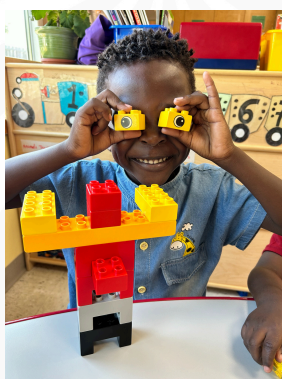




2024-2025 EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY HANDBOOK



Preparing children to be joyful lifelong learners!



Learning through play everyday!



NEIGHBORHOOD
CENTERS

Pheasant Ridge Site

354-2886

Broadway Site

354-7989

Welcome Families!

The Neighborhood Centers are pleased you have chosen us for your early childhood needs. Whether it is for infant/toddler, preschool, or school-age care, we are here to support you and your child. This handbook outlines our policies and programs. Please read the handbook and talk with your child's teacher or Early Childhood Director if you have any questions or concerns.

Your family is very special. It is our goal to support all of your family's needs. In addition to our early childhood and after-school programs, Neighborhood Centers offers a wide variety of activities for the entire family. These activities include school age and teen programs, in-home and group-oriented parent education classes, and family events.

Please stop in at any time to see your child and sign up for our other programs. You are an important part of our "Neighborhood Center Family".

Our Philosophy

We believe that each child is a unique individual with the ability to succeed to their greatest potential. Neighborhood Centers strives to meet each individual child's needs by implementing developmentally appropriate practices that match the way each child develops and learns in all content areas: literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology. Neighborhood Centers believes that there are three critical areas that play an important role in the success of a child; how children learn, the teacher's role, and the parent's role. It is when these three roles are united together a child can experience success at their greatest potential.

How children learn

We believe that play is the most important process in which children learn. Play can be further enhanced when children are exposed to practical, real life, hands-on experiences that challenge them just beyond their present level of development in all areas; social, emotional, cognitive, and physical. As children play, they are able to explore, manipulate, question, create, and experience success in the world around them.

Teacher's Role

Qualified, dedicated teachers are essential to the development of a quality program that promotes the individual development and success of each child. Knowing how children develop is the foundation for every teacher. Careful observations and ongoing assessments will further the teachers' knowledge about each child's individual learning style and present level of development. Teachers use this information to create an environment that includes a balance of both child-initiated learning and teacher directed learning. The teacher's role will also be focused on building meaningful relationships with children and families. A caring, supportive, nurturing, responsive, relationship creates a safe place where children can thrive, grow, and learn and is essential for success. Teachers will also construct a collaborative approach with parents, other teachers, and supportive professional staff to do everything we can to support each child's learning and development. Lastly, teachers will know and understand that each child is a unique individual. They will strive to meet each child's individual needs in positive and developmentally appropriate ways and make accommodations and adaptations where needed for each child to find success.

Parent's Role

We acknowledge and value parents as their child's first teacher. Establishing a partnership with the child's teacher/center is imperative to the success of the child. This is accomplished through ongoing communication with the center and the child's teachers, as well as frequent participation in the child's program. Families are embraced for their uniqueness and welcomed and included in their child's learning. Please let us know of any skill, culture, and/or special area of interest that you would be willing to with your child's classroom and their learning.

Starting Program

Before your child starts their first day, we will schedule a Parent Orientation with the Lead Teacher in your child's classroom. Please bring the following items:

- Completed Intake Form
- Signed Physical Form or School-Age Health Form
- Immunization Form
- Child Information Form
- CACFP Food Forms (2)
- Household Survey form
- Completed Insect and Sunscreen Form
- (if needed) Allergy, Asthma, or other instructional health forms.

When you bring your child the first day, be sure to bring:

- Extra Clothes
- For infants and toddlers:
 - Diapers
 - Diaper-rash Medications
 - Breast milk/Formula/Baby Food

Program Descriptions

We enroll our classrooms in August for the following year as it is our goal to keep children of all ages with the same group of teaching staff and peers for an entire year (minimum of 12 months) or longer if possible.

Our Infant/Toddler Program

Our infant/toddler program is designed to provide the utmost security, love and nurturance for children in our care who are under the age of two years. Our emphasis is on the individual developmental needs of each infant/toddler. Your child's inner rhythm of sleeping and eating schedules will be honored to allow for their optimal development.

All of our materials are selected to provide a variety of natural learning experiences for your infant/toddler through manipulation, sensory awareness, and decision-making. We emphasize language development with planned and spontaneous opportunities for communication between the teachers and your child. Plenty of snuggle time and cuddling will be provided to your child.

Two-Year-Old Program

Our two-year-old programs' consistent daily routine will help your child become familiar with and secure in their surroundings. They will have group time, large motor activities, read stories, experience a variety of art and fine motor activities, and have time for free play each day.

Learning social skills is encouraged throughout the day as opportunities for talking and communicating are both planned as well as spontaneous. Your child will be given assistance to identify and deal appropriately with their emotions and feelings.

We encourage cooperative play while fostering independence and responsibility. When your child shows signs of readiness for toilet learning, we will provide patient guidance to help establish proper toilet habits.

Our Preschool Program

The basis of our preschool program is nurturing your child's self-concept and enhancing their development by providing many successful experiences. We will provide many opportunities for your child to learn social skills such as turn taking, good manners, problem solving, and communication with other children and adults.

Your child will be introduced to learning areas which encourage their natural curiosity and exploration of their surroundings. The use of a variety of hands-on manipulative activities and interest centers enrich concept development and enhance intellectual development. Your child will be involved in organized large motor activities and introduced to play equipment designed to facilitate their physical strength, agility and coordination.

Your child will also be exposed to academics and concepts of language, literacy, math, science, and social studies through developmentally appropriate activities. They will be allowed to show their creativity through music, art and role-playing.

Our School Age Program

When school is out for the day or during the summer months, it is important for children to be engaged in a comfortable yet stimulating environment. Our School Age Program allows for school aged children to balance learning and fun through a variety of experiences from homework help to fun physical activities. We also recognize your school aged child is eager to build close friendships, seek new challenges, and increase their independence and responsibilities. Our school age program offers many of these opportunities for your growing child during after-school care, some no-school days, and summer camp programs for children Kindergarten-6th grade.

Program Curriculum

We use the **Creative Curriculum** as our core curriculum. **Get Set for School, Read It Again, AI's Pals and, Second Step**, are our supplementary preschool curriculums. We look to the **Iowa Early Learning Standards** for early childhood benchmarks and utilize **Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS)** to guide children and create an enhanced learning environment.

The **Creative Curriculum** balances teacher-planned and child-initiated learning; emphasizing responsiveness to children's strengths, interests, needs, and learning styles. It is nationally known for being forward-thinking, comprehensive, and rigorously researched, and helps teachers plan and implement content-rich, developmentally appropriate programs that support active learning and promote children's progress in all developmental areas. The Creative Curriculum translates child development theory and research into best practice, clearly defining the teacher's vital role in connecting content, teaching, and learning for preschool children. It discusses the five components of teaching preschool children effectively:

- how children develop and learn
- the learning environment
- what children learn
- caring and teaching
- partnering with families

Get Set for School is our supplementary curriculum featuring Readiness & Writing, Language & Literacy, and Numbers & Math programs. Get Set for School uses a developmental approach that is based on the most relevant research about how young children learn best. Lessons and activities are introduced in a developmental sequence incorporating multisensory lessons that use a plethora of hands-on materials, as research shows that children develop through multisensory play.

Read It Again-PreK! is a curricular supplement designed to develop and strengthen young children's early foundations in language and literacy. Read It Again-PreK! provides a systematic, explicit, and flexible approach to building children's skills in four key areas of language and literacy: vocabulary, narrative, phonological awareness, and print knowledge.

AI's Pals is a nationally recognized, evidence-based social-emotional learning curriculum designed for children ages 3 to 6. This comprehensive curriculum empowers young children to learn how to make healthy decisions, resolve conflicts, manage their feelings, and build positive relationships. Educators who implement AI's Pals can build a nurturing classroom environment with activities such as; lessons that facilitate large-group interactive discussions and problem-solving experiences, original songs that reinforce lessons and core concepts, and puppets and puppet scripts to engage preschool children.

Second Step is designed to help children harness their energy and potential by teaching them to listen, pay attention, control their behavior, and get along with others. We want students to enter kindergarten with the self-regulation and social-emotional skills taught in this supplementary curriculum to have success in school.

Iowa Early Learning Standards 3rd Edition, also referred to as guidelines or expectations, are descriptions of the knowledge, behaviors, and skills that children from birth through age five may demonstrate before they enter Kindergarten. These skills defined in the Iowa Early Learning Standards tie into the Iowa Core standards (K-12).

Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) is focused on promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of young children birth to age 5. It uses the Teaching Pyramid model for supporting social emotional competence in infants and young children. It works on the four levels of creating and fostering strong relationships, designing supportive environments, teaching social/emotional skills, and developing individualized supports for children to find success in school.

Program Enrollment Forms

Intake and Release Form

The intake form provides us with your family's basic home and work contact information, as well as emergency information such as doctors' names and phone numbers, and who you authorize to pick up your child in an emergency. This form is updated annually, or whenever you have changes to make.

Physical Exam

Physical exams are required for all children entering the program, as well as a yearly physical update. The update exam is needed one year from the date of the previous physical, not one year from the date your child begins the program.

Immunizations

State law requires proof of immunizations. A signed Iowa Immunization Record is required before your child may start. Remember that no child can attend without an up-to-date immunization record on file. As your child receives immunizations, please be sure to bring in a new signed Iowa Immunization Record. Our immunizations are reviewed yearly by the DHHS Licensing Consultant, and the Johnson County Child Care Nurse Consultant.

Exceptions to this rule are allowed only for religious or medical reasons. If you have been granted a religious or medical exemption, you must provide a valid, signed "Certificate of Immunization Exemption" from the Iowa Department of Public Health. However, if a vaccine preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program an underimmunized child will be excluded if they have not received the recommended number or types of vaccines for their age according to the current national and local immunization schedules.

Child Information Form

Prior to your child entering our program, the Child Information Form is shared with the classroom teacher. This form allows us to get to know your child better and, hopefully, ease her transition period a little.

CACFP Forms

Neighborhood Centers participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to provide quality nutrition for your child while in program. All families are required to fill out new CACFP food forms every year. There are two separate forms to fill out; CACFP Enrollment and CACFP Eligibility.

Insect Repellent Form: During the warmer spring and summer months and when public health authorities recommend use of insect repellent due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, we will apply insect repellent containing 10% DEET to the skin of children two years old and younger. Children over 2 years of age will use insect repellent containing up to (but not over) 30 % DEET. **Children under 2 months of age will not receive insect repellent.**

Sunscreen Application Form:

We recognize that too much sunlight may increase a child's risk of getting skin cancer. Therefore, to protect your child we will offer them shady areas in which to play outside, encourage skin protecting clothing, and offer them sunscreen or sun block that contains UVB and UVA protection of SPF 30 or higher, with parents' permission. Families can choose to use Neighborhood Centers sunscreen or bring their own for their child/ren. Sunscreen will be applied to all children unless a medical note from a doctor indicates otherwise.

As needed...

Food Allergy forms

If your child has a food allergy please make us aware of this at enrollment and we will do everything we can to accommodate and substitute for the food(s) your child is allergic to. You will need to have your child's doctor fill out the "Allergy/Food Exception Statement" and return it to the center as soon as possible. You will also need to fill out the "permission to post allergy form" giving us permission to post your child's name and allergy in their classroom and the kitchen. If your child's allergy is life threatening and they require an epi-pen you will need to bring 2 epi-pens to the center prescribed to your child and fill out a medication sheet for them.

Allergy Action Plan: If your child has another allergy other than food, it is important that you complete the Allergy Action Plan (which is filled out by both the physician and parent) and share the specific information with staff at enrollment. We will do everything in our power so that your child avoids contact with any substance to which they are allergic. If your child requires an epi-pen you will need to bring 2 epi-pens to the center prescribed to your child and fill out a medication sheet for them.

Asthma Action Plan: We understand that some children have asthma. You can help us to treat your child's asthma in the best way possible by having your child's doctor complete an Asthma Action Plan. The Asthma Action Plan works on three separate levels to prevent asthma symptoms when there are none present (green), treat minor symptoms when needed (yellow), and treat and/or seek professional help for symptoms of danger (red). This form must be filled out by a physician and is required for children diagnosed with asthma. If your child requires medication or a nebulizer for their asthma you will need to bring the medication in its original container and nebulizer if needed. Please fill out the medication sheet so we are able to help treat your child's asthma with the proper medication in the correct manner.

Care Plan for Children with Special Health Care Needs: If your child has any other specialized health care needs not addressed by the Allergy or Asthma forms above families will need to have their physician fill out and complete this form. This may include health care needs such as: diabetes, cerebral palsy, bleeding disorders, metabolic problems, cystic fibrosis, sickle cell disease, seizure disorder, sensory disorders, autism, immune deficiencies, or many other conditions. This form should be filled out and updated after any hospitalizations,

changes in medical status, or at least annually. Staff will need to receive training on any specialized health care procedures before your child can begin in program.

A note about Program Files and Confidentiality

Child and family files are confidential. This includes intake, health and safety, assessment, etc...information. Neighborhood Centers does not share information in the files with other agencies or people not affiliated with Neighborhood Centers without written permission from a parent or guardian. However, some officials do have the right to review files to assure that regulations are being met such as:

- ✓ Immunization records are considered to be public record. For this reason, and in order to protect other information about your family, immunization records will be kept in a separate file to which the public is allowed access.
- ✓ Some officials from funding agencies (e.g., ECI) and licensing agencies (e.g., Department of Human Services, NAEYC) conduct periodic reviews of our files in order to make sure we are retaining the paperwork required for us to maintain our license.

Through the course of your involvement with our agency, we will collect information and paperwork in order to serve you better. Information will include child development information, family contact information, enrollment forms, and reports that document injuries, accidents, or other incidents involving the child. Files will also include emergency information related to who to contact if a parent/guardian is unavailable, as well as authorization from the parent/guardian to obtain appropriate emergency medical and dental care for the child if needed.

Parents must sign an 'Authorization to Exchange Information' form in order for us to release any information on a child to another agency. As further protection of confidentiality, all volunteers and visiting students read and sign a "Confidentiality Policy" form regarding and written, verbal, or observed information on families and children. Staff also attend agency-required training on confidentiality.

- ✓ Screening and Assessment Information: This information is shared with parents and Neighborhood Centers staff. With written consent, the information is also shared with area schools, GWAEA staff, and other area resources.
- ✓ Family Rights: All authorized parents and guardians have access to their program files and can ask for a copy of the file at any time.
- ✓ Procedures: All program files are maintained in a secure location in the office. Access is granted to Neighborhood Centers staff, regulatory agencies, and parent/guardians (upon request).

Emergency Guidelines

In order to ensure the safety of staff and children in the buildings, we have numerous emergency guidelines posted throughout the building. In all classrooms the Emergency Guidelines are posted near each exit. In an emergency that requires staff and children to stay out of the building for a long period of time, Broadway staff and children will evacuate and go to the Post Office; Pheasant Ridge staff and children will evacuate and go to Fareway. Annual trainings are conducted on emergency guidelines and monthly drills are conducted to practice the procedures of fire and tornado safety. Please speak with you Teacher or the Early Childhood Director if you would like a copy of our Emergency Guidelines or if you would more detailed information on our emergency plans.

Sick and Exclusion Policies

Sometimes your child may become ill while in our care and is no longer able to participate in our programs. In some cases, the Early Childhood Director will post information regarding a communicable disease to notify other parents of the presence of a contagion.

If we believe that your child needs to go home due to illness, your child's teacher will call you (or your emergency contacts, if you cannot be reached). It will be expected that someone will be available to pick up your child immediately; in order to minimize the threat of spreading illness, your child will rest in the office, supervised by a staff member, until they are picked up. Reasons for exclusion from our programs will include:

1. An illness that prevents your child from participating comfortably in activities;
2. An illness that results in greater care needs than our staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
3. An acute change in behavior: lethargy, lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing or a quick spreading rash or,
4. Your child has any of the following conditions:

Fever: A child with a fever of 100.4 °F or more will be sent home. Your child may return when fever-free (less than 100.4°F) for 24 hours **without** the use of fever-reducing medication.

Vomiting: A child that is acting ill and has vomited 1-2 times will be sent home. Your child may return if they have not vomited for 24 hours and is tolerating bland foods or 1/2 strength formula.

Diarrhea: A child having uncontrolled diarrhea will be sent home. Your child may return when the condition improves (stools are no longer watery and are returning to normal consistency) and is tolerating bland foods or 1/2 strength formula. Uncontrolled diarrhea is defined as:

- An increase in number of stools, compared with the child's normal pattern
- Increase stool water; or
- Decrease form that is not contained by the diaper or use of toilet.

Please note: If your baby has diarrhea due to teething, the child may stay in care if they are not presenting any additional signs of illness.

Mouth Sores: A child who has mouth sores and is drooling will be excluded from program. Your child may be readmitted when sores are scabbed and healed, or their doctor determines they are non-infectious.

Eye Infections/Conjunctivitis: You will be notified if your child has signs and symptoms of conjunctivitis (pink eye). They will be sent home with recommendations to see a physician. Your child may return after 24 hours of antibiotic therapy (or sooner if approved by child's doctor).

Ear Infection: If your child exhibits symptoms of an ear infection and is acting ill, you will be notified so that you may take them to the doctor. Your child may return after initiation of antibiotic therapy or if cleared by the doctor, and they are fever-free for 24 hours **without** the use of fever-reducing medication.

Strep Throat: A child with fever and strep throat will be excluded from program. Your child may return after 24 hours of antibiotic therapy **and** if fever-free for 24 hours **without** use of fever-reducing medications.

Chicken Pox: Your child will be sent home when chicken pox lesions are detected. They may return when all chicken pox lesions have dried and crusted. All parents will be notified when a case of chicken pox is suspected.

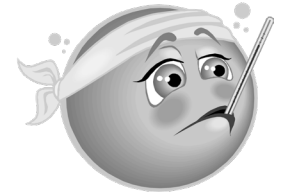
Skin Outbreak: If a child develops a rash, (this includes ringworm, impetigo, hives, severe diaper rash, or any other undiagnosed rash), parents will be notified to remove the child from program and see a physician. Child may return after 24 hours of medication or written clearance from a physician that states the child does not have a communicable disease.

Head Lice: A child with head lice will be excluded from program. Your child may return when their hair has been properly treated and all live lice have been removed. Hair must continue to be treated for 14 days until all nits and live lice have been removed.

Other illnesses or conditions that require treatment by a physician will be managed as directed by the physician after approval by the Early Childhood Director.

Please notify staff if your child is exhibiting any signs of illness for a known reason other than sickness, such as diarrhea from medication, or fever from an immunization. You may still need to take your child home if the condition becomes severe.

If your child comes down with a communicable disease, it is important to let the center know the details. We will notify you if your child may have been exposed to any communicable disease by posting an information sheet in your child's classroom.



Care Plans for Children with Special Health Needs: Children with special health care needs could have a variety of different problems ranging from asthma, diabetes, cerebral palsy, bleeding disorders, metabolic problems, cystic fibrosis, sickle cell disease, seizure disorder, sensory disorders, autism, severe allergy, immune deficiencies, or many other conditions. Some of these conditions require daily treatments and some only require observation for signs of impending illness and ability to respond in a timely manner. Neighborhood Centers will collaborate with families and medical providers to implement the strategies to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children with special health needs while simultaneously supporting and partnering with families. Families should have their medical provider fill out the "Care Plan for Children with Special Health Care Needs" form. Staff will be trained on any procedures, skills, modifications, adaptations, or observations required to care for a child with special health needs noted in the form. The form should be updated after any hospitalizations, changes in medical status, or at least annually. If a child in care has a special medical management procedure in place a staff trained in the procedure will be on-site whenever the child is present in order to assure that the child's needs are being met.

Medication Information

If your child needs medication while attending Neighborhood Centers programs, we require proper written permission from a parent or authorized guardian on the "Medication Sheet" form. On this form you will let us know the name of the medication, the physician's name, dosage, number of days and time(s) to be dispensed, method of administration (oral, topical, etc...), and method of storage (refrigerated, not refrigerated). This form must be signed. We have locked medication boxes for refrigerated and unrefrigerated medications. All medications will be kept in these locations unless they need to be kept with your child for emergency purposes. Please make sure to notify your child's teacher and/or the staff at the front desk about the medication and ensure

they understand the directions for administering it. Your child's lead teacher, or other staff who are trained in medication administration, will dispense the medication to your child. The staff administering the medication will document the date, time, and dosage on the medication sheet. In addition, when the medication is not given, the designated staff will indicate the reason on the form.

Over-The-Counter-Medications

It is a parent's responsibility to consult with their doctor to determine which over-the-counter-medications are appropriate. Parents must fill out and sign a "Medication Sheet" form for each product. Your child's name must be written on the label. Over the counter medications will need to be in the original container. Staff will follow the instructions given by the parent but will never exceed the recommended dosage that is stated on the label. We may request that a doctor's note be given in addition to the parent's permission. Neighborhood Centers will not dispense any medication for fever, unless your child's doctor deems it medically necessary.

Prescription Medications

If your child's condition requires a staff member to administer prescribed medications or treatments, you must bring the medicine in the original container from the pharmacy or doctor's office. Your pharmacist will divide your prescription for Neighborhood Centers if you ask. The container must be clearly marked with the child's name, date, name of medication, doctor's name, and the frequency and dosage to be given. You must fill out and sign a "Medication Sheet" form for each prescription. These forms are valid for 1 month.

On-going Medications

Conditions or illnesses that require medication on an on-going or "as needed" basis must have medication permission form filled out annually for use at Neighborhood Centers. Expiration dates for these "long term" medications will be observed. If a medication expires, a new prescription must be obtained before the child will receive the medication.

Skin and Diaper Medications

Skin creams, such as for diaper rash, may be applied if the child has no adverse side effects from the product. You are asked to provide all skin and diaper creams. Parents must fill out a "Medication Sheet" form each product that you wish us to apply. These medications will be kept out of the reach of children but in the child's classroom. Please make sure these medications are in the original container and labeled with your child's name. Expiration dates for these medications will be observed. If a medication expires, a new prescription or new medication must be obtained before the child will receive the medication.

Sunscreen:

We recognize that too much sunlight may increase a child's risk of getting skin cancer someday and want to protect the children from this to the best of our abilities. We will offer shady areas to play outside, encourage skin protective clothing, and apply sunscreen or sun block that contains UVB and UVA protection of SPF 30 or higher with parents' permission. This permission form is filled out annually. Families can choose to use Neighborhood Centers sunscreen or bring their own for their child/ren. Sunscreen will be applied to all children unless a medical note from a doctor indicates otherwise.

Insect Repellent: During the warmer spring and summer months and when public health authorities recommend use of insect repellent due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, with parent's permission, we will apply insect repellent containing 10% DEET for ages 2 and under and up to but not over 30% DEET for children over 2 years of age. **Children under 2 months of age will not receive insect repellent.** Parents may choose to not have their child receive insect repellent or may supply their own for use on their child.

Parent Involvement Information

We believe that you and your child's teachers are partners in preparing your child for future success. We believe that it is essential to keep the lines of communication open between families and teachers in order to build this partnership. Families need to know what experiences their child is having at school, as well as how they are progressing in their development. In our programs, you will work together with teachers to decide what kinds of learning experiences are best for your child.

We seek input from parents because we believe that parents know their children best and know how and what they want their children to learn. The following strategies are in place to build a strong relationship between parents, teachers, and children.

Family Orientation: We believe that it is vital for parents and children to visit the classroom, meet the teachers, review the family handbook, and share information prior to attending program. Prior to enrollment, we recommend one or more visits to become familiar with our program and our staff. We know that it can be difficult for families to start a new classroom or to start with a new teacher in a new year. Our goal is to make these transitions as comfortable and easy as possible for the child and the family through orientation. We orient families to Neighborhood Centers by doing an enrollment home visit followed by a visit to the classroom and tour of the center. A tour will include; viewing spaces to be used by your child, learning how to sign in and out, and receiving a general routine of the day. At the enrollment visit we will share our family handbook that contains all of our policies and give opportunities for families to ask any questions they may have. We want to be flexible and sensitive to children and families to ensure they have a positive orientation experience. We consider the individual needs of children and families at this time, such as cultural and/or linguistic background, family's needs in relation to work and other commitments in respect to time, any previous experiences families have had with childcare, additional needs of the child and/or family, and child's age and abilities. This orientation builds the foundation of the parent/teacher communication system.

Enrollment Home visit: At the beginning of each school year (August) or upon time of enrollment Neighborhood Centers will do an enrollment home visit. The purpose of the visit is to promote the home-school relationship and to engage families in their child's learning and development. Parents are a child's first and most important teacher, so it is important to partner with families to communicate school information. We believe this creates a more effective early learning experience. We will make every attempt to conduct the enrollment home visit in the parent and child's home however, please let your child's teacher know if you need to make an exception to the enrollment home visit. If needed, we can conduct the visit at the center or a neutral location.

Daily Exchanges with Parents: We believe that it is best to have on-going, daily contact with parents. At drop-off and pick-up, we hope you will be able to spend a little extra time talking with teachers so that we can continue to build our relationship—together we can provide a strong education for your child. These contacts can take on a variety of forms:

- **Unlimited Contact:** You can have unlimited access to your child during hours of operation, unless we have legal documentation on file stating otherwise.
- **Daily Notes Home to Parents:** For every child under two years of age, we shall make a daily written record. At the end of your child's day at the center, the record shall be provided either verbally or in writing to you (or the person who removes the child from the center). The record shall contain the following information on each of these areas:
 - The time periods in which your child slept,
 - The amount of food your child consumed and the times at which it was eaten,
 - The time of and any irregularities in your child's toileting patterns,

- The general disposition of your child, and
- A general summary of the activities in which your child participated.
- **Welcoming/Greeting:** Your child’s teacher will greet you and your child, by name, everyday upon arrival to and departure from the center. We hope that this simple conversation will help you feel welcomed, wanted, and important.
- **Sharing events/information:** We know that parents love to hear “good news” about their child. Your child’s teacher will share information at the end of the day about an activity or event your child did that day; we hope that this will show you that your child enjoys being at the center and that we care about what your child is doing. **Please check your child’s cubby daily and the location where your classroom teacher posts information (door, dry erase board, etc...). These areas will contain important information regarding your child, the center, and any upcoming events.**
- **Parent Communication Challenges:** We serve many families from various cultures and backgrounds and we hope to have quality communication with all of our families. If there are any difficulties in accessing the information in our Early Childhood Programs, we will make every effort to provide a translator or have information translated by our diverse staff who speak many different languages (Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, French, Swahili, and Lingala). Please let us know the language you are most comfortable speaking or reading so that we can communicate for your child’s success.

Parents as Volunteers: Volunteers are a vital part of our programs. A good program calls for many people working together, sharing their talents, knowledge, and energy so families receive the greatest benefit. Our parent volunteers benefit all the children because each child receives more individualized attention, learns to relate to a variety of adult personalities, and learns about different parts of their world from adults who have diverse experiences. We have many opportunities for you to volunteer in our program and we encourage you to volunteer. Some of these opportunities include: accompanying the class on a field trip, preparing activities for the teachers, bringing individual talent into the classroom and sharing it with the children, etc. If you wish to volunteer, please stop at the front desk and fill out a Volunteer Application.

Family Events: We sponsor many events throughout the year to encourage families to spend time together and have fun. We hope your entire family can join us at these events—together we can build strong partnerships that encourage and support your child’s development and growth.

Parent Complaint Procedure: If you disagree with an event in or the general practices of your child’s classroom or the Center, please voice your complaint first to the teacher involved whenever practical. If your complaint is not resolved satisfactorily at this level (or if there is no teacher involved), your complaint may be presented to the Early Childhood Director. If your complaint is still not resolved at this level, you may request a meeting with the Associate or Executive Director. All complaints should be handled in a timely manner.

Parent Requests: From time to time you may have a specific request in regards to the well-being of your child. Though we do our best to accommodate parent’s requests, we always maintain the following guidelines/policies:

- **If dietary and/or medical:** We must have a written and signed note from a doctor stating specifically your child’s medical/dietary condition, restrictions, and any accommodations that we must make to best serve your child.
- **Not going outside:** We feel it is important for all children to go outside to exercise and breathe fresh air daily. Children will go outside unless it is raining, or the temperature is below zero degrees Fahrenheit. If your child is too sick to go outside, they are considered too sick to be at the Center that day.
- **Naps:** Occasionally, parents request that their children not nap while at the Center. Best practice has taught us that young children benefit from naps, rest times, and/or periods of quiet play during the day. These periods of rest allow your child’s body and brain to reenergize and facilitate their learning throughout the day. For children under five, regularly scheduled nap or resting time in comfortable and quiet surroundings are important. We recognize that sleep needs vary by child. Your child will never be forced to sleep but may be encouraged to lie quietly for a period of time.

Parent Advisory Groups: You have a chance to be involved in the decision-making process through Parent Groups and Policy Councils. Ask your child’s teacher for more information on how to become involved.

Family Support Programs: We believe that family is the most important part of a child’s life. For this reason, Family Support Workers are employed to serve the entire family. Many of our Family Support Workers are native speakers of Spanish, Arabic, French, Swahili, Lingala, Portuguese and they all speak English as well. This service provided by Neighborhood Centers can help to connect families culturally and linguistically to the community and its services. Likewise, Family Support Workers provide assistance to families in an effort to improve the conditions and quality of their family life. Family Support Workers can answer your questions, help with family problems, and inform you of community services and resources that will help meet your needs. We also offer a variety of parenting support classes to assist your family in its development and growth.

Child Assessments and Screenings

Our teachers continually observe children to make sure that our teaching and our classrooms are best meeting children’s learning needs. Some of our observations are informal—we notice something about your child while they are playing, and we use that information to help us in planning future activities. Some of our observations are formal—we have specific questions about your child’s development that we answer using assessment tools so that we can create individualized learning goals for your child. If you have any questions or concerns about how our assessments or screenings will meet your child’s needs, please feel free to speak with your child’s teacher or the Early Childhood Director at any time.

Purpose and Use of Assessments: We continually assess your child to determine if our classrooms and curricula are helping them develop and grow. We use the assessment information to make changes in our teaching, to create individualized goals for your child, and to find other resources and/or agencies that can help us meet your child’s learning needs. Specifically, we use assessments to:

- a. Arrange for outside developmental screenings if you or the teachers have any concerns;
- b. Identify your child’s special needs and special interests that can be incorporated into daily plans;
- c. Gather information on all areas of your child’s development and learning, including cognitive skills, language, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, health, and physical development (including self-help skills);
- d. Improve our curriculum by making changes in the lesson plans, routines, and environment;
- e. Plan the overall improvement of the classroom program;
- f. Build a partnership with your family by sharing child information, setting goals, and improving overall communication.

Assessment and Screening Procedures: Our lead teachers primarily assess your child during the classroom day, during the normal routine. We observe your child playing and interacting with materials and other children and record these observations to determine how well their learning is progressing. Sometimes, outside agencies (like Grant Wood AEA) will work with your child outside the classroom for some assessments—like vision and hearing screenings. When this happens, you will be informed in advance, and a classroom teacher will always be present. Whenever possible, our assessment forms are written in the child’s home language and administered by staff who are a native speaker of the child’s home language; utilizing a native speaker of the language provides greater sensitivity to family culture and experiences.

Types of Assessments and Screenings

All our classroom teaching staff are trained to administer the following assessments and screenings. They work together as a team with assistant teachers to gather the most accurate information on each child and use this information in their weekly room-planning meetings to develop classroom and individualized plans.

My Teaching Strategies (GOLD): All children in preschool programs receive a My Teaching Strategies assessment three times a year (early-Fall, winter, late-Spring), and it is completed online. The items on the Child Development and Learning Checklist assess your child's progress with respect to the goals of the Creative Curriculum, so your child's teacher can develop individualized plans for your child. This information will be shared with you during parent teacher conferences, both verbally and in-writing.

Ages and Stages Screenings: Three times per year (fall, winter, and late spring) Ages and Stages Assessments are completed on each enrolled child. Ages and Stages is a screening tool used to reliably identify children in need of further assessment. Each questionnaire contains 30 questions, divided into the following areas of development: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, self-help, and personal-social. You may be asked to help with this assessment, so a complete 'picture' of your child is made. Results will be shared formally with you during parent/teacher conferences, both verbally and in writing.

Ages and Stages SE Screenings: Three times per year (fall, winter, and late spring), A&S-SE are completed on each enrolled child. The A&S-SE is a screening tool used to reliably identify children in need of further assessment because of social and/or emotional issues (often seen as 'behavior' issues). Like the Ages and Stages, each questionnaire contains 25-35 questions and looks for parent-input. Questionnaires may be sent home for parents to provide their input. Results will be formally shared with you during parent/teacher conferences, both verbally and in writing.

Portfolios and online documentation portfolios: Each classroom will maintain a portfolio, and/or an online documentation portfolio, on each child enrolled in our program. In the portfolio we keep assessment information, photos, teacher observation notes and other types of work that document progress and development. We use portfolios for a variety of reasons. Firstly, portfolios are used to share progress with parents. They show real life work and examples of a child's strengths and areas for growth. Secondly, portfolios are used to have children select their best work and be proud of their work. Finally, teachers use the information to help evaluate the child's progress at meeting the goals and objectives of the classroom curriculum.

Outside Agency Screenings and Assessments: We have close relationships with numerous providers in Johnson County and they often help us assess the children in our programs. Parents will sign a release form prior to any outside agency assessment; as with all of our assessments. This information is shared during parent teacher conferences or a parent meeting. Some of the outside assessments include: Grant Wood AEA developmental or hearing screenings; UI College of Dentistry or I Smile dental screenings; and the Lion's Club Vision Screenings.

Reporting Assessments to Parents:

Parent Teacher Conferences: Three times per year (fall, winter, spring) we will complete a parent teacher conference during which we review completed assessment information, and jointly set goals for each child. Additionally, whenever possible, we will have a translator present and provide written information in your home language. Your teacher will let you know when conferences are going to take place and parents will be able to sign up for available conference times. We are flexible with respect to work and school schedules. If the times available will not work, please let your teacher know. We will make every possible accommodation to meet at a time that works best for you. Parent teacher conferences take approximately 30 minutes and are conversational based.

Referral Procedures:

After completing the various assessments on your child, we may find some areas of concerns or areas in which we may need help in planning for your child's needs. Also, after completing parent teacher conferences, parents may report some developmental or behavioral concerns that they are having at home. At this point, we may want to make a referral to one or more of the various support agencies that we work with on a regular basis. We will work with you to determine the referral that best meets your child's needs. Referrals always require written permission from the parent or guardian.

Funding and Fee Information

There are a number of funding options for the Early Childhood Programs at Neighborhood Centers. Each of the options has unique requirements. We accept Child Care Assistance, Promise Jobs, and other DHHS funding sources as well as private payments. Some options do not require monetary payments but do have other eligibility guidelines. To find out about each program's unique requirements, please ask the Early Childhood Director. The following are funding options currently available at Neighborhood Centers. Eligibility requirements are subject to change.

Child Care Assistance (CCA):

CCA is available through the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for families to help pay for the cost of child care while the parent(s) are at work, in school or searching for a job. You must apply to DHHS and receive approval to use this funding at Neighborhood Centers. We are happy to assist families in applying for CCA. Neighborhood Centers is required to follow contracts through DHHS.

Child Care Assistance Co-payments:

When DHHS reviews your CCA application and determines you are eligible for child care assistance, you may be required to pay for part of your child's daycare. This is called a 'co-payment.' DHHS determines the co-payment amount from your CCA application based on your income and family size. If you have a co-payment, it is listed on your DHHS contract and is the amount that you are required to pay for every half-day (unit) your child attends. Co-payment fees are due by the 10th of the month and can be paid at the front desk. Failure to pay may result in your child losing their placement at Neighborhood Centers.

Promise Jobs Funding:

Promise Jobs funding is available to income eligible families to help pay for the cost of child care while the parent(s) is at work or school. You need to apply to Promise Jobs to see if you qualify for services. If you qualify you must meet the requirements of the Promise Jobs contract to maintain your child care.

Grant Funded Programs: We have several grant funded programs at Neighborhood Centers. Families will need to apply for these spots to see if they are eligible. Each grant has its own specific set of eligibility requirements. The requirements may be based on income, age, and/or other eligibility criteria.

Private Pay/Tuition:

Neighborhood Centers offers a private pay or tuition option for families who do not qualify for any other funding options. Private pay/Tuition fees are due by the 10th of the month and can be paid at the front desk. Failure to pay will result in your child losing their placement at Neighborhood Centers. Fees for specific programs are listed in our annual program description. Prices are subject to change.

Food and Mealtimes

Neighborhood Centers participates in the Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). One of the goals of CACFP is to improve the diets of children. It also seeks to establish healthful lifetime food habits through appropriate health/nutrition education. Breakfast is served in the mornings until 9:00 am, and lunch is served between 11:00 am and noon. For programs running in the afternoons, we provide a healthy snack around 3:00 p.m. We will post menus in each program room.

We are willing to work with you and your doctor to meet your child's special dietary needs. If your child requires a special diet please discuss it with the Lead Teacher or the Early Childhood Director. For your child to receive substitutions to the regular meal, written instructions from a doctor are needed. Religious preferences may be made if a parent provides written instructions. A parent may provide birthday treats if they desire, however we ask that you speak to your child's teacher about it beforehand. **We do NOT serve pork at Neighborhood Centers.**

Food and Meal Time Procedures: With the exception of infant foods (breast milk, formula, foods and cereals), we provide all food for children enrolled in programs; **food is not allowed to be brought from home**, unless instructed by a doctor, with written documentation in your child's file. All food provided by parents would be supplemented to meet CACFP guidelines. The food we provide is developmentally appropriate based on the needs of your child. We will follow all of the food preparation, service, and food storage guidelines of the CACFP program.

Infant Feeding (0-12 months): Infants under one year of age are fed on demand. Infants that are unable to sit independently will be held and fed. Infants and toddlers are never fed by propping up a bottle or by being laid in a crib with a bottle. Infants under 6 months are not offered solid foods unless prescribed by a doctor. Infants younger than 12 months are never given cow's milk—only formula or breast milk provided by the parent. Breast milk should be labeled with the child's full name and date that it was expressed. Unfinished or unrefrigerated breast milk or formula will be discarded after two hours. Hot food (over 110 degrees F.) is kept out of the reach of children.

Older Baby Feeding (12-24 months): Eating for older babies (over the age of 1) occurs during the designated mealtimes. Children are not allowed to walk around with snacks, cups, bottles, etc. As soon as your child is developmentally ready, they will be transitioned from a sippie cup and/or bottle and begin to learn how to use an open cup. Whole milk or breast milk is served to children between the ages of 12-24 months. Hot food (over 110 degrees F.) is kept out of the reach of children.

Toddler and Preschool Feeding (24-60 months): Eating for toddlers and preschool children occurs during the designated mealtimes. Food is served family-style. This means that one teacher must be sitting at the table with your child while they eat to help serve food. Teachers are eating the food and engaged in conversation with your child during the meal. Your child will be offered milk or water to drink; we do not offer juice. Foods that pose a risk of choking – such as hot dogs, popcorn, chunks of raw carrots, etc. – are avoided. We will cut large chunks of food into ½ inch pieces for toddlers/young preschoolers to prevent choking. Hot food (over 110 degrees F.) is kept out of the reach of children.

Food Allergies and/or Special Feeding Needs: If your child has special feeding needs or food allergies, you will need to provide a doctor's note detailing the allergy and/or feeding need; this form is maintained in your child's file. We will make daily notes to be given to you recording how much and when your child ate. For your child's safety, you will be required to authorize Neighborhood Centers to visibly post any food allergies or special needs in the classroom for all our staff to see.

Program Policies

All of our program policies comply with Federal and State Civil Rights laws and prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, or sex.

Admission to the Program

If you are interested in a spot in one of our childcare rooms, please fill out a waiting list form. The Office Manager or Early Childhood Director will contact you if a spot becomes available for your child.

Attendance Policy

For all Neighborhood Centers early childhood programming good attendance is required. It is important for your child to attend each day to be part of the routines and learning activities that are incorporated into the schedule. We ask that your child have at least 80% attendance each month (which is approximately 4 absences or fewer per month).

Neighborhood Centers prides itself in providing quality learning experiences for each child in our program. Classrooms have established consistent daily routines, and often this routine becomes disrupted when children arrive during an activity. If your child's program has specific set hours you should attend during those set hours. If your child is enrolled in full-day programs you are strongly encouraged to have your child at the center by 9:30 AM.

If your child is going to miss school or be late, we require that you contact Neighborhood Centers and communicate the reason with your child's teacher or office manager. If for any reason you are unable to cooperate with our attendance policy, please speak with the Early Childhood Director. Some exceptions can be made such as; long-term illnesses, surgery, vacations, appointments etc. Attendance will be reviewed each month, and if your child's attendance becomes a concern they may be unenrolled from program.

Center Access and Security

Neighborhood Centers functions as a community center therefore as one of its main purposes the center is open to the community during hours of operation. However, the classroom your child is enrolled in has limited access. Only approved staff who have received background checks and training, supervised volunteers, and individuals who are authorized to drop off and pick up can access the classrooms. As such, we ask that all people who have access to the classrooms enter and exit the buildings at the front entrance so our staff at the front desk can keep track of who is in the building to help maintain safety and security for the entire building.

Authorizing individuals to pick up your child

A section on the intake form allows you to authorize individuals who may pick up your child. You may authorize as many individuals as you wish on the form. For the protection and safety of your child, we will not allow your child to leave with an unauthorized person. Please remember to keep this form updated. Individuals picking up your child should have identification with them. A staff member that is unfamiliar with the pick-up person may request identification to verify they are authorized to pick-up your child. If the person picking up your child cannot provide identification, we will not allow your child to leave with that individual.

Bad Weather Policy

When the Iowa City Community School District (ICCS) cancels school for the day because of cold, snowy, or icy weather, all Neighborhood Centers programs will also be cancelled. Neighborhood Centers will not run separate information on the radio or television stations, so when ICCS has cancelled, you will know that Neighborhood Centers is also cancelled.

When the ICCSD dismisses early and/or starts late, Neighborhood Centers will follow that schedule. So, for example, if ICCSD starts "two hours late," Neighborhood Centers will open at 9:30. If they dismiss at 1:00, we will close at 1:00

Biting

In the case that a child is bitten by another child while in our care, the teacher will fill out an injury report detailing the incident. The parent will sign the form and keep a copy. A second copy will be filed in the child's licensing file. The bitten area will be treated as appropriate with an ice pack and/or bandage. Please know that we try to prevent children from being bitten and if it does occur, we will work closely with parents of the 'biter' to plan for the biting to stop. We will keep the name of the 'biter' confidential.

Center Closings

Neighborhood Centers will be closed for the following holidays: Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, and Fourth of July. Also, at our Pheasant Ridge location we will close twice a year (up to 4 days), date to be determined, for Eid al Fitr and Eid al Adha.

In addition to the holiday closings, we will close programs for building cleaning and staff development for a week in August prior to the start of Iowa City schools and between Christmas and New Year's Day. We will close for an all staff professional development day on Friday, October 4, 2024. Finally, each month **we close at 2:00 on the second Thursday of the month** for on-going staff training and development. In addition to our closed days we may have times of the year, usually closely tied into a holiday or a non-school day at ICCSD, that we may offer "limited childcare". These days we will ask for families to sign up only if they absolutely need care for their child.

Clothing

It is important for every child to have a change of clothing at the Center, even those beyond the stage of toileting "accidents." Your child may spill juice, milk, or paint or get wet or dirty while playing outdoors. We ask that you please clearly mark all items of clothing. Please dress your child appropriately for the environment (we do a lot of messy activities) and the weather. If your child needs a change of clothing and has none available, we will call you to bring the items immediately.

We have a limited capacity to do laundry. If your child dirties their clothing while at the Center, it will be rinsed, placed in a leak-proof bag, and given to you at the end of the day.

Dropping-off and Picking-up your child policy

It is important that families and teachers use the time of drop-off and pick-up to connect and communicate. It is important that the drop-off person take the child to their classroom and greet the teachers and communicate any important or relevant information needed to care for your child for that day. Likewise, teachers may communicate any relevant information that you may need to know as well. At pick-up time the same pattern is true in reverse. Come to your child's classroom (or playground) and teachers will greet you and communicate any relevant information that you need to know about your child's day, things needed for the next day, important forms or paperwork, or anything that may help you care better for your child after-pick up. This communication is hindered if the drop-off and pick-up person are on their cell-phone or digital devices. Therefore, we need all drop-off and pick-up persons to be cell-phone or device free during the entire drop-off and pick-up time. Also, as cell-phones or electronic devices are distracting for adults they are even more distracting for children. We also need children to come into the center cell-phones or electronic devices free. This will create a better atmosphere and stronger communication at drop-off and pick-up time and make this time of transition smoother.

Diapers and Formula

Parents are asked to furnish diapers and formula for their children still using either of these items. Neighborhood Centers will provide diaper wipes and whole milk for children over one year.

Shoe-Free Policy (Infant/Toddler Room only)

We ask that all parents, teachers/staff, and children entering the Infant/Toddler room be shoe-free. We want to provide a clean, safe, and healthy environment in the Infant/Toddler Room. Infants and Toddlers spend much of their time exploring on the floor, so it is best that these areas be kept as clean as possible. Therefore, we take this action to prevent outside contaminants from being brought into the room and spread onto the floor. We ask that teachers, staff, and children remove their shoes every day before entering the room and that parents and adults either remove their shoes or wear a shoe covering.

Discharge Policy

An individual may be asked to take a break from our Early Childhood Programs because of noncompliance with any of our program policies, failure to pay co-payments monthly or to maintain full day funding. When a child is discharged from our program, the parent will receive verbal and written notice specifying their child's last day, and what needs to be completed or changed prior to re-entry into the program. If families wish to appeal the discharge decision, they should request a meeting with the Early Childhood Director.

In the case of extreme developmental or behavioral concerns Neighborhood Centers will follow The Challenging Behavior Flow Chart (copy provided upon request). In which the goal is not to expel or suspend a child from the program but to ensure they are receiving the services they need to be successful in school. The Challenging Behavior Flow chart is driven by data and observation of the child's behavior along with familial input and feedback. If needed, support from external professional partners such as AEA may be utilized. Every effort will be made to implement interventions in our program that can help the child to be successful at Neighborhood Centers. In the case that these interventions are not successful we will work with the family to access services and help them to find alternative placement for their child.

Discipline

We believe that all people, adults and children, deserve love and respect. We create a positive atmosphere at the Center by encouraging and supporting one another. We do not accept violence of any kind; physical or corporal punishment, psychological abuse including seclusion, or coercion will never be used by staff members of Neighborhood Centers.

Our staff uses PBIS (see description below). However, if children are behaving violently or dangerously, they may be sent home until a meeting can be arranged between the Lead Teacher, Early Childhood Director, and the parent to come up with an approved intervention plan.

PBIS Mission Statement

At Neighborhood Centers we are committed to utilizing the best practices of the Teaching Pyramid Model to create positive, safe, and effective learning environments. Neighborhood Centers is committed to using Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) as our method of guidance and approach towards challenging behaviors

Implementing PBIS at Neighborhood Centers

Through our use of the Teaching Pyramid Model, Neighborhood Centers works to build strong, caring, supportive, and responsive relationships with families and their children. Our programs teach a consistent set of expectations and rules through the use of predictable and consistent schedules, routines, and transitions. Each program teaches social and emotional skills individually, in small groups, and in large groups using educationally and developmentally appropriate materials. Our children are acknowledged for positive behavior throughout program,

helping them to develop critical skills needed for sharing, taking turns, building friendships, coping with emotions, being resilient, and prepared in a rapidly changing world.

When needed, Neighborhood Centers will create individualized interventions to assist children in their success at program. Supervisors will collaborate with a team, including guardians and staff, and collect data to determine the best plan of action to help a child achieve success. Some interventions may require the assistance of outside staff, or agencies, which will partner with our team to determine optimum success for our students.

At Neighborhood Centers we continue to promote the Teaching Pyramid Model through continuing support and growth of PBIS skills with our staff. Each staff is purposefully trained throughout their time at Neighborhood Centers. We believe that through PBIS based environments, children will be intrinsically motivated to practice prosocial behaviors and become leaders within our community. We wish to instill confidence, resilience, and courage into all of our children, and we strongly believe that PBIS is the method to achieve our goal.

Emergency Contact Person

It is crucial that emergency contact persons and their phone numbers be accurate on your child's forms. Each child needs to have two emergency contacts that are not listed as adults living in the household (top part of the intake). Please keep in mind that this person must be available to deal with emergency situations. In addition, the emergency contact person needs to be able to pick up your child, if necessary.

Field Trip Policy

Programs at the Neighborhood Center take advantage of the rich community in which we live by going on numerous field trips. Your child will benefit by having the opportunity to visit parks, libraries, and cultural, educational or recreational events that the Johnson County area offers. Parents authorize their children to participate in field trips when they sign the Release of Liability section on the Intake required to participate in our early childhood programs. You are always welcome and encouraged to participate. Your child's teacher will post all planned field trips with the weekly lesson plans. Transportation is provided through the Neighborhood Centers vans and Iowa City Transit Bus System.

Parents who do not wish their child to participate in a field trip should speak with their child's teacher. If staffing patterns allow us to have the child participate in another classroom, they will be allowed to stay at the center. If we do not have the staff to accommodate your request, or if you arrive and your child's class has already left for a field trip, we will discuss your options with you

Idling Vehicles

Neighborhood Centers discourages idling vehicles in our parking areas, unless you need to maintain interior or engine temperatures on extreme hot or cold days. Our goal in doing this is to make the air healthier for everyone by cutting down on hazardous pollution in our community. Idling vehicles emit the same pollutants as moving cars. These pollutants have been linked to serious human illnesses including asthma, heart disease, chronic bronchitis, and cancer. We also want to improve the environment. For every 10 minutes your engine is off, you'll prevent one pound of carbon dioxide from being released (carbon dioxide is the primary contributor to global warming).

Tobacco Free/Nicotine-Free Policy

Neighborhood Centers facilities and grounds, including Neighborhood Centers vehicles, and staff vehicles on Neighborhood Centers grounds are off limits for tobacco and nicotine use including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, vape, pipes, snus, Electronic Smoking Devices (ESD), and nicotine products that are not Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved for tobacco cessation. This requirement extends to students, employees, and visitors. This policy applies at all times, including Neighborhood Centers sponsored and non-Neighborhood Centers sponsored events. Persons failing to abide by this policy are required to extinguish their

smoking material, dispose of the tobacco/nicotine product or leave Neighborhood Centers premises immediately. Providers/teachers/staff and volunteers are prohibited from wearing clothing that smells of smoke when working. It is the responsibility of the administration to enforce this policy.

Late Policy

Our full-day Early Childhood programs close at 5:30; it is important that you arrive on time to pick up your child. If you are late picking up your child, you can choose to pay \$1/minute for the late fee or lose the next day of care. All late fees MUST be paid in cash, check, Venmo, or PayPal at the time of pick-up.

When a child is not picked up within 30 minutes of the Center closing, staff are unable to get in touch with a parent or an emergency contact. Neighborhood Centers must contact the Iowa City Police and/or DHHS to report that your child has been neglected to be picked up, and your child will be turned over to the proper authorities.

Meals and Snacks

Neighborhood Centers participates in the Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The goal of the CACFP is to improve the diets of children, handicapped and elderly people. It also seeks to establish healthful lifetime food habits through appropriate health and nutrition education. Breakfast is served in the mornings from 8:30-9:00, with lunch being served between 11:00-12:00. For programs running in the afternoons, we provide a healthy snack at 3:00 until 3:30. Menus are posted by each program room.

If your child requires a special diet please discuss it with the Lead Teacher or the Early Childhood Director. For your child to receive substitutions to the regular meal, written instructions from a doctor are needed. We are willing to work with you and your doctor to meet your child's special dietary needs. Religious preferences may be made if a parent provides written instructions. All food provided by parents would be supplemented to meet CACFP guidelines. A parent may provide birthday treats if they desire, however we ask that you speak to your child's teacher about it beforehand.

Outside Play

We feel it is important for all children to go outside to exercise and breathe fresh air each day. Children will go outside unless it is raining, the temperature is below 0, or the heat index is dangerously high. So, please send the appropriate outerwear. If your child is too sick to go outside, he/she is considered too sick to be at school.

Participation Policy

We believe that all people should have an equal opportunity to participate in our programs. Individuals with special needs are accommodated, whenever possible, in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act.

Privacy Policy

The Neighborhood Centers places a high priority on protecting your privacy. This privacy policy was created in order to demonstrate Neighborhood Center's firm commitment to the privacy of our families. This policy explains what types of information is collected by Neighborhood Centers and how this information is used.

Neighborhood Centers families that participate in Neighborhood Centers programs provide us with contact information (such as name and e-mail address). Through the course of services, we may also collect information on: child wellness, program attendance data, child development assessments, and general household and family information.

Neighborhood Centers uses your personal information to provide you with personalized service and to continuously improve our programs. Some of our credentials and funding agencies require that we enter your personal information in online data collection systems. Neighborhood Centers does not sell or rent email addresses or other contact information to anyone outside the organization. We may amend this privacy policy from time to time; please review it periodically.

Reporting Child Abuse

Neighborhood Center complies with Section 235A of the Iowa Code, which mandates that any employee of a licensed day care make a report to the Department of Human Services when child abuse or neglect is suspected. Whenever possible, we will inform the parent if a report is made and support the parent through the investigation process. "What staff must report is their suspicion that someone may have purposely hurt your child. They have no choice under the law. Thorough investigators decide whether or not abuse actually took place."

Allegations of Child Abuse or Neglect against Staff.

When the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) receives a report of suspected abuse against an Neighborhood Centers employee during the performance of their job, Neighborhood Centers will cooperate fully with the DHHS process. Neighborhood Centers will make all appropriate records and policy manuals available for review.

During that time...

- ▶ Neighborhood Centers will take immediate action to assure the health and safety of the child involved in the report. This shall be accomplished in a manner that would cause as little disruption to the child as possible.
- ▶ Efforts will be made to place the implicated staff within a supervised setting that does not bring them in contact with children. If an appropriate setting cannot be arranged, the implicated staff will be suspended until the outcome of the case has been issued.
- ▶ Where dismissal or removal of the implicated staff is not necessary in order to protect children, Neighborhood Centers will, as appropriate; increase supervision over the staff, provide instruction and/or technical support, initiate appropriate disciplinary action, and/or provide appropriate training.

Report findings:

- ▶ If the child abuse report is unfounded, the staff will be reinstated in the job duties they held prior to the abuse report and under the same level of supervision. The report/information will be removed from the employee's record.
- ▶ If the child abuse report is founded, they may be terminated from the agency in accordance with Neighborhood Center's Personnel Policies.

Withdrawal from the Program

If you wish to withdraw your child from a Neighborhood Centers Early Childhood program, we ask that you give at least two weeks' notice. This allows us to properly say good-bye to your child and arrange for a new child to enroll in the program.