with the Director, the grievance will be forwarded to the Dean of the College of Education for further review.

TUITION POLICIES

The Children's House is a university department that relies on revenue from parent fees to cover all operating expenses. Prompt and regular tuition payments are essential to ensure the continuity and quality of our program.

Tuition is calculated based on the program and hours of enrollment. Billing statements are issued during the first week of each month, and payment is due by the last day of the month. The Children's House reserves the right to bill for all scheduled days, including snow days and other emergency closures, with the exception of the following excluded dates:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the Friday following
- Winter Break (typically includes Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, and the weekdays in between; exact dates vary each year)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Fourth of July
- Two-week break between summer session and fall semester (based on the Minnesota State University, Mankato academic calendar)

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New families will receive a prorated invoice based on their child's start date. Monthly billing statements are placed in each parent's mailbox. Families are encouraged to check their mailboxes regularly to stay up to date on tuition and account information.

Payments may be made in the following ways:

1. Check made payable to The Children's House
2. Credit or debit card in person at the front office or by phone
3. Online through your university account portal

LATE CHARGES AND PENALTIES

A late fee will be assessed if payment is not received by the end of the month. If payment is 30 days past due, parents must make immediate financial arrangements to bring the account current. If payment arrangements are not made within 10 additional days (a total of 40 days past billing), the account may be turned over to a collection agency. Should legal or collection services be required, those fees will be added to the account, and disenrollment of the child will occur.

GENERAL PARENT INFORMATION

Parking and Building Entry:

Parking is available for The Children's House families in the section signed "No Parking – Load/Unload, 15-minute parking," which runs the entire length of our side of the street. Please do not leave your car idling except in extreme weather. DO NOT park across the street or on neighborhood signed streets. Resident monitors can and will assess parking tickets for the City of Mankato. Be sure to have your child(ren) exit your vehicle on the curb/sidewalk side of the street. The MSU fleet is parked behind our building and drop-off/pick-up times are very busy. Please comply with signage and drive slowly and carefully. Parking passes can be requested in the office during parent/teacher conferences. We are a security building. If you are an MSU student or employee, your MSU ID card will get you in. Wave it at the black box to the left when you enter the vestibule and the door will unlock. There is no buzz sound, just a tiny beep. If you are not affiliated with MSU, you will be given a code to enter the same black box to gain entrance.

PARENT COMMUNICATION and PARTICIPATION

Parent Mail:

Each child has a mailbox—please check it daily for notes, billing statements, and other important info.

Bulletin Boards:

There's a Parent Bulletin Board in the front hallway with menus, USDA notices, and community happenings. Each classroom also has a communication board right outside the door with daily or weekly updates.

Who to Talk To:

Director – For questions about our mission, curriculum, child development, licensing, staffing, research partnerships, and overall program policies.

Administrative Assistant – For things like enrollment, billing, waitlist questions, daily operations, menu info, and anything happening at the front desk.

Your Child's Teacher – For anything about your child's classroom: routines, learning goals, assessments, behavior, or just how their day went!

Getting Involved:

We love when parents join in and share their time or talents! Here are some ways to participate:

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Help with events, gardening projects, or donating materials. Stop by anytime to visit or observe. If you want to lead an activity, just check with your child's teacher first. Share your interests—music, science, art, storytelling—we'd love to include them. Fill out occasional surveys to help us grow and improve. Just a reminder: We have an open-door policy—you're always welcome.

Everyday Communication

It's important we stay in touch about your child's day and how things are going. Please call if your child will be out or arriving late. If they'll eat breakfast here, they need to arrive by 8:30 a.m., and we encourage everyone to be here by 9:30 a.m. so they can fully join in on the day.

- **For infants and toddlers** – Teachers will send home a daily note with info about what they ate, how they slept, diaper changes, and anything else we think you'd want to know.
- **For preschoolers** – Since they can usually tell you about their day themselves, we don't send daily notes, but teachers are always happy to chat or answer questions!

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

At The Children's House, research opportunities are an important part of our connection with Minnesota State University, Mankato and support the university's mission. All research conducted here is supervised by a faculty member and reviewed and approved by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), as well as by the Director of The Children's House. We may occasionally ask for your consent to have your child take part in a research project—participation is always completely voluntary. Many families enjoy contributing to meaningful research that supports the field of early childhood education, but you are never required to participate. The process for research projects includes:

1. The faculty member or graduate student submits a written proposal.
2. The University IRB approves the research.
3. The Children's House Director reviews the proposal.
4. Lead Teachers provide input and approval.
5. A consent form is shared with families.
6. The researcher visits the classroom several times to build familiarity.
7. Children are then invited to participate—but always have the choice to decline.

University students may occasionally complete class projects at The Children's House. These might include activities like asking questions, playing games, or engaging in simple classroom tasks. All activities are age-appropriate, supervised by staff, and take place during the regular school day. Some students may observe children either from inside the classroom or through hallway observation windows. Students are not allowed to record or take photos unless you've given written permission. Participation in class projects is always optional. Children are never forced to participate and are encouraged to opt out if they are uncomfortable.

MANDATED REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY

As mandated reporters, THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE staff are required to make a report if there is "reason to suspect" that a child is being neglected or abused or subjected to witnessing domestic abuse or has been within the past three years. (MN State statute code section 626.556.)

MALTREATMENT OF MINORS MANDATED REPORTING POLICY FOR DCYF LICENSED PROGRAMS

Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect:

Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect. If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911. All reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed facility should be made to the Department of Youth, Child and Family's Maltreatment Intake Line at (651) 539-8222.

Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county social services agency or local law enforcement.

If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Youth, Child and Family, Licensing Division at (651) 431-6500.

What to Report:

Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and should be attached to this policy. A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident. An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

Failure to Report:

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations. MN Department of Human Services Division of Licensing, November 2014.

Staff Training:

The license holder must provide training to all staff related to the mandated reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556). The license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14. The mandated reporting policy must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment in the childcare program and must be made available upon request.

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Should you have difficulty in providing for your own child's emotional or physical needs, or safety you are encouraged to ask for help. Our staff can help you find a community resource that can help. Some 24-hour community resources which can help you when you find that you are experiencing more stress than you can handle, include:

- Parents Anonymous of Minnesota 651-487-2111 or National Parent Hotline 855-427-2736
- Blue Earth County Resource: <https://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/493/How-to-Report-Abuse-or-Neglect>
- Nicollet County Resource: <https://www.co.nicollet.mn.us/214/Child-Family-Services>
- Minnesota Crisis Connection 612-379-6363
- Minneapolis Crisis Nursery 763-591-0100
- Blue Earth County Child Protection 507-304-4444
- Nicollet County Child Protection 507-386-4528
- Warmline 612-863-6336
- http://parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/age1_2/HelpMeGrow_SpecialNeeds/ReferChild/index.html

HIRING CHILDREN'S HOUSE STAFF FOR PRIVATE CHILD CARE

The Children's House does not provide references for staff or student workers for private babysitting, nor do we maintain or distribute babysitter lists or allow postings, due to liability concerns.

Families may independently hire current staff outside of their scheduled work hours. Staff are free to accept or decline, set their own rates and define their terms. These arrangements are strictly personal agreements, and The Children's House and Minnesota State University, Mankato assume no responsibility for any aspect of the arrangement.

Important Guidelines:

- Outside Work Hours Only: Babysitting arrangements must be made entirely outside of staff's paid work hours and responsibilities
- Off-Premises Only: Private Child-care may not take place on Children's House property. Staff may assist with drop-off or pick up only when off the clock.
- Emergencies: Exceptions may be considered in emergencies (e.g. early center closure or car accidents) but staff may not provide private car during paid work time.
- No Dual Roles: Staff may not accept payment for childcare while clocked in or provide individual care in their classroom during work hours.
- Confidentiality: Information gained through private babysitting must remain confidential and separate from Children's House operations.
- Private Agreements: All babysitting arrangements are personal contracts between the parent and staff member. The Children's House and Minnesota State University, Mankato are not liable for any disputes or issues that arise.

PROGRAM PRACTICES

At The Children's House, we prioritize staffing consistency across all classrooms to support the development of strong, trusting relationships between children and caregivers. Whether your child is in the Infant, Toddler, or Preschool program, we recognize the importance of stable, familiar adults in fostering emotional security, confidence, and a love of learning.

In our Infant classroom, care is guided by each child's individual schedule. Routines—such as feeding, diapering, and sleeping—are not just part of the day; they are the curriculum. Through these consistent and nurturing routines, infants begin to understand that they are valued and safe. Caregivers respond respectfully and attentively, building early communication through gestures, vocalizations, American Sign Language (ASL), and self- and parallel talk. We work closely with families to understand each baby's unique preferences and evolving needs, adjusting materials and routines as development progresses.

As children move into the Toddler stage, their growing independence and curiosity are supported through intentional routines and engaging, play-based learning experiences. Teachers draw from Developmentally Appropriate Practice as outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and use the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress to guide planning. Activities are thoughtfully selected from our library of curriculum resources to support emerging language, motor, cognitive, and social-emotional development. The consistency of caregivers provides a secure base from which toddlers can explore, connect, and grow.

In our Preschool classrooms, this same foundation of nurturing relationships and intentional teaching continues. Teachers plan meaningful indoor and outdoor experiences that promote school readiness, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving. Using the same evidence-based frameworks as in the Toddler classroom, preschool educators design environments that challenge and support children at their individual developmental levels. A strong sense of community and routine helps preschoolers develop independence while building the skills needed for future learning.

Across all age levels, our curriculum evolves with the children. We view families as essential partners and invite ongoing collaboration to ensure each child's experience reflects their individual strengths, preferences, and developmental stage. Our commitment to consistency, connection, and quality care supports every child in feeling seen, heard, and capable—each and every day.

TOUCH AND NURTURING

Respectful, nurturing touch supports children's emotional development and sense of security. At The Children's House, staff may offer comforting touch, such as hugs, handholding, cuddling, back pats, or lap sitting, with the child's consent. Children always have the right to decline, except when touch is necessary for safety or care.

Staff are trained to be sensitive to children's cues and model appropriate touch for student workers. Children are taught respect others' personal space.

Touch may include:

- Diapering, toileting, dressing and feeding
- Hand/face washing, nose wiping, first aid
- Support during rest time or clothing changes

GUIDING CHILDREN TOWARDS SELF-REGULATION

Self-regulation is a foundational skill that supports success in relationships, learning, and overall well-being throughout life. This critical ability begins developing in infancy, rooted in consistent, nurturing relationships with responsive caregivers.

When infants are cared for in predictable and loving ways, they begin to form secure attachments and learn that their environment is safe. In time, they recognize that their needs will be met—this helps them

begin to soothe themselves, such as calming after crying, because they trust in the care they receive. This early trust is the first step in learning self-regulation.

Self-regulation encompasses a range of abilities, including:

- Managing impulses
- Seeking help from others to regulate emotions (co-regulation)
- Responding to emotional support
- Self-soothing and calming
- Focusing attention
- Persevering through challenges

Like other developmental milestones, children build these skills at different rates. By preschool, many can begin to wait their turn, follow rules (with reminders), and seek help instead of reacting impulsively. At The Children's House, we support this growth daily by modeling calming strategies, guiding conflict resolution, maintaining consistent routines, and responding with empathy. We value our partnership with families in helping children build confidence, emotional awareness, and the tools to navigate their work with resilience.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE POLICY

At The Children's House, we view behavior as a skill that is taught and learned just like reading or math. Teachers guide children's behavior through their words and actions, recognizing that young children are still learning what is expected of them. It is developmentally appropriate for children to require many reminders and redirections before they fully understand that certain behaviors are not acceptable, such as:

- Hitting, biting, or physically hurting others
- Teasing, name-calling, or excluding others from play
- Destroying another child's work or property
- Running from the group in a way that creates an unsafe situation

As children grow, our classrooms are designed to promote positive behavior and the development of self-control and self-help skills. Staff support this through consistent routines, clear expectations, redirection, and guidance in problem-solving. We encourage respectful discussions and help children balance individual expression with the safety and needs of the group.

The Children's House staff uses a non-punitive, redirective type of discipline.

General Requirements:

Our behavior guidance approach is grounded in developmentally appropriate practices and individualized to meet the needs of each child. Strategies include:

- Providing multiple sets of high-interest toys as children begin learning to share
- Establishing clear, age-appropriate limits
- Modeling positive and respectful behaviors
- Helping children identify their feelings and appropriate emotional responses
- Recognizing each child's unique needs and strengths
- Structuring environments and schedules to support self-regulation
- Noticing and encouraging positive efforts
- Anticipating potential challenges and intervening early
- Using redirection and open-ended questioning

- Teaching problem-solving strategies
- Designing daily schedules that balance choices and structure
- Applying natural and logical consequences
- Supporting self-esteem while addressing conflict
- Encouraging verbal expression over physical responses
- Coaching children on appropriate language to use in social situations

Persistent Unacceptable Behavior:

If redirection and proactive strategies are not effective and behaviors continue, teachers will begin documenting the behavior with signed and dated observations. If the behavior persists, the child may be invited to take a break from the activity or play in a separate, calming space within the classroom. In some cases, the child may be separated from the group in accordance with licensing guidelines (outlined below). For behavior that continues over time, the lead teacher may request a meeting with the child's parent(s) or guardian(s), classroom staff, and the center director to collaboratively create a behavior support plan that aligns with our expectations and supports the child's needs. If a child engages in behaviors that endanger themselves, others, or staff, families may be contacted for immediate pickup.

These behaviors may include (but are not limited to):

- Physical harm to self or others
- Property destruction
- Running from staff or the group
- Aggressive or unsafe actions that put others at risk

In such cases, a return to care will require the development of a behavior plan created in partnership with the family, the child's teachers, support personnel, and the director. Permanent removal from care will only occur after all possible strategies and supports have been explored and the decision is agreed upon by a team that includes the classroom staff, director, support professionals, and the child's family.

Separation from the Group:

Separation from the group is used only when less intrusive strategies have not been effective, and the child's behavior poses a risk to themselves or others. In such cases:

- The child will remain within an unenclosed area of the classroom and under continuous supervision
- Alternative participation options will be offered before resorting to separation
- The child may return to the group as soon as they have regained control of their behavior
- All separations will be documented per DCYF licensing requirements
- Children between six weeks and 16 months of age will not be separated from the group as a behavior guidance measure.

Prohibited Behavioral Actions and Interventions:

The following actions are strictly prohibited at The Children's House, whether by staff or among children:

- Corporal punishment, including shoving, shaking, hair or ear pulling, slapping, biting, hitting, or spanking
- Emotional abuse, such as name-calling, ostracism, shaming, or threats
- Separating a child from the group in ways not outlined above
- Punishment related to toilet learning or accidents
- Withholding of food, warmth, comfort, or medical care
- Physical restraint, except when absolutely necessary to prevent harm
- Use of mechanical restraints of any kind

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

The Children's House is committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and anti-bias environment that reflects the diversity of the children, families and staff in our community. We believe that all children benefit from learning in a space where differences are acknowledged, valued, and celebrated.

While in our care, children build a sense of self and group identity, kindness, fairness and respect for others. Teachers guide children in recognizing and responding to bias in developmentally appropriate ways, helping them grow into thoughtful, compassionate members of a diverse world.

We strive to balance the culture of our program with the unique cultural identities of the families we serve. This commitment is reflected in our philosophies, curriculum, assessments and overall program goals. We also make reasonable accommodations for children with developmental delays or disabilities, as long as these do not fundamentally alter the program or compromise health and safety.

We welcome open dialogue about your family's culture, language and values. If you need translation or interpretation services at any point, especially during communication about your child's development or assessment, please let us know. We are here to support and partner with you and we encourage you to continue using and sharing your home language and cultural practices.

HOLIDAYS

The Children's House does not celebrate religious holidays, attempt to provide religious education to children, or use religious symbols in the classroom. However, children and/or their parents may share their own individual holiday experiences and games with teachers and other children. Children learn to respect and appreciate different cultural practices through child-initiated sharing.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

At The Children's House, daily outdoor time is an essential part of our program. Outdoor play promotes physical health, supports emotional well-being, and fosters a connection with the natural world.

The Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Family requires that all children in licensed childcare programs receive daily exposure to fresh air, and we are committed to making outdoor play a positive, healthy experience for every child.

Weather permitting, children will go outdoors each day when temperatures fall between 0°F wind chill and 100°F heat index. Infants will go outside only when the temperature is between 30°F and 90°F, while toddlers and preschoolers participate in outdoor play more regularly within the wider weather range. Children will not be taken outdoors during severe, dangerous, or threatening weather conditions (e.g.,

thunderstorms, high winds, or extreme cold).

It is the policy of The Children's House that all children who are well enough to attend school are well enough to participate in outdoor activities. If your child is unable to go outside due to a medical condition, we require a written note from a physician stating that outdoor play should be restricted.

We understand that dressing for outdoor play can take time, especially in cold weather—but we view these routines as valuable learning opportunities. Children build independence, confidence, and self-help skills as they practice putting on and taking off their outerwear.

To support your child's comfort and safety outdoors, please send them in seasonally appropriate clothing each day. In winter, this includes:

- Warm jacket
- Snow pants
- Snow boots
- Hat
- Clearly labeled items with your child's name in permanent marker
- Mittens will be provided by The Children's House.

NAPPING

Each child at The Children's House is provided with their own individually labeled crib or cot, used exclusively by them. Cribs and cots are cleaned and sanitized regularly to ensure a healthy environment.

Infants follow individualized sleep routines that reflect their unique needs. In accordance with safe sleep practices and licensing guidelines, infants are always placed on their backs to sleep, and cribs remain free of any items such as blankets, pillows, or toys.

Toddlers and Preschoolers participate in a daily group rest period. Each child should bring a blanket or beach towel for nap time; a small pillow is optional. These items will be sent home weekly for laundering.

Children are supported in lying quietly on their cots for at least 30 minutes during the rest period. If a child falls asleep during this time, they are allowed to nap without interruption until the end of the group rest period. If a child does not fall asleep after the 30-minute quiet period, they may be offered quiet play activities within the classroom, such as puzzles, books, or small manipulatives like Legos.

In accordance with licensing regulation 9503.0050 Subp. 3, children who have completed a nap or rested quietly for 30 minutes must not be required to remain on a cot or in a crib.

The total rest period is typically one hour for children ages 3 to 6. If a child remains asleep at the end of this time, they will be allowed to continue sleeping unless parents have made a request for the child to be gently awakened. If there are concerns about a child sleeping for extended periods, teachers may attempt to wake them—but only after 30 minutes of rest, using calm, respectful prompts. If the child remains asleep, a second gentle attempt may be made after an additional 15 minutes. Staff will never forcefully wake a child. Children are typically awakened by the natural sounds of the classroom: teachers' voices, lights being turned on, soft music playing, or gentle prompts. While sleep is not required, quiet rest is expected out of respect for sleeping peers.

DIAPERING

Parents are responsible for providing diapers, wipes, diaper cream, and multiple changes of clothing.

Diapers:

Disposable diapers are most commonly used and must be provided by the parent. However, if a family prefers to use cloth diapers, we are open to working together to develop a plan that meets the needs of both the child and the classroom. In cases where a child has a medically documented allergy to disposable diapers, cloth diapers may be required. These situations will be addressed in collaboration with the Infant Teacher.

If a request for diapering supplies (such as diapers, wipes, or cream) has been made and the materials are not provided after the second reminder, a \$30 supply fee will be assessed to cover the cost of providing these items.

All diapering procedures are reviewed and approved by The Children's House health consultant and are posted in each diaper changing area. Diapering may only take place in designated areas.

TOILET LEARNING

At The Children's House, staff and parents work together to support each child's success in toilet learning, using developmentally appropriate best practices. We recognize that children grow and develop at their own pace—just as they begin walking and talking at different times, they also become ready for toilet learning at different stages.

We observe each child for signs of readiness and, once these signs are evident, we partner with families to ensure a consistent approach between home and the Center. This consistency helps children achieve this important milestone with a strong sense of mastery and confidence.

Group care provides a natural benefit, as toddlers often learn by observing and imitating their peers who are beginning or already using the toilet.

We intentionally use the term toilet learning rather than toilet training to reflect our respectful, child-centered approach. While our goal is for children to be in underwear by the time they enter the Preschool 1 classroom, we always meet children where they are developmentally. We understand that accidents will happen and that many children will need frequent reminders and support along the way.

CLOTHING

Children should wear clothes that are comfortable, easily cared for and age appropriate and can be managed by him or herself. Boots and snowpants that are large enough for the child to easily manipulate are a great help to the child. Each child needs three complete changes of clothing including underwear and socks. Please do not bring clothing that is valuable or would be missed if lost, misplaced or dirtied.

Please label all clothing (including boots, mittens and shoes). Unlabeled clothing can result in losses and mixups.

SHOES: Flip-flop shoes, Crocs, or open toed sandals are often dangerous for children to wear while climbing or running. We ask that your child wear shoes appropriate for taking part in active play. Footwear in Infant Room: No one will wear shoes (including staff) in the infant day room. Socks and slippers are available for adults when needed.

TCH Parent Handbook

Your child's teacher will give you a list of other items you need to provide (blankets, diapers, wipes, etc.).

TOYS

We ask that children do not bring toys or personal items from home unless specifically requested for a planned classroom activity. While we understand the sentimental value these items may hold, they can create challenges in a group setting—such as difficulty sharing, distraction from learning activities, or risk of damage or loss.

Security or comfort items, such as a blanket that help your child feel safe and at ease are welcome. These items should be clearly labeled with your child's name and will be stored in the cot area when not in use. Please note that due to licensing regulations, blankets, stuffed animals, and other soft items are not permitted in infant cribs.

BIRTHDAYS

We plan to make your child's birthday a very special time for him or her at The Children's House. Our teachers will create a joyful and meaningful celebration in the classroom to help your child feel recognized and celebrated among their peers.

We kindly ask that families do not bring birthday treats. Many children have food allergies or dietary restrictions, and we want to ensure all children remain safe and included.

If you'd like to contribute something special to mark the occasion, you are welcome to bring non-food birthday items such as:

- Pencils
- Crayons
- Small containers of play-dough
- A book to donate to the classroom in honor of your child

To avoid hurt feelings and maintain fairness, we ask that birthday party invitations be distributed outside of the program. Our staff is happy to help connect parents with one another, if needed, to facilitate communication.

HEALTH, SAFETY and EMERGENCY POLICIES

HOURS OF OPERATION

Our center operates from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily. Families may not enter the building before 7:30 a.m. and must exit by 5:30 p.m. Time outside of operating hours is reserved for staff to prepare classrooms, complete documentation, and manage administrative responsibilities.

Per Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families (MN DCYF) licensing requirements:

- Children must always be under the direct supervision of a parent/guardian or approved adult before being signed in and after being signed out.
- Staff are not responsible for children outside of our official hours or outside of the sign-in/sign-out process.
- Parents must accompany their children into and out of the building at all times.

Emergency Weather Closures

In the event of severe weather, The Children's House will remain open unless Minnesota State University, Mankato closes. If the University closes due to inclement weather, The Children's House will also close.

TCH Parent Handbook

Closure updates will be shared through the following channels:

- University communications (Star Alert, homepage, local media)
- TCH voicemail – updated to reflect closure status
- Email notification from your child's teacher
- KEYC News and other local media stations

To ensure timely updates, please keep your contact information current and notify us promptly of any changes.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Accurate attendance records are required by MN DCYF licensing and are crucial for ensuring child safety.

ARRIVAL:

Parents must sign in their child each morning upon arrival. Handwashing is required for both parents and children upon entering, per NAEYC accreditation standards. After signing in, parents should bring their child to the classroom and help them transition into the group's current activity. Our staff are available to support smooth, reassuring drop-offs.

DEPARTURE:

At pickup, both child and parent should wash hands before leaving. Parents must sign their child out and inform the teacher directly. After sign-out, the child is no longer under staff supervision. For safety reasons, children may not run through the halls or exit the building unaccompanied. We recommend arriving by 5:10 p.m. to allow time for transition, conversation, gathering belongings, and signing out before doors lock at 5:30 p.m.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY:

The Children's House closes promptly at 5:30 p.m., and families are expected to have exited the building by that time. To support staff schedules, licensing compliance, and children's routines, we ask that families arrive with enough time to gather belongings and leave by 5:30 p.m.

If you anticipate being late, please call before 5:00 p.m. to notify staff and your child.

LATE FEE POLICY

Late pick-up officially begins at 5:31 p.m.

A three-strike system is in place:

- First and second late pick-up: No fee is charged
- Third late pick-up: A \$75 fee will be billed
- Each subsequent late pick-up: A \$75 fee will be charged every time

Families who are late 7 times annually (resets on enrollment anniversary date) are subject to termination of childcare services. See Grievance Procedure.

The situation of 7 late pick-up infractions incurred annually is very rare. However, if it does occur, a notice of termination of childcare services two weeks from the date of the seventh infraction will be assigned by the administrative assistant. The termination may be discussed with the director of The Children's House. A hearing discussion with the Director must be requested in writing to the administrative assistant within two (2) working days of the termination notice. Late pick-up not only impacts staff schedules and classroom transitions—it also threatens the standing of our license and the integrity of our program. Maintaining timely departures ensures we remain in compliance with state regulations and can continue providing high-quality care.

Why It Matters:

- Consistent arrival and departure times:
- Support children's sense of security and routine
- Allow staff to complete their end-of-day responsibilities
- Reflect respect for the professional responsibilities of our teaching team
- We appreciate your cooperation in respecting our closing time and helping us uphold a safe, well-functioning, and licensed program for all families.

AUTHORIZED ALTERNATIVE PICKUP POLICY

For your child's safety, children will only be released to parents, legal guardians, or individuals pre-authorized by a parent or guardian. Staff cannot release a child to anyone not documented in our records unless we receive prior notification. To authorize an alternate pick-up:

- Notify us in advance (in person or by phone).
- The individual must be listed on your child's Emergency Contact Form
- First-time alternates must present a valid government-issued photo ID.
- In urgent situations (e.g., a late pick-up with no contact from the parent), we may reach out to listed emergency contacts but will only release the child if that person has been pre-authorized.

We are required to keep updated records of all authorized individuals, including any applicable legal documents (e.g., custody agreements or restraining orders). Please make sure your child's records always remain current.

EMERGENCY LATE PICK-UP PROTOCOL

We understand that delays happen. If you're running late, please call us as early as possible—ideally before 5:00 p.m. If no parent or authorized adult arrives by 6:00 p.m., and we have not heard from you:

- Staff will contact all listed emergency contacts.
- If no one is reachable by 6:30 p.m., we will notify University Security.
- If necessary, Security may involve local authorities or Blue Earth County Child Protection Services to place a temporary protective hold for your child's safety.
- Staff are not permitted to transport or take children home, per licensing and insurance regulations. While we work to contact you, your child will continue to be cared for in a calm, supportive environment.

Help us avoid emergency situations by:

- Keeping emergency contacts' current
- Making back-up pick-up plans
- Communicating promptly if you're delayed
- Your cooperation ensures every child stays safe and supported—even when the unexpected occurs.

EMERGENCY CARDS AND CONTACTS

Per Minnesota State Law (Rule 3, MN DHS 9503.0125), a completed Emergency Card is required before a child can be admitted to The Children's House. Your child may not attend until this form is submitted to the front desk. Required information includes:

- Parent/guardian work, home, and cell phone numbers
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of at least two emergency contacts authorized to act on your behalf if we cannot reach you

TCH Parent Handbook

- Your child's current healthcare provider and phone number

It is your responsibility to update this information immediately whenever there are changes to ensure your child's safety and our ability to respond in an emergency. Children will only be released to adults specifically authorized on their Emergency Card. Emergency contacts are permitted to pick up and transport a child only if:

- The parent or legal guardian has informed the lead teacher in advance that the individual will be picking up on a specific day or days, or
- It is an emergency, and the parent/guardian cannot be reached.
- Telephone authorization may be accepted if the staff member is able to verify the caller's identity as the child's parent or legal guardian.

HEALTH RECORD INFORMATION

Two health record forms are required for enrollment:

1. Immunization Record-Per State Law (Rule 3), a current Immunization Record must be submitted before your child can attend. Your child may not be admitted until this form is received at the front desk.
2. Health Care Summary- This form must include the date of your child's most recent physical exam (within the past 6 months) and be signed by your child's health care provider. It is due within 30 days of enrollment.

Medications:

If your child needs medication while at The Children's House:

- Prescription medications require written parent/guardian consent and written approval from the prescribing physician.
- Medications must be in their original container and labeled for the child. Expired medications will not be administered.
- A Medication Form must be completed before any medication can be given.
- Over the counter (OTC) medications require:
 - Written parent consent
- Written approval from the child's healthcare provider, except for:
 - Diaper rash ointments
 - Moisturizing lotions
 - Insect repellents
 - Sunscreen
 - Chapstick

These may be given with parent consent only. We reserve the right to require physician approval for any OTC medication.

Medication Administration Procedure:

- Wash hands
- Verify completed Medication Form
- Follow the 6 Rights of medication administration:
 - Right Child
 - Right Medication
 - Right Time
 - Right Dose (use appropriate dispenser)
 - Right Route (method of administration)

TCH Parent Handbook

- Right Documentation
- Administer medication
- Store medication properly, out of children's reach
- Wash hands again

Sunscreen:

From April 1 through October 1, sunscreen will be applied before outdoor play. Parents must complete a sunscreen permission form. Families must supply their own labeled sunscreen.

Staff will use gloves (or wash hands between applications) to prevent cross-contamination.

If your child's sunscreen is running low, a reminder note will be placed in their locker.

Please check lockers daily to ensure your child has all necessary items for safe outdoor play.

EXCLUSION POLICIES

If a child becomes ill while at The Children's House:

- They will be cared for separately with a staff member.
- Parents are expected to pick up within 30 minutes of being notified.

Signs & Symptoms Exclusion Chart:

Children must be excluded for the following:

General Illness	When child cannot participate in normal activities or needs more care than staff can provide
Fever	Axillary/forehead temp of 100°F+ with symptoms (behavior changes, stiff neck, breathing issues, rash, etc.)
Severe Illness Symptoms	Uncontrolled coughing, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, etc.; return only with provider clearance
Diarrhea	Until 24 hrs after last episode or with medical clearance
Vomiting	2+ times in 24 hrs; return after 24 hrs symptom-free unless cleared as non-communicable
Mouth Sores w/ Drooling	Until provider confirms non-contagious or sores are healed
Rash + Fever/Behavior Change	Exclude until rash ruled out as communicable
Eye Drainage	No exclusion unless paired with fever or inability to participate
Jaundice/Discoloration	Exclude until hepatitis A is ruled out

SPECIFIC DISEASE EXCLUSION CHART

Please refer to the abbreviated table below for detailed exclusion guidance on specific conditions. For the full chart refer to Appendix A or it is available upon request.

Chickenpox:	Until all sores are scabbed or no new sores appear for 24 hrs
COVID-19:	24 hrs fever-free and well enough to participate
Hand, Foot & Mouth:	Until fever-free and well enough to join activities
Head Lice:	No exclusion required, but treatment is expected
Influenza:	Until 24 hrs fever-free without medication
Strep Throat:	After 12 hrs on antibiotics and fever-free

ADDITIONAL EXCLUSION SITUATIONS

If a child cannot participate in classroom or outdoor activities, they must remain at home. If a child is medically diagnosed with a contagious illness, we will notify the appropriate health authorities and inform families of any exposure within 24 hours via posted notice or email, using official information from the MN Department of Health or Hennepin County's Infectious Disease Handbook.

Parent Responsibilities

Notify us within 24 hours (excluding weekends/holidays) if your child is diagnosed with a communicable illness. If your child is underimmunized for a reported disease (e.g., MMR), they may be excluded for the duration of the public health exclusion period. You will be notified to pick up your child and should consult your medical provider for return guidance.

ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

Responsible supervision of the children is of utmost importance and children are appropriately supervised at all times. Each staff member is responsible for implementing accident prevention measures and for always maintaining active interaction and/or observation of children. Outside play areas are inspected daily before the children go out. Parents can expect to receive an accident injury report any time their child is hurt at The Children's House. Parents are required to sign the report and then is maintained in the child's permanent file. The accident injury report describes the nature of the injury, when it occurred, how it happened, and what type of first aid was administered. Parents will be contacted by telephone if an injury requires more immediate, emergency attention.

FIRST AID

In the event of any injury or illness, appropriate first aid will be administered by staff trained in first aid. If staff decides this is an emergency situation, 911 will be contacted to provide emergency first aid. If necessary, the emergency medical service will transport your child to a medical facility as designated by emergency services. A parent or alternate listed on the EMERGENCY CARD will be contacted as soon as possible. An attempt to contact your child's source of health care may also be made.

Our staff keeps current on Pediatric First Aid and CPR training. MN DYCF- licensing requires all teaching staff in the facility to have this training and certification current.

RISK REDUCTION PLAN – MN DCYF Licensing Requirement

As per Minnesota DCYF Licensing statute Sect 245A.66 subdivisions 2; Childcare centers must develop a Risk Reduction Plan that identifies the general risks to children served by the childcare center. The license holder must establish specific policies and procedures or refer to existing policies and procedures that minimize identified risks, train staff on the procedures, and annually review the procedures.

HEALTH CONSULTATION SERVICES

Our program is contracted with MN Child Care Health Consultants and receives monthly health consultation service as required by law:

EVACUATION & SHELTER PROCEDURES

To Ensure the safety of Children and safety, The Children House conducts regular emergency drills:

- Fire Drills: Monthly, year – round
- Tornado Drills: Monthly, April – October

Fire Evacuation:

Children and staff will exit the building and gather along the sidewalk by the back fence of the playground, our designated fire evacuation site.

Tornado Shelter:

In the event of a tornado drill or tornado warning, children and staff will move to the Family Consumer Sciences hallway, located adjacent to our hallway.

If a drill is in progress when you arrive, go directly to the shelter location. You may sign your child out during a drill; teachers will have the sign-in/out sheets with them.

During an actual warning, families may either leave with their child or shelter with us until the warning passes.

EMERGENCY CLOSING & EVACUATION

If The Children's House or the University closes during the day due to weather or another emergency:

- Staff will contact families by phone.
- Children must be picked up within one hour of notification.

Closures are dictated by Minnesota State University, Mankato. In case of overnight weather emergencies, information will be available via:

- The MSU website
- KEYC online and TV
- The Children's House voicemail (507-389-1645)

Please use your best judgment when deciding whether to attend during inclement weather. Some staff may be unable to travel safely due to road conditions or their own childcare responsibilities. We appreciate your understanding.

If an extreme emergency (e.g., bomb threat, hazardous material release) requires evacuation, we will relocate at our designated site at the McElroy Residence Community, located across the road from Wiecking Center.

MISSING CHILD POLICY

While The Children's House has never had a missing child incident, we are prepared with the following procedures:

- The director is notified immediately.
- Staff are assigned to search:
 - All classrooms and indoor areas
 - Outdoor play areas
- If the child is not found promptly:
 - University Security and the child's parents will be contacted.
- While awaiting assistance:
 - Staff will be stationed at each corner of the block and will search clockwise around the area until the child is located.

FOOD AND NUTRITION PROGRAM

The Children's House participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and provides three meals daily:

- Breakfast includes milk, fruit and a whole grain.
- Lunch includes milk, a meal/meal alternative, a vegetable, a fruit and a whole grain
- Afternoon snack includes milk and either a whole grain, fruit, or vegetable.

All meals follow or exceed CACFP nutrition guidelines. Infants receive developmentally appropriate meals; toddlers receive the standard menu with necessary substitutions.

Special Dietary Needs:

A completed Special Diet Statement Form from your child's Healthcare provider is required for any food allergies or substitutions. We cannot make dietary changes without this documentation.

Food From Home:

To protect children with allergies, outside food is only allowed for documented medical needs. If food is brought from home, it must:

- Be provided on the day it's served
- Be labeled with your child's full name and serving instructions
- Meet USDA CACFP guidelines
- Be picked up by the end of the day or it will be discarded

Infant Food Program:

We provide formula, bottles, and baby food unless a specific formula is required. If you provide your own, items must be unopened and labeled with your child's first and last name. Feeding practices include:

- Feeding schedules set at enrollment and posted in prep area
- Sanitary handling of formula, milk and baby food
- Opened baby food used or discarded the same day
- Infants are always held during bottle feeding (never propped or fed in cribs)
- Bottles are warmed in warm water, not microwaved
- Finger foods introduced when appropriate, with parent approval
- Breast milk must be labeled and stored per USDA guidelines

Breastfeeding Support:

The Children's House supports breastfeeding and will:

- Accept, store, and serve expressed breast milk in ready-to-feed, sanitary containers labeled with the infant's full name and date.
- Store freshly expressed breast milk in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.
- If the milk has been thawed from frozen, use it within 24 hours and do not refreeze.
- Provide a welcoming space for nursing mothers within the infant room, should you wish to breastfeed on-site.

Appendix A: Specific Disease Exclusion Guidelines for Child Care

This chart outlines exclusion criteria for common childhood illnesses, based on current public health guidance. Please refer to this appendix when your child is ill or recovering from an illness. For any illness not listed, consult The Children's House administration or your child's health care provider.

Disease/Condition	Exclusion Criteria
Bed Bugs	None
Bronchitis/Bronchiolitis	Until fever-free (without medication) and well enough to participate
Campylobacteriosis	Until 24 hrs after diarrhea stops; avoid water play
Chickenpox	Until all sores are crusted/dry or no new sores appear for 24 hrs
COVID-19	24 hrs fever-free and well enough for activities
Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)	No exclusion unless fever is present or child is unwell
Cryptosporidiosis	Until 24 hrs after diarrhea stops; avoid water play for 2 weeks
Cytomegalovirus (CMV)	None
Diarrhea (Infectious)	Until 24 hrs after diarrhea stops or per specific disease guidance
E. coli O157:H7	Until 24 hrs after diarrhea stops and 2 negative stool samples
Enteroviral Infection	Until 24 hrs after diarrhea/vomiting stops; no exclusion for mild cases
Fifth Disease	None, unless other rashes are suspected
Giardiasis	If symptomatic, exclude until 24 hrs after diarrhea stops
Haemophilus influenzae (Hib)	Until treated and well enough to participate
Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease	Until fever-free and able to participate
Head Lice	None, though treatment should begin before return
Hepatitis A	Exclude per local health department guidance
Hepatitis B	None, unless bleeding or aggressive behavior is present
Hepatitis C	None, unless oozing sores or bleeding problems are present
Herpes (Oral)	Primary: exclude if secretions can't be controlled; Recurrent: no exclusion
HIV/AIDS	None, unless bleeding or aggressive behavior is present
Impetigo	Until 24 hrs after starting treatment and sores are drying
Influenza	Until 24 hrs fever-free and well enough to participate
Measles	Until 4 days after rash appears
Meningococcal Disease	Until 24 hrs on antibiotics and well enough
MRSA	Exclude if draining sores can't be covered or hygiene can't be maintained
Molluscum Contagiosum	None; cover bumps; avoid contact sports/swimming if not covered
Mononucleosis	None if child is well; avoid contact sports if spleen is enlarged

Disease/Condition	Exclusion Criteria
Mumps	Until 5 days after swelling begins
Norovirus	Until 24 hrs after vomiting/diarrhea stop
Parapertussis	None if child is well enough
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Until 5 days after starting antibiotics or 21 days after cough starts if untreated
Pinworms	None
Pneumococcal Infection	None if child is well enough
Pneumonia	Until fever-free and well enough to participate
Respiratory Infection (Viral)	Until fever-free and able to participate
RSV	Until fever-free and well enough
Ringworm	Until treatment has begun; exclude from contact sports for 72 hrs
Roseola	Until fever-free and measles ruled out
Rotavirus	Until 24 hrs after diarrhea stops
Rubella	Until 7 days after rash appears
Salmonellosis	Until 24 hrs after diarrhea stops
Scabies	Until 24 hrs after starting treatment
Shigellosis	Until 48 hrs after diarrhea stops or based on test results
Shingles (Zoster)	None if blisters can be covered; exclude if severe or uncovered
Staph Skin Infection	Exclude if sores can't be covered or hygiene isn't maintained
Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever	Until 12 hrs after antibiotics and fever-free
Tuberculosis (TB)	Follow public health guidance
Viral Meningitis	Until symptoms resolve and child can participate
Warts	None
Yeast Infection (Candidiasis)	None