

childserve woodland center
Family Handbook

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Introduction

Section 1: Introduction

our mission

We partner with families to help children with special health care needs live a great life. Our purpose is achieved through a strong commitment to four intrinsic values: care, integrity, trust and partnership.

philosophy

ChildServe Woodland Center strives to provide quality care and guidance for young children, adolescents, and young adults with disabilities. We provide support to families to enable them to work or attend school while their children are cared for in a safe, respectful environment. Our staff members support each child to reach his/her fullest potential. By partnering with families, we hope to offer services that will contribute to supporting children in their own family/home setting.

licensing

All ChildServe Childcare Centers are licensed by the State of Iowa, Department of Human Services. A copy of Licensing Standards and Procedures form SS-0711 is available to parents upon request. Centers are inspected regularly by a childcare licensing consultant and our own field management staff to ensure that they meet or exceed health, safety, and other state requirements, as well as the ChildServe standard of quality. Our centers partner with a childcare nurse consultant, sponsored by Childcare Resource and Referral, to promote best health and safety practices in all classrooms.

equal opportunity and non-discrimination

ChildServe is firmly committed to the concepts and practice of equal opportunity and non-discrimination. We administer our programs for children and our employment practices without regard to race, gender, religion, age, cultural heritage, marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, veteran status, national origin, disability, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. We will make reasonable accommodations, based on the child's special needs and our abilities to meet those needs. If your child is in special education at a public school, it would be helpful to have a copy of his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP) or similar document for inclusion in the child's file. Having this plan will allow our teachers to provide the best possible care and guidance for your child.

the staff

Our teachers are specifically chosen for their interest and dedication to provide quality care, nurturing and guidance to children and young adults. Each member of our staff has education, training and/or experience in caring for and/or teaching children and meet the qualifications set by the State of Iowa, Department of Human Services. Staff must pass thorough criminal and child abuse criminal record checks, references check, and health examination. Staff complete an orientation and ChildServe training program. We believe that learning is a life-long process, for children as well as adults. Our teachers encouraged to reach their full potential and are offered continual opportunities throughout their employment to further their education and improve their skills. We offer in-service training, company-wide workshops and seminars and tuition reimbursement. Our full time staff members are eligible to participate in a comprehensive employee benefits program and are compensated above market rate which enables us to attract and retain high quality employees.

Section 2: Enrollment

We welcome the opportunity to enroll children with special needs who are between the ages of 6 weeks and 21 years of age and whose needs can be met in our setting. An assessment by our administrative staff of each child's needs is completed prior to acceptance for admission in our program.

application

All application/enrollment forms must be on file at least 5 business days prior to the first day of care. A student file will be maintained for each child enrolled. The file includes application for enrollment, fee agreement, physical examination report, Iowa Department of Public Health Certificate of Immunization, emergency contact information and completed consent and authorization form. Student records are to be updated annually according to the Iowa Department of Human Services. Any change of address, telephone numbers, emergency contact information, and/or medical/health information should be reported to the office immediately. Enrollment information including emergency contact information must be renewed at least every 12 months.

The center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program sponsored by the Federal Government. This program supports the center to provide high quality, nutritious meals and snacks that meet federal dietary standards. We require families to complete an application associated with this food program prior to enrollment and annually thereafter.

fee and payment policies

A \$50.00 non-refundable family registration fee is due at the time of the child's acceptance in the program.

Tuition must be paid by Friday of each week for the prior week in accordance with your fee agreement. A late payment fee will apply to past due accounts. Payment must be received each week for service to continue the following week. Your child will not be allowed to attend the center if your account is not up to date and paid in full according to your fee agreement.

A late pick-up fee will be charged if your child is picked up after closing time. The fee is \$5.00 per child per 5 minute period after 6:00 p.m. Repeat occurrences of late pick-up could result in an increased fee or discontinued enrollment.

A fee will be charged for checks returned due to insufficient funds. We reserve the right to refuse any subsequent payments by check.

Tuition fees are reviewed annually and are adjusted according to the local funding source reimbursement rate.

payment methods

Payment is accepted in the form of check, money order, cashier's check or cash. When paying with cash, we require you to present the payment in person and obtain a written receipt.

tuition funding requirements

The ChildServe Woodland Center partners with state and county agencies to provide tuition assistance for qualified families. The Site Supervisor will discuss funding options prior to your child's enrollment. Forms associated with government assistance are required, including income verification. The center is required to review income verifications for all families supported by a funding source in the fall of each year, typically in September. It is the family's responsibility to advise us immediately of any change to income or employment status.

withdrawing your child

In the event that you need to withdraw your child, a written two week notice is required.

Section 3: Center Policies

hours of operation

The center is open Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

holiday closings

Our centers are officially closed on the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Independence Day	Friday following Thanksgiving Day
Martin Luther King Day	Labor Day	Christmas Day
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving Day	

If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, it will be observed on Friday or Monday. Our centers are closed on Martin Luther King Day to conduct full-day professional development training for center staff.

Operating hours on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve may be reduced.

other center closings

The ChildServe Woodland Center will be closed due to inclement weather in accordance with the Des Moines Public Schools closings. Announcements will be made on local television and radio stations. You may also access closings electronically on the Des Moines Public Schools web site or sites associated with local media.

In the event that schools are closed during the day, after the school day has begun, due to adverse weather conditions, we will remain open for children to be transported to our center from school. However, we must insist that attendance is limited and that your child is picked up as soon as possible once the bus arrives. Children who do not attend public or private school during the day will be expected to be picked up from the center as soon as possible after the announcement of closing for the Des Moines Public Schools.

In the event that your child's school is closed for a non-weather related situation such as a power outage, we will not accept your child for attendance beyond his/her normal schedule unless requested prior to the child's arrival and provided the center has the required staffing to accommodate the extended care.

We reserve the right to limit attendance at any time when abnormal conditions exist, based on our ability to adequately staff the center and/or provide service according to licensing regulations.

attendance schedule

Your child's schedule for attendance must be on file at the center. Changes to the schedule must be submitted in advance to ensure that appropriate staffing is available.

If your child will not attend on a given day, or arrive late, please notify the center no later than 9:00 a.m. It is critical that we be informed of absences, especially for children who attend school and ride a bus to our center after school. If we are expecting your child to arrive at our center after school and he/she is not on the bus, we will be concerned that your child could be in danger. Please extend the courtesy of timely communication about your child's schedule so that we can fulfill expectations to provide supervision for your child.

We do not provide drop-in child care. We do not allow children to attend the center if they are scheduled to be in school. For example, if your child misses the school bus, he/she should be taken to school. Our program is not a substitute for your child's school program. We do not accept children who are restricted from attending school due to illness.

Center Policies

drop off and pick up

Our center has a security system. Each family is given a code to access the building.

We require that children be brought into the center and personally escorted to the classroom teacher by an adult. We also require that the child be signed-in on the roster.

At the end of the day, we will release your child only to parents or guardians with legal custody or persons over the age of 18 who are designated by you on the Emergency Contact form. Under no circumstance will a child be released to a person who is not on the contact list or for whom the parent has not written an authorization note, even if the child and a staff member are familiar with the person. This includes parents of other children enrolled in the center as well as staff members. Adults other than parents or guardians will be required to show picture identification. The child must be signed-out by the person to whom the child is released. If you are unable to arrive at the center prior to our closing time of 6:00 p.m., it is your responsibility to contact your emergency pick-up person to make arrangements for timely pick-up of your child.

The safety of your child is our highest priority. For that reason, we require that all children be signed in and out each day, be escorted to and from the classroom or playground by an adult and be supervised at all times in the center, in the parking lot and on ChildServe property. Please make sure that you or your designee has contact with your child's teacher both at drop-off and pick-up times.

Designated parking is available in our parking lot. Please do not block the driveway. Parking in the bus drop-off zone on Woodland Avenue is prohibited.

open door policy

Parents/guardians are always welcome at ChildServe. We encourage you to visit anytime and join us for field trips or special center events.

In the event that parental contact is prohibited by court order, a copy of the applicable legal document (court/custody order) must be included in the child's file. Otherwise, we are unable to restrict access. We keep this information confidential and solely for the safety of your child. Even with a court order, our ability to deny access is limited to our notifying promptly the proper police authority and the custodial parent and following our organizational process should unsanctioned contact be attempted or occur at the center.

It is ChildServe policy to remain neutral in all custody matters. Our centers may not serve as a visitation site.

privacy/photos

ChildServe strives to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and dignity of the children and families we serve. Our policy is that a signed photo release form must be on file prior to any photos being taken of any child. The photo release forms are quite specific both in who is photographing the child and how that photo will be used, so it is likely that you will be asked to sign multiple forms throughout the duration of your relationship with ChildServe. Parents must also be aware that they will not be able to take photographs of any child (other than their own) without the express written permission of the other child's parents. Exceptions to this policy may be made for field trips, group events, or performances.

nutrition

Our center provides a nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack that meet the Federal Food Program guidelines. We do not allow outside food to be brought into the center unless the child is not ready for table foods or the child has a special diet. Infants will be fed according to your written diet plan. The plan will be updated as the diet changes. If breast milk is provided, we require the bottles to be labeled as such and include your child's name and date.

If your child has food allergies or requires a special diet, we will work with you and/or your child's physician to accommodate your child's needs. We require a signed physician's order for children with certain special diets (low sodium, diabetic diet, tube feedings, etc.). We will follow a therapist's recommendation for a modified diet (pureed foods, for instance) provided a signed special diet form is included in your child's file.

Center Policies

special occasions

It is not necessary for you to provide treats for your child's birthday or other special occasions. If you chose to do so, we require that treats be peanut/tree nut free, purchased commercially and prepackaged. Please discuss and schedule your plans with the Supervisor in advance.

clothing

Sturdy, washable and appropriate clothes are recommended for your child's safety and comfort at the center. Your child should wear rubber-soled, closed-toe shoes, preferably sneakers, to prevent injury, especially on the playground. Jellies, flip-flops and sandals are discouraged. The children are expected to wear shoes at all times. When your child wears heavy boots to school during inclement weather in place of shoes, other shoes must be sent for use indoors. We ask that you provide a complete set of season-appropriate extra clothing, including underwear and socks, labeled with your child's name. All outwear should also be labeled. Clothing soiled as a result of "toileting accidents" will be sent home in a plastic bag. According to health and safety guidelines, we are unable to rinse or launder soiled articles of this nature.

We provide diapers for children under the age of 5. Children over the age of five will need to provide their own diapers or briefs, if needed. Families are encouraged to contact the Site Supervisor for information regarding assistance programs for their child's personal care supplies.

personal recreation items

Our center provides fun, educational toys, equipment and activities. Therefore, we ask you to keep your child's toys or special personal items of this nature at home to avoid loss or breakage. For occasional sharing times planned by a teacher, your child may bring in an item as long as it is safe, appropriate and labeled with his/her name.

toilet training

Toilet training is approached in accordance with requests of the child's parents and in a manner that is consistent with the child's physical and emotional abilities. Once you start at home, we will make every effort to coordinate our program with yours. We ask that you supply us with at least two complete changes of clothing, and an ample supply of training pants or underwear for each day your child attends. If your child has just started toilet training, he or she may still wear a diaper at rest time. Children learning to be self-sufficient in the bathroom will have an easier time if they wear clothing that they can pull off and on by themselves. Your child's teacher will provide written communication daily regarding your child's toileting progress.

traditional holidays

Holiday themes will emphasize multi-cultural traditions. The children in our care represent many different religions and ethnic groups. The folklore and customs of each are an important part of our collective culture and are presented as such. The spirit of joy and happiness is the common theme. We do not emphasize religious themes or one particular tradition. Parents are encouraged to share their traditions and customs with other children and their families. Please offer your suggestions to the Supervisor or your child's teacher.

Section 4: Health and Safety

illness

Our goal is to keep the spread of contagious diseases and illnesses at a minimum. For the comfort of your ill child and the health and wellness of other children, families and staff, your child may not attend the center if any of the following symptoms are present:

- Fever of 101 degrees or above
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (watery stools, 2 or more times in one day)
- Uncontrolled coughing
- Difficulty breathing or wheezing
- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow discharge), until after treatment has been initiated
- Rash of unexplained origin
- Lethargy that is more than expected tiredness
- Persistent abdominal pain continuing more than 2 hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms
- Inexplicable irritability or persistent crying
- Other illnesses that warrant exclusion until treatment has been initiated sufficient to reduce the likelihood of transmitting the illness. Sources such as the CDC Safe and Healthy Childcare manual and Iowa Department of Health may be used to provide guidance.

If your child becomes ill while at the center, we will call you and expect that your child be picked up within one hour of notification. Children should not return to the center until he/she has been fever-free for 24 hours, has been free from vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours, is on his/her normal diet, and/or has had adequate time of recovery recommended for the specific illness. In some instances, a physician's certificate of good health may be required before a child will be allowed to return.

contagious diseases

If your child is ill with a contagious disease, he or she may not return to the center without a physician's written statement indicating that the child is no longer contagious and is able to participate in activities. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the center if their child is diagnosed with any contagious disease so that other families can be notified according to recommendations of the Iowa Department of Health. We will post a notice on the family information board in the lobby and in your child's classroom for any instance of contagious disease affecting children who may have had direct exposure at the center, and we will immediately report such disease to the local health authorities as required.

hand washing

We comply with infection control standards and require hand washing upon arrival at the center, before eating, after toileting, after playing outside and at any other appropriate time. We want to control the spread of germs and also strive to help support your child to practice valuable personal skills.

rest and naptime

For the health and well being of every child, a rest time is provided every day for children under the age of 5. Children over the age of 5 who are attending the center for a full day will also be allowed to rest. We provide a cot, sheet, and a blanket. Your child may bring a favorite blanket or small sleep toy from home. Please label these items and launder them weekly.

allergies

Please inform the Supervisor if your child has an allergy. An emergency health care plan will be required prior to initial start day and updated as needed. The plan will be established by our nurse and center staff in collaboration with the parents/legal guardians and child's physician. If your child has food allergies or requires a special diet, we must be provided with a physician's note with recommendations. We will work with you and your child's physician to accommodate your child's needs.

Health & Safety

immunization records

To protect the health of all children, the Iowa Department of Health requires all children to be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, H. Influenza type B, polio, measles, rubella and varicella (chicken pox). A current signed and dated Iowa immunization certificate must be on file and updated in accordance with state law. We maintain the right to deny attendance if immunizations are not current.

medication

When possible, it is preferred that medication be given at home. BID (twice/day) medications most often preclude distribution at the center. Medication will be administered only with written consent of a parent or legal guardian on a medication permission slip. Medications will be given by a caregiver who has completed medication administration training provided by ChildServe.

Prescription medication must be supplied in the original container, complete with the pharmacy label including child's name, date, name of medication, prescription number, required dosage and schedule for administration. It is recommended that you request that prescriptions be filled in 2 containers, one for home and one to be left at the center during the treatment period. Over the counter medications, other than diaper ointment and sunscreen, require a written physician's order. Physician documentation must include child's name, name of medication, required dosage and time to be given, time frame for treatment, and reason for the medication. We cannot dispense over-the-counter medication on an "as needed" basis. Long-term physician's orders must be updated by the physician every 3 months for children under the age of 2 and every 6 months for children over the age of 2 years. Long-term medications include Epipen, Albuterol, and Benadryl. Special medical procedures, such as breathing treatments, will be administered only with written orders signed by a physician.

All medications must be given to a supervisor or your child's teacher by a parent or guardian for safekeeping in a locked cabinet, inaccessible to children and the public. When dropping off OR picking up your child's medication, you will be asked to sign and date documentation to verify the transfer of medication. Do not send medication with your child.

Medications must be taken home at the end of the authorization period. Any medication left in the center without a current consent permission slip will be disposed of.

outdoor play

Daily outdoor activities will occur, weather permitting. Parents are responsible for sending children in adequate clothing and footwear to maintain good health during outdoor play in all suitable weather conditions, including normal winter temperatures. Please do not ask us to keep a child inside because of a cold or other illness, except for recuperation from bronchitis or pneumonia, as ordered by a physician. A child who is too sick to go outside is usually too sick to be in a social situation with other children.

accidents, injuries, or emergencies

We take every precaution to protect the safety of your child. This includes routine inspections and maintenance of our facilities, playgrounds and equipment, a safety awareness program, and monthly fire and tornado drills. We follow SIDS prevention practices in our nursery. All staff receive first aid training and are certified in CPR. Any accident or injury is reported to the supervisor and is documented. You will be informed of any injury, will be asked to sign an incident report and will receive a copy of the report when you pick up your child.

Because children will be children, accidents may happen. When they do occur, and we determine that medical attention is needed, we will call you or your designated emergency contact. If a child experiences a medical emergency, ChildServe staff will take the action that is in the best interest of your child, including calling emergency medical personnel if necessary.

responsibilities to protect children

It is the policy of ChildServe that all staff are mandatory reporters and under Iowa state law, must report observed or suspected abuse or neglect against children or dependent adults to the Child Protective Services Agency.

Section 5: Family Partnership

parent involvement

We maintain an open door policy for parents and guardians. We welcome visits and involvement in program activities at any time when your child is present. We will also accommodate your request for a special conference with your child's teacher and/or an administrator with reasonable notice. We encourage open communication between families and staff and advise you to make time that you need to visit with your child's teacher at drop off and/or pick up time. We want to speak with you daily about the small but important changes that can affect your child's ongoing development. Our goal is to establish an ongoing dialogue with your family. Please keep in mind that your child's teacher must continue to monitor the rest of the class even though you may feel you have something very important to discuss. For extended discussion, you will always be able to arrange an appointment with your child's teacher or Supervisor at a mutually convenient time.

Parents of infants and toddlers receive daily reports noting activities, including nourishment, naps, and diaper changes. Daily notes are posted in our two year old and preschool classrooms to highlight activities of the day. Please check the classroom family information boards to keep up to date with daily happenings and special events. Periodic bulletins with special announcements will also be posted or provided to you. Regular newsletters are posted on our web site. Printed copies of newsletters are available upon request.

principles of family centered care

The foundation of family-centered care is the partnership between families and professionals. Key to this partnership are the following principles:

- Families and professionals work together in the best interest of the child and family.
- Everyone respects the skills and expertise brought to the relationship.
- Trust is acknowledged as fundamental.
- Communication and information sharing are open and objective.
- Participants make decisions together.
- There is a willingness to negotiate.

Based on this partnership, family centered care:

- Acknowledges the family as the constant in a child's life.
- Builds on family strengths.
- Supports the child in learning about and participating in his/her care and decision making.
- Honors cultural diversity and family traditions.
- Recognizes the importance of community-based services.
- Promotes an individual and developmental approach.
- Encourages family-to-family and peer support.
- Supports youth as they transition between milestones.
- Develops policies, practices, and systems that are family-friendly and family –centered in all settings.
- Celebrates successes.

Family Partnership

partnering with childserve

The purpose shared by both the parent and ChildServe is the health and well-being of the children entrusted to ChildServe for support. Our dependence on one another requires us to work together to meet your child's needs.

Together we are responsible to:

- Treat each other with dignity and respect.
- Share essential information to understand your child's needs.
- Develop a plan of care that will meet the priority needs of your child.
- Keep each other informed of any changes in your child's health or any circumstances that would affect the services received from us.
- Notify each other in advance of any scheduling changes.
- Talk with one another at least once every three months to review your child's progress.
- Meet with one another at least once a year to develop a new plan of care.
- Resolve concerns in ways that build a positive relationship.

professional boundaries

ChildServe recognizes that families often like to express their appreciation for the care and support provided to their child by giving gifts. Words of appreciation expressed verbally or in a thank you card are the best ways to express your appreciation. Families wanting to give a gift should direct that gift to all caregivers in our center. Individual staff are not allowed to accept gifts from families.

providing feedback

ChildServe is committed to the highest ethical and quality standards. We rely on our staff, volunteers, board members, families and strategic partners to help us identify sources of concern or confusion. ChildServe professionals are available during arrival and departure times to listen to your feedback in person. Those individuals will share your feedback with the appropriate management team by using a family feedback form.

You are also encouraged you to contact the on-site Supervisor, the Service Manager, or any administrator at any time. Contact information is listed on the family information board at the center or may be obtained by a supervisor or staff member.

Because we value your feedback, a member of our management team may call you to simply touch base and to give you an opportunity to share feedback. We also conduct an annual family satisfaction survey which provides a more formal venue for families to share positive experiences as well as an opportunity to make helpful suggestions.

ChildServe has partnered with Allegiance, Inc. to provide the SilentWhistle service. SilentWhistle serves many purposes. You can use the SilentWhistle website to report an ethical, legal, compliance, or customer service issue, make suggestions or ask questions. SilentWhistle provides a confidential, anonymous forum for staff, families, and partners. To access the SilentWhistle website, go to <http://childserve.silentwhistle.com> from any computer or call the toll-free hot line: 1-877-874-8416.

confidentiality

ChildServe believes in protecting the confidentiality of all families who choose to use our services. Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential.

guiding behavior

ChildServe programs incorporate goals for positive guidance to help children learn appropriate behavior and to develop a positive self-concept. Designated teachers are trained in the MANDT system, a program that teaches concepts and strategies to de-escalate potential aggressive situations in order to avoid physical restraint. The program also teaches techniques for physical holds, if needed, which promote safety for the staff and child.

Staff use the following strategies to encourage a child's self-control:

- Redirection – offering an appropriate, alternative activity or choice.
- Positive statements – explaining appropriate behavior and referring to the behavior, not the child.
- Giving attention to the children who are hurt before talking to the child who hurt someone.
- Focus on positive behavior and acknowledge children's good choices.
- Using the "cool-down" strategy by giving the child time to calm down and improve his/her behavior in a quiet area of the room
- Partnering with families to establish an action plan for guiding behavior at home and at school.

Should there be concerns about a specific developmental issue or behaviors, we may partner with you to develop a plan to help identify both the child's needs and sources of help available to address those needs, including outside referral organizations.

In the event that your child exhibits behavior that staff are unable to help de-escalate, we will call you or an emergency contact to pick up your child as soon as possible. In the meantime, staff may need to initiate a physical hold or restraint as an intervention to aggressive behavior. Documentation of all situations of this nature is required, as in the case of other incidents/accidents. A report will be completed by the staff member and signed by the supervisor and parent/guardian.

Because we provide care in a group setting, we must be concerned for the welfare and safety of all children and staff. If a child exhibits behaviors or needs that jeopardize the welfare and safety of other children or our staff, we reserve the right to discharge your child immediately, without notice.



childserve

Believing in the spirit of a child.