



PARENT HANDBOOK

Northwest Center Kids Greenwood

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Parents/guardians are welcome at any time of the day during operational hours.

Program Background

Founded nearly 50 years ago, Northwest Center Kids is a licensed provider of childcare for infants and children from 6 weeks through 12 years of age as well as a State contracted provider of Birth to Three Early Intervention Services. We are a division of Northwest Center Industries, a not for profit 501©3 corporation.

Northwest Center Kids is an inclusive model. We provide child development for children with and without developmental disabilities. Families are supported through programs of education, advocacy, therapy and financial assistance. We honor and celebrate families with diverse backgrounds and cultural values. Northwest Center Kids believes that all children are entitled to high quality childcare in a nurturing environment. We believe play, independent thinking, problem solving and self-initiated learning experiences are keys to healthy development.

Our Mission

To provide an inclusive environment in which all families receive individualized programs of education, advocacy, therapy, and family support, that nurtures the development of children with and without disabilities.

Inclusion, Diversity and Cultural Competency



Inclusion means attending to the needs of all children in the same program and valuing each child and adult as unique individuals within the group. At Northwest Center Kids we honor diversity of all kinds including developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and age. We strive to be culturally sensitive to all families, respecting their values and attitudes and sharing the diverse population we serve. You will see this in our classrooms where we display pictures of people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities and more. Our dramatic play areas and dress up areas are not only full of diverse and imaginative items, but the toys are welcoming to both boys and girls and provide opportunities to explore without gender bias.

In keeping with our mission to serve children with developmental delays and disabilities, children with and without disabilities learn and play side by side, learning valuable lessons from each other. An inclusive setting creates a natural environment where children are encouraged to share their unique gifts with others. We believe that through inclusive environments, children are given opportunities to reach their highest potential, while developing positive attitudes toward all types of people.



The Staff

The **Program Director, Snezhana Chiecsek**, oversees all programs and aspects at NWC Kids Greenwood, Early Learning Program. **The Vice President of Education & Therapy Services, Laura Kneeder**, oversees the Early Intervention team and both Early Learning Sites at Greenwood and Chinook, supporting all program directors.

The Program Director assures our teachers have the support and training needed to maximize the quality of education offered to each child. They assist the classrooms developing curriculum and individual programs for each child. They are on-site to supervise the teachers and to meet with families in response to any questions, concerns, needs and suggestions.

The position of **Assistant Director** is shared by **Kristin Stout and Tessa Worley**. **Kristin Stout**, supports all of our office functions including scheduling, attendance, and ordering. You can always bring questions about paperwork and forms to her. **Tessa Worley** is in charge of our Parent Program and Family and Staff Support.

Our **Business Director, Lavina McClam**, handles all scholarship documentation and assists with tuition questions. If you have questions about your bill, you can always contact her or a program director.

Our classroom **Teachers** are professionals who are trained to work in early childhood and school-aged environments. All lead teachers hold, or are working toward, a degree in Early Childhood Education or related field or a Child Development Associate certification. All teachers are qualified through the Washington State MERIT registration.

Our classroom **Assistant Teachers** are interested in the field of early childhood education and are often working on gaining classroom experience before pursuing a degree or a lead teaching position. They help in various classrooms and allow teachers to take breaks and have planning time outside of the classroom, as well as filling in for lead teachers when they are sick or on vacation.

Our **Cook, Jessica Ceballos**, provides a nutritional breakfast, lunch and two afternoon snacks based on a menu that meets USDA nutritional requirements, is appealing to children, and is considerate of special diets and allergies. We serve a vegetarian menu. All kitchen personnel maintain a current Food Handler's Permit. Parents with specific dietary concerns should speak with their child's teacher and program director.

Together, the staff is continually working to meet each child's individual goals. All staff with access to children are trained in First Aid and CPR and have passed a Department of Early Learning background check.

Our classrooms are supported by our **Aides** who are assisted in their job performance by Northwest Center's Individual Employment program for adults with developmental disabilities. They perform many housekeeping duties which allow the teachers to spend more time with the children. They interact positively with the children and add a very important part of our inclusive environment. They also assist in the kitchen.



PROGRAMS AND CURRICULUM

Our classrooms are organized by chronological and developmental ages. We use the Creative Curriculum, an emergent play-based curriculum, focusing on developmentally appropriate practice. The Creative Curriculum is based on a foundation of research and theory of child development, including the ideas of Maslow, Erikson, Piaget, Vygotsky, Smilansky, and Gardner which, as well as recent information on brain research and resiliency research.

The teacher's role includes becoming a careful observer and using a variety of instructional strategies and interactions with children to guide their learning. A system for ongoing, authentic assessment, based on observations made during everyday classroom activities, enables teachers to plan for each child as well as the group. Our teachers teach in ways that match children's developmental levels. Teachers act as nurturing facilitators of this learning, observing children's strengths and needs, and implementing activities that help children reach their highest potential. The model encourages the child in four major ways:

1. Increase problem solving and thinking skills;
2. Increase independence;
3. Promote communication skills;
4. Increase the likelihood of appropriate socialization skills.

The Creative Curriculum is fully integrated with Teaching Strategies Gold, an assessment system used to track each child's individual developmental level, and to assist in lesson planning. The Objectives for Development and Learning are separated into the following domains: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies and the Arts. Teachers assess children on an ongoing basis to see what progress they are making towards specific goals. Teachers embrace each child's differences and support their learning needs.

In each classroom, the physical room arrangement is divided into interest areas. The educator is viewed as the "facilitator" and "nurturer" of the child's learning, and is always encouraging independent movement and behaviors. We believe that children learn through play, and so we strive to plan activities that are guided by the child's interests.

Children transition into the next classroom based on developmental stages, parent and teacher recommendations, and space availability. General transition time occurs in September. Parents are consulted regarding the transition plan for their child. **Please see section on Transitions in the handbook**



Infant, Waddler, and Toddler Program

Our infant and waddler program offers a warm, nurturing environment where babies and one-year-olds can develop at their individual pace on their own schedule. We contract with Seattle & King County Public Health to provide a consulting nurse for our program. The nurse visits monthly to monitor our program and answer questions. She is available for consultation whenever we call. The name and phone number of the nurse is posted in the classroom.

We believe that children benefit from forming lasting relationships with a stable, nurturing caregiver. Rather than transition children to a new classroom at age one, our infants and teachers transition into the Waddler classroom in September. Children may stay with the same teachers through the toddler year, when all of the children have turned two. Our waddler/toddler curriculum allows children to adapt to a larger social group. Language development, sensory exploration, and motor skills are emphasized in a warm, nurturing environment.

Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Two's

Our infant, Waddler and toddler classes utilize the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Two's, which is a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate curriculum. The care that infants and toddlers receive and their experiences during the first 3 years of life have a powerful influence on the way they view the world, relate to others, and succeed as learners.

Teachers provide responsive care, which includes:

- Building a trusting relationship with each child
- Providing individualized care for each child; for example, infants eat and sleep on individual schedules based on the child's cues and needs
- Creating environments that support and encourage exploration. This includes changing the classroom materials or layout to meet the developmental needs of the children enrolled.
- Developing partnerships with families, and appreciating cultural and individual differences
- Observing and documenting children's development in order to plan for each child and the group
- Recognizing the importance of social-emotional development

Routines and Experiences make up a child's day and foster positive relationships, promote trust, and encourage children to practice new skills and develop a sense of their own competence. Teachers document these areas on each child to allow them to individualize their classroom environment, routines and experiences.

Our waddler/toddler curriculum allows children to adapt to a larger social group. Language development, sensory exploration, and motor skills are emphasized in a warm, nurturing environment.

Infant room staff/child ratio: 1:4	Maximum number of children: 6 (ratio always 1:3 when 6 infants are present)
Waddler room staff/child ratio: 1:5	Maximum number of children: 10
Toddler room staff/child ratio: 1:6	Maximum number of children: 9

Young Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten Program



Young Preschool Room

Ages: 2 ½ to 3 ½ years

Staff/Child Ratio: **1:6**

Maximum number of children: 12

In our young preschool rooms, children are supported in experimenting and practicing their new social, language and motor skills in a stimulating and safe environment.

Pre-Kindergarten Program

We have two mixed age Pre-K rooms that serve children aged 3-5. In our Pre-K rooms, children are supported in experimenting and practicing their new social, language and motor skills in a stimulating and safe environment.

Ages: 3 - 6 Staff/Child Ratio: **1:7** or **1:10**

Maximum number of children: 12-15

Creative Curriculum for Preschool and Pre-K

Our Pre-Kindergarten classes use The Creative Curriculum for Preschool that is based on five fundamental principles:

- Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide a critical foundation for successful learning.
- Social-emotional competence is a significant factor in school success.
- Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning.
- The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions.
- Teacher-family partnerships promote development and learning.

This curriculum stresses the importance of independence through choices and self-guided learning. The Creative Curriculum framework indicates the 11 interest areas that are considered important for Preschool classroom. They include: Blocks, Dramatic Play, Toys and Games, Art, Library, Discovery, Sand & Water, Music & Movement, Cooking, Computers, and Outdoors. The children are encouraged to make their choices from the abundance of appropriate materials available in our classroom. Content is learned through investigation and play, as well as focused, intentional teaching to build on prior learning experiences.

The classroom curriculum (topic of study and investigation) is shared with parents through newsletters and lesson plans. Parents are encouraged to participate in their child's investigation and invited to share in a mutual learning process. The development of language and literacy comes from building an inviting and exciting environment and activities that build literacy into the fabric of everything that is done in the classroom in a meaningful way.

The stages of early writing occur over a long stretch of time and after many, many experiences with putting marks on paper in an informal and undirected manner. The teacher will provide a variety of materials for use in writing and give children many opportunities to practice writing throughout their day. All writing opportunities take place in every area of the classroom learning environment.

When children play in meaningful ways they acquire language, learn to solve problems, learn to control their behavior and feelings, and explore social roles. Teachers provide opportunities for children to explore and

learn, while meeting developmental language and cognitive milestones that will prepare them for kindergarten.

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School age program

Ages: Kindergarten – 12 years Staff/Child Ratio: **1:8**

Maximum number of children: 15

Our school age program consists of before and after school care for children attending Elementary School. Teachers work closely with families and school teachers to follow Individualized Education Plans (IEP), and to help each child maximize their potential. During times when schools are closed, our school age program offers full day camps where children continue to learn and explore. We often take field trips around the community during full days.

Our school age program also offers a **summer camp** program where children develop social experience through self-guided play and teacher guided opportunities. Our teacher to child ratio on field trips is 1:4. We serve many children with varying needs, and it is essential for us to maintain these ratios. For this reason, if on any field trip your child is requiring 1:1 attention for longer than 20 minutes, you will be called and asked to pick up your child or join us on the field trip. This policy is in place for the safety of all of the children in our care.



EARLY INTERVENTION

Northwest Center also provides early intervention and support in the areas of family resource coordination, special education, occupational therapy, and speech therapy to children birth to three years old who have a developmental disability or a 25% delay in one of the following areas: fine motor, gross motor, vision, hearing, cognition (Thinking skills), communication, social/emotional, or adaptive (self-help skills). The program is of no cost to parents. Northwest Center contracts with the Division of Developmental Disabilities for funding and the remainder of the cost is covered by Northwest Center Industries. Parental Health Insurance may be billed. Parental consent to participate in the program is required.

Services will be provided Monday through Friday according to the parent's and childcare provider's convenience. The following services are offered: initial evaluation, assessment/progress reports, and an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), which involves one on one or group developmental intervention. Family Resource coordination, including transition services with the public schools, and assistance in creating a network to access other needed services is also provided. All services are based on the needs and goals of the child's family or caregiver, and allow for the opportunity of individual conferences to address and discuss program strategies, needs or concerns.

For more information please contact Northwest Center Early Intervention at 206-691-2598.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT



Family Enrichment Program

Events for parent and family enrichment and education are held regularly. Check the yearly calendar for dates and programs. Childcare is provided for children whose parents are attending meetings. All parents and families are encouraged to attend, participate, and set agendas.

Classroom communication

Families are encouraged to stop by and visit whenever they wish. You are welcome to explore all the areas of our school where your child plays.

Classroom teachers will communicate with parents through a system of notebooks and mailboxes where parents and teachers will exchange information on their child's daily progress, education and health. Parents of infants and waddlers will receive detailed information on feedings and diaper changing, as well as important information about what your child enjoyed each day. Also, posted in each classroom are weekly plans and monthly newsletters outlining classroom themes and other news. Older children will have a spiral notebook for comments between teachers and parents.

Comments, questions and suggestions are always welcomed. Please call the office to keep us apprised of children's schedules, including absences or lateness.

Teachers, therapists, and the director are always happy to spend time with parents. If we are not immediately available, please let the office manager know you would like to set up a visit.

Families are always encouraged to volunteer for special classroom activities and on field trips.

Parent –Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are offered every 6 months. Teachers complete Conference Form to share with families that review's the child's development in the areas of Social/ Emotional, Cognitive, Language, and Physical development. The conference is free flowing and determined by the parent's questions and topics brought up by the teachers. When children in our Pre-K rooms have Parent-Teacher Conferences and are around the age of 4, we begin providing Kindergarten readiness information as a part of our conference, along with information on Kindergarten.

Family Resources

Our Center has resource information available to parents. Some is located in the hall outside the office and much more is available through our Early Intervention office and our directors. Please also check with any staff, they can assist you in finding information.

There is a binder with a large Resource Guide put together by our NWC Early Intervention Department. It has a variety of community information, such as local activities, museums, playgroups, story time, connecting with other parents and children, funding resources, hair stylists, education, transportation services, pediatric and primary care clinics, pediatric dental resources,

hearing screenings, neurology clinics, natural and alternative health providers, counseling and mental health agencies, private therapists, etc. Please stop by and take a look. We can make copies of the pages you are interested in, or email you the entire guide in PDF format.



ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSION

Enrollment

Enrollment is based on availability of space in the age appropriate classroom and is filled on a first come, first served basis. Children funded through DSHS/DCFS, the City of Seattle and Child Care Resources are welcome.

Enrollment Forms

Parents complete our registration materials including:

- Client Information Form
- Emergency contacts and authorized persons for pick up
- Consent to medical care and treatment
- Consent for release of information
- Release consent form
- Health History
- Immunization Record

It is the responsibility of the family to keep us advised of personal changes such as address, phone number, and authorized pick-up person(s). Annually we will ask you to update your information form.

Tuition

Our current tuition sheet is included in our enrollment packet and posted in the hallway.

Tuitions are generally set for a one-year period, with increases taking effect at the beginning of the calendar year. We reserve the right to adjust tuitions at any time. Families are notified one month in advance of a tuition increase. Tuition is based on classroom ratios; which are determined by the age of the **youngest** child in the classroom. For example, if a child remains enrolled in a Waddler classroom, after they turn two, their tuition will stay at the Waddler rate until all children in the class are two.

Funding Subsidies

In order to provide childcare to all families Northwest Center Kids at Greenwood is pleased to accept funding from DSHS, the City of Seattle and Child Care Resources when families qualify. DSHS funding does not cover the cost of providing childcare so Northwest Center provides a scholarship to cover the difference. If a child funded through DSHS is absent more than 5 days a month in 2 months of a quarter, we may not be able to hold the classroom spot for that child. Families receiving funding subsidies are responsible for maintaining the subsidy. In the event the subsidy ends and the child is still enrolled, the family is responsible for the full tuition.

Payments

Childcare fees are payable in advance. Payments are due the fifth of the month and are delinquent on the 10th. A late payment fee or 10% of the balance or \$50.00 will be assessed after the 10th. If payment is not received by the 20th of the month, children will not be allowed to attend. Courtesy monthly invoices will appear in your child's classroom folder. Not receiving an invoice does not permit a missed or late payment. Please deposit payments in the drop box at the Front Desk or mail payments to:

Northwest Center

P.O. Box 80827

Seattle, WA 98108

Vacations

We do not decrease tuition for vacation or illness. Our expenses remain the same whether or not your child is here. If you withdraw your child for a vacation month we are unable to guarantee that your space will be available to you, should you wish to return. Those families who return to Northwest Center Kids after an absence of one month or more will be subject to the same policies as new families, including the \$50.00 registration fee.



Attendance Policy

We are unable to reserve or 'hold' a space for a child that is enrolled, but not regularly attending the program. We do not provide drop-in care or wrap-around services for other childcare or school-age programs, or act as a backup in the event that a child is not able to attend their usual childcare program.

Reducing days attended

If you wish to reduce the number of days your child attends we will offer a part time space when one becomes available. We require a minimum of one-month notice for this change. You will be billed at the higher rate for one month beyond the date notice is given.

Withdrawal

We require a written notice of withdrawal a minimum of one month prior to your child's last day. You will be billed for one month beyond the date that notice is given, whether or not your child attends Northwest Center for the full period. Your account must be paid in full no later than your child's last day. If no payment has been received within 15 days of termination your account will be turned over to a collection agency.

Late pick up charges

Northwest Center closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. everyday. There is a late pick-up charge of \$15.00 for the first 15 minutes after the official closing time, with an additional charge of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes after 6:15 p.m.

Please call the center in the event of an emergency that will prevent you from picking up your child on time. If we haven't heard from a parent/guardian or been able to reach an emergency contact by 7:00 p.m., your child will be referred to Child Protective Services, as required for abandoned children.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES AND INFORMATION

Diapering and Toilet Training

Infants and children not toilet trained will have their diapers checked regularly throughout the day. Families need to provide their own diapers to use for their child. Sanitary precautions are used by the staff including the use of gloves and disinfectant as prescribed by the health department. Toilet training is a process that involves the efforts of all parties. Teachers and families will discuss toilet training issues as they arise. On-going communication, verbal reinforcement and the child's readiness and desire to be toilet trained are all considerations in making this decision.

Infant Feeding

Parents are responsible for sending formula or breast milk already prepared in bottles for their infant. Please also provide an extra bottle and a container of formula, or frozen breast milk, in case we run out of bottles during the day. We can store frozen breast milk as backup in case for 2 weeks and must send it home after the 2-week period. When transitioning to solid foods, Northwest Center Kids will provide rice cereal and pureed food according to our Infant Feeding Plan form. Infant room teachers and parents will communicate regarding schedules and feeding. All infants will eat and nap on their own schedules.

Release of children from school

It is the policy of Northwest Center Kids to release a child only to parents or guardians. Parents can authorize other people to pick up their child for a specified date or period of time not to exceed one month. Forms are available in the office for this purpose. Under no circumstances will a child be released to someone not specifically designated by the parent/guardian. We will not release a child to anyone under the age of 16. If the person picking up a child is unknown to our staff, we will require picture ID.

Sign in/out policy

All custodial parents and/or guardians will be assigned a pin number for signing their child(ren) in and out of the center. This is considered a legal signature. Please do not give your number to anyone else picking up or dropping off your child. Non-custodial adults dropping off or picking up a child will manually sign children in and out at the office.

Things to Bring From Home

All children should have a complete change of clothing that can be left in their cubby. Label everything with your child's name including coats and hats. If your child has a special comfort item, he/she is welcome to bring that to school. When children bring toys from home, parents should

discuss with them the possibility of the toy getting lost or broken. Teachers cannot be responsible for taking care of toys from home.

Family Conduct

Northwest Center reserves the right to ask a family to leave the program if:

- A parent/guardian demands special services that are not provided to other children's families and that cannot reasonably be delivered by the program (including requests that are outside the philosophy of the program).
- A parent/guardian is physically or verbally abusive to staff, children, or anyone else at the program, including any communications they may have been posted on any social media sites.

Hours and Closures

Our normal hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7:00AM until 6:00PM. A schedule of closures for the current year is attached.

Holidays

Northwest Center Kids is closed New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the Friday following.



Winter Break: During winter break the center will be closed December 23th through January 1st.

Staff In-service Training: Northwest Center Kids closes six times each year for teachers to attend training or workshops, clean the classrooms and meet together. Please refer to our yearly calendar for in-service days.

Staff meetings: We will close once each month at 5:00PM for an all-staff meeting except months when we are closed for In-Service training. Late pick-up charges will apply after 5:00 PM on these days. Please see our yearly calendar for dates.

Snow/ weather: Generally, Northwest Center Kids will open late for severe weather whenever the Seattle Public Schools close, however the Northwest Center Kids closure will be at the discretion of the Director or Northwest Center CEO. We also reserve the right to close at any time due to severe weather conditions, or for other emergencies or natural disasters. No refunds or credits are given for closures due to severe weather. Our voicemail message will tell you if we are closed.

In the event of an air pollution alert, outside play time for children will be limited in accordance with the public alert. The directors will monitor public radio/television or internet information.



Daily Schedule

The following is a typical schedule for a classroom. Please check individual classroom schedules which are posted in each classroom.

7:00- 8:15am: Children enter their classroom for free choice time.

Teachers have placed out activities that spur the children's interest. Children are free to choose from any activities in the room.

8:15- 8:45am: Breakfast is brought to the classrooms. Family style dining with staff role modeling takes place at this and all meal/snack times. Table setting, self-serving and clean up are the children's responsibilities, as they are developmentally able to accept them.

8:45 – 11:30am: During this time classrooms schedule Circle Time, Small group activities, outside time and free choice time. Children are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities, which are focused on the theme for the month and/or day. These include stories, songs, finger plays, dancing, art, manipulatives, puzzles, fine and gross motor activities, and social interactions.

9:30AM: All children in Toddler, Preschool, Prekindergarten, and School Age classes (on full days) need to arrive by 9:30 AM in order for classrooms to meet the needs of all the children.

Infants and Waddlers are not included in this policy. Children and parents coming into the classroom disrupt attention of the other children from the classroom activities. We also complete the day's meal counts and attendance at 9:30. If there is a special exception, such as a doctor's appointment, please notify the office in advance (the day before or by 8:30 AM) so the teachers can plan for a late arrival. Children other than infants will not be allowed to be dropped off during the class's naptime in order to avoid disrupting the other children.

11:30am-12:30pm: Family style dining is not to be rushed. Children are included in this event through helping to prepare the room, themselves, and setting the table. Serving themselves, manners and conversation are again reinforced at this time.

12:30-2:30pm: At this time many children will sleep. Children up to age 5 are encouraged to relax and quietly rest for 45 minutes even if they are not sleeping, in compliance with state childcare licensing regulations. Sleeping at Northwest Center Kids is an option. Those who are not asleep after 45 minutes will join others who are not sleeping, and be engaged in quiet activities. The length of rest time varies in each classroom.

2:30- 3:00pm: Children are given time to wake up and join friends in play

3:00 – 3:30pm: Family Style afternoon snack

3:30 – 6:00pm: Teacher and child initiated activities including circle, board games, outside time, and crafts.

5:00pm: A second snack is provided to the children. Children have the choice to sit and eat or continue to play. This snack is available for children when they feel ready, and is not necessarily a family style meal.

Transportation

Parents are responsible to transport children to and from the center during hours of operation. Those receiving services or attending school through the Seattle school district may be provided with bus transportation. Generally children receiving special education services can be dropped off directly at Northwest Center Kids, while typically developing children must have arrangements for a bus to drop them at a nearby bus stop, where Northwest Center Kids teachers may agree to meet them and walk them up to the center. Parents are responsible for making all bus arrangements and notifying Northwest Center Kids of all bus pick up and drop off procedures in writing. Parents can pick up a transportation form from the office to detail specific bus arrangements. Northwest Center Kids does not transport children to or from school.

Field Trips



Parents may sign a blanket authorization form allowing children to participate on field trips. Classroom teachers will provide at least three days' notice to parents about trips they are planning and will ask for specific permission for the trip. Field trip transportation will include walking, (stroller and front/back packs for infants/waddlers), METRO buses or Northwest Center's school bus. Children will not be transported in private cars. Neighborhood walks and trips to parks within walking distance may be taken without three days notice or specific permission slips at any time, and notification will be left on the classroom door and in the office. Parent volunteers are welcome on field trips. If a child is not able to attend a field trip with their class, parents will be asked to wait until the class returns from the field trip to drop him or her off.

Transitions

Between Classrooms

We follow an academic school year calendar in that students transition between classrooms in September. Our Infant, Waddler and Toddler program follows Continuity of Care model. Rather than transition children to a new classroom at age one, our infants and teachers transition into the

Waddler classroom in September. Each group of infants will remain with their core teachers through their Toddler school year and will transition into the Pre-School or Pre-K with new teachers. Decisions as to which classroom individual children go to are based on a variety of factors including the available openings in each class, overall classroom make-up, the goodness of fit between students and teachers, and the toddler teachers suggestion and insight. Families are encouraged to give suggestions and feedback but we are unable to guarantee the requested placement for each child.

The month of August is used as a transition month where children are gradually spending more time with their new teachers and classroom. A typical transition schedule is as follows;

Week 1: Each day, a teacher from the older classroom visits the younger room where the children are currently enrolled. This helps children to get to know new faces while they are still in a familiar setting with their current teacher.

Week 2: Each day, a group of children and their current teacher will visit their future classroom, with their current teacher staying for the duration of the visit. This allows them to explore their new environment while having a secure base of their current teacher with them.

Week 3 and 4*: Children will be dropped off in their new classroom by one of their teachers and they will stay there for increasing amount of time. By the end of this period they will remain in their new classroom from 9-after nap.

The last day of school year is spent back in their current classroom to celebrate their year together.
**Week 4 is used depending upon how the calendar month falls.*

Back to School Night/ Open House is held before the first day of school in September. The families are invited to tour their child's new classroom, spend time with their teachers, review lesson plans, and ask any questions they may have. This is also a great opportunity for families to connect with one another. Please review the Calendar for specific day and time. Transitions that occur outside of the regular August/ September schedule are based on an individual child's needs and family request and/ or consent.

Graduation to Kindergarten

We have resources and information on Kindergarten readiness, registration and an enrollment application for Seattle Public Schools. If you have questions about Kindergarten enrollment please speak with your child's teacher or center director so we can provide you with individualized support. During the enrollment season, as part of our parent program, we host Kindergarten Enrollment meeting with Seattle Public Schools representatives.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

Your child's health is a matter of importance to all of us. Your family can contribute to the health of your child at school in the following ways:

Immunizations

Immunizations must be kept current. A certificate of immunization, complete with your signature, is a state requirement for admission to any children's facility. You are responsible for informing us in writing when your child receives additional immunizations. Our program follows the King County Health Department recommendations for immunization schedules. The director can provide information about immunization schedules on request.

Illness policy

Northwest Center Kids follows the Seattle King County Department of Public Health recommendations. **If all parents keep sick children at home, everybody's children will stay healthier!**

Please keep you child home, if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

- **Fever** (temperature of 100 degrees F, taken under the arm) **AND** sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, fatigue, irritability or confusion.
- **Diarrhea** – 3 or more watery stools (BM, poop) in a 24 hour period.
- **Vomiting** – 2 or more times within the past 24 hours.
- **Rash** – especially with fever or itching.
- **Sore throat** – with fever or swollen glands.
- **Eye discharge/Conjunctivitis** – thick mucus or pus draining from the eye, or pink eye (must be kept home until clear or until 24 hours after antibiotics are started).
- **Open or oozing sores** – unless they can be completely covered and 24 hours has passed since the start of antibiotic treatment if antibiotics are necessary
- **Lice/Scabies** – head lice: until no lice or nits are present; scabies: until after treatment.
- **Not Feeling Good** – unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite, sick appearance, confused or irritable.
- **Not able to keep up with usual program activities**

Please let the office know about any illness your child has. We will notify other parents if children have been exposed.

We will follow the guidelines above when determining when a child needs to be picked up from Northwest Center Kids. A child who is ill will be separated from other children either in a separate area of the classroom or in the office. Parents/guardians will be contacted and asked to pick up their child as soon as possible.

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

Parent/Guardian Consent

1. Medication will only be given with prior written consent of the child's parent/legal guardian. The Medication Authorization Form will include the child's name, the name of the medication, reason for the medication, dosage, duration and any side effects, (use package insert or pharmacist's written information).
2. A parent/legal guardian will be the sole consent to medication being given, without the consent of a health care provider, if and only if the medication meets all of the following criteria:
 - The medication is over-the-counter and is one of the following types of Parent-Consent Medications:
 - Antihistamine
 - Non-aspirin fever reducer/pain reliever
 - Non-narcotic cough suppressant
 - Decongestant
 - Ointments or lotions intended specifically to relieve itching
 - Diaper ointments or powders intended for use with "diaper rash"
 - Sunscreen for children over 6 months of age
 - The medication is in the original container and labeled with the child's name; *and*
 - The medication has instructions and dosage recommendations for the child's weight and age; *and*
 - The medication is not expired; *and*
 - The medication duration, dosage and amount to be given does not exceed label-specific recommendations for how often or how long to be given.

Health Care Provider Consent

1. A health care provider's consent, along with parent/guardian consent, will be required for prescription medications and over-the-counter medications that do not meet the above criteria.
2. A health care provider's consent may be given in 3 different ways:
 - The provider's name is on the original pharmacist's label (along with the child's name, name of the medication, dosage, duration and expiration date); *or*
 - The provider signs a note or prescription that includes the information required on the pharmacist's label; *or*
 - The provider signs a completed Medication Authorization Form.
3. Medications for chronic conditions such as: Asthma or Allergies can be given when the below requirements are met and:
 - Symptoms that would require the medication are documented; *and*
 - The length of time the medication is to be given (ex. 1 week) is documented; *and*
 - The maximum amount of medication that can be given in a 24-hour period is documented.

Disaster Preparedness

Our center has developed a disaster preparedness plan/policy. Our plan includes responses to the different disasters our site is vulnerable to, as well as procedures for on and off site evacuation and shelter in place. Evacuation routes are posted in classrooms. Our disaster plan/policy is located in our policy notebook, located in our main hallway near sign in/out computers.

Staff are oriented to our disaster plan annually and at hire.

Necessary and immediate steps will be taken and you will be informed of the situation as soon as possible. If you cannot be reached, a call to the emergency contact person listed on the emergency card will be made. **It is critical that you keep current the emergency numbers updated in the office. Inform us immediately of any changes.**

Fire drills

Monthly fire drills are held at unspecified and unannounced times and conducted by the director. A log is maintained and looked over by the local and state fire marshal during their annual inspection of the building.

Earthquake preparedness

In the event of an earthquake or other disaster, our staff will follow Red Cross recommendations. We will stay on site until notified that it is safe to leave, and/or all children are picked up. We are fully equipped with earthquake disaster kits, food and water for more than 72 hours. First Aid kits are on site, and quarterly earthquake drills are done at the center and posted.

Poisoning

We will immediately call Poison Control and follow their recommendations. The parent will be contacted and informed of the incident, actions and recommended procedures. In the school, all potentially hazardous and dangerous materials are kept in locked cupboards and on inaccessible shelves.

Accidents

Sometimes accidents occur in the school environment. The staff makes every attempt to keep the areas where children play free from dangers. All staff are trained in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid. It is the program practice to have a person who witnessed an accident/incident complete an injury form. A copy of the report is given to the parent and kept in the child's file. In a case where outside medical attention is needed, emergency procedures will be followed and parents will be contacted as soon as possible. If we cannot contact parents, we will call the person listed on your emergency form in the office.



Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency, we will call the family, advise them of the circumstances and follow their instructions. If we are unable to reach the family or it is a life threatening emergency we will call 911 and continue to try to reach the family and/or the emergency contact person listed on the enrollment form. We will request transport to Children's Hospital unless otherwise instructed by the family. If there is no family member available, a staff member from Northwest Center Kids will accompany the child to the hospital and remain with them until a family member arrives. The child's medical records that we have on file will be provided.

No Smoking

Northwest Center Kids facility is completely NON SMOKING.



Nutrition

We serve a vegetarian menu that meets USDA food requirements and is appealing to children. Our cook will also prepare puree or variations to accommodate allergies or other diet considerations. Special diets require written authorization from the parent and in certain cases from a health care provider. Please talk with the director or assistant director regarding special diets. Suspected food allergies must be documented by an allergy plan from the physician and accompanied by suggestions for substitute foods in the diet of the child.

We serve our meals family style, and children are given age appropriate responsibilities such as serving themselves, setting the table and clean up. These meals are a time for conversation and focus on manners and social interactions. Because our meals are nutritious, children are given the opportunity to choose which foods they wish to eat. Food is never used as a reward or punishment.

Please do not send food from home. Special occasions may be celebrated with food prepared in a licensed kitchen. **In most cases, this means treats must be store bought.**

Meal schedules are as follows:

Breakfast: 8:15am
Lunch: 11:15am in infant/waddler rooms
11:30am in toddler/preschool/pre-K/School Age rooms
Snack: 2:45pm in infant/waddler rooms
3:00pm in toddler/preschool/pre-K/School Age rooms
Late snack: available at 5:00pm

Discipline policy

At Northwest Center Kids, the practices regarding discipline and behavior management are based on accepted early childhood theories and principles, namely, that the child learns and copes best when motivation and behaviors are internal and self-imposed, rather than external and imposed by adults. By principle, it is understood that self-discipline is not innate, and the role of the adult is to assist the child in learning self-control. Some common practices would be that of a positive approach redirection of the activity and diversion of a child from a less accepted activity to a more acceptable activity.

No physical punishment (for example: spanking, hitting, shaking, slapping hands, biting or pinching back) is ever allowed under any circumstances. No verbal or emotional punishment is ever allowed. Each need for behavior management is handled individually and according to the child's developmental level, behavior, skills and cognitive/emotional level. Individual behavior plans may be developed with the assistance of the director when teacher's feel special assistance is required. The plan will be shared with parents.

Physical restraint of a child would only be used in an extreme situation where a child is in danger of seriously hurting him/herself or others and then only by a staff member trained in the appropriate use of the basket hold. At any time a restraint was required, the parent/guardian would receive written documentation.

Non-discrimination policy

No person shall be the subject of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability status, sexual orientation, marital status, age, or HIV/AIDS status.

Religion and Holidays

Northwest Center Kids does not prescribe to any specific religious or holiday practices. Customs and beliefs are taught in all classes as a way of teaching children about all cultures and respect for all. Families are encouraged to share activities, food, songs, and stories from their cultures.

Child Abuse Reporting Requirements

All Northwest Center Kids employees and volunteers are mandated by law to report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of children and vulnerable adults. Any employee or volunteer having reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect shall report the incident to Child Protective Services and to Law Enforcement when appropriate as soon as possible but no later than within 48 hours of the suspected violation. We will cooperate with instructions of confidentiality from DSHS and law enforcement.

Confidentiality of records and files

Your child's files are private, confidential and protected from unnecessary scrutiny from any unwarranted party. Information will be released ONLY after our program staff have a signed and dated, "release of information" provided by the parent or guardian.

Security system

For purposes of safety of the children during the day, a security system is installed on the front door. The security code is given only to parents who have children enrolled. Please ask the office manager or other appropriate staff for the entrance code. Please do not share the code with others. Office staff will open the door for visitors who are not parents/guardians.

Grievance Procedures



Families have the right and responsibility to help ensure a safe, fun and nurturing environment for their children. If at any time a family member has a question or concern about a program or child we recommend it first be addressed to the child's teacher. If the concern persists or is not addressed in a way that meets your needs the family and/or the teacher should include the Director in the resolution.

All concerns in regard to schedules, financial responsibilities and health should be addressed directly to the Director.

Pesticides Application

No chemical application will be applied without written notification to parents 48 hours prior to any intended application of pesticides. Written notification will include details about the chemicals to be used and application procedures. A complete Pesticide policy is available in our policy notebook, located in our hallway outside the office.

Fish Policy

We have fish on site for children's entertainment and learning. This tank is maintained by staff in a safe and sanitary way and fish food is kept out of reach of children. A hand washing sign is posted near the fish tank and children are directed to wash their hands after touching the tank or its water. A complete copy of our fish policy can be found in our policy notebook.

Please note that all policies are made at the discretion of the director, and may be changed at any time. Families will be notified via email if the handbook has been updated, and new copies will be available. You may request a copy of the handbook at any time.