

MCC PARENT HANDBOOK

Updated February 2019



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1. Welcome to Meadville Children's Center!

We are glad that you chose our center to take part in your child's early education experience. We are committed to you and your child's development. Our center strives to develop your child's physical, social, emotional and intellectual well-being. Meadville Children's Center (MCC) is here as your partner to help care for your children the best way we can and teach them to reach their full potential.

2. MCC Vision

MCC wants you to be a part of our team! Come together and join our day to day lives with our team of creative children, amazing staff, our wonderful families and our supportive community. MCC is full of love, learning, growing and exceeding expectations every day.

MCC continuously makes improvements in quality care and programming for families, professional development of staff and community outreach by focusing on cooperation and support from various groups and families involved with the center. Our team is committed to pursuing growth in our children, program and staff with new equipment and learning tools, creative curriculum to enrich each child's social, emotional, physical, cognitive and creative growth and ongoing professional development focused on our staff's needs and continuing education.

When you walk through our halls, you hear laughter, singing, never ending questions, reading and learning. Our team of staff nurture, teach and love the children who walk through our doors. On any given day, many of our classrooms are visiting learning centers, story time, free play, art, circle time and gross motor time. Many of our favorite escapes are exploring our beautiful college campus where we often go sledding, building snowmen, exploring the creek and playing on the playground. As one can gather, MCC provides a creative learning experience for each child in preparation for any early success and school readiness. Our children come to MCC for a safe, fun, exciting, stimulating learning environment and with the teamwork from our staff and families that is what they are getting!

MCC exceeds standards of excellence, personally and professionally, which proves our dedication to our families, center and our profession. All MCC early childhood professionals are supported with professional development opportunities, trainings, team building events and guidance that enhance their knowledge in early childhood education. Through team building, our teachers are a cohesive unit and provide the children with best experiences to enhance their learning capabilities. As a cohesive unit, our teachers blend their teaching styles to create harmony within the classrooms, share ideas and focus on shared goals for our children. Our staff is dedicated to furthering their knowledge and expertise in early childhood education to better themselves, the center and the experience we provide your child.

MCC maintains a developmentally appropriate environment and program for learning while empowering families to support their child's education in conjunction with the teachers. MCC's cooperative ideals help families and staff come together to create the best environment for the children. On many days at MCC, our center is bustling with visitors from the community coming to do "Read with Me", dental demonstrations, multicultural expo's, therapy dog visits, cooking and fire/policeman visits. These real-life learning interactions

are what the children thrive on and working as a team to create these experiences is what MCC does best. Our programs and services enhance the quality of life for children and families throughout the community while supporting and embracing diversity, self-esteem, life-long learning and individual potential.

3. History

The center was founded in the fall of 1994 by a group of individuals dedicated to the idea of providing specialized high-quality childcare for families in the Meadville area. The center received a start-up grant from Allegheny College to partially fund the project, and was offered space in the Jewish Community Center on Park Avenue. Since initially opening (with just two children enrolled), MCC moved to its current facility in the Odd Fellows Building on North Main Street. In April 2000, the center changed its name to Meadville Children's Center (MCC) to better reflect the service to the community. The center has grown to serve more than 75 children on a regular basis and operates independently of Allegheny College, mostly from child tuition.

4. Licensing

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) Children, Youth and Family Division license MCC. We follow all regulations set forth by the state for the care of children. All staff is qualified according to the requirements of the state licensing board. The Center maintains state-mandated teacher to child ratios at all times at MCC. A DHS agent reviews our staff regularly. A current copy of the license is on display in the front entry glass display case.

5. Keystone STARS

Our center also participates in the PA Keystone STARS program. Keystone STARS is Pennsylvania's program to promote continuous quality improvement in early learning and school age environments. The Keystone STARS program is an initiative with research-based Performance Standards as its foundation. The STARS standards are tiered in levels that range from start with STARS to STAR FOUR. This program is also an important part of Pennsylvania's growth in early learning system. Lastly, the Keystone STARS program is a tool to increase parental and community awareness of the importance of quality early learning.

6. Program Philosophy

Meadville Children's Center believes in the importance of stimulating the development of young children by providing age-appropriate, individualized care in a warm, loving environment. Because our center believes that children are all unique, our program is designed to meet the specific developmental needs of every child. Our program works as a team to provide a safe, stimulating environment that accommodates and embraces differences within each child. Our goal is to promote children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. We believe that hands-on play, either guided by the teacher or initiated by the child, provides the proper growth and development in these areas that each child needs. Our program values the team atmosphere where staff and families are partners in the children's progress. This partnership is essential for the continuous growth and development of each child.

7. Program Description

Meadville Children's Center is a licensed, non-profit child development center that provides quality care for children from six weeks to 12 years old (exceptions may be made with Board of Directors' approval). Our center is divided into seven classrooms: Infant, Wobble, Young Toddler, Older Toddler, 3-year old Preschool, 4/5 year old Pre-K and After school. Each classroom follows Creative Curriculum and has class lesson plans to guide their week. Our center offers full day or half day care for all of our children with after school hours for our school-age program. Hours of operation are:

Infant, Wobble, YT, OT, Preschool, Pre-K	School-Age
6:30am-8:00am – Morning drop-off	School Year- 2:45pm-6:00 pm
8:00am-5:00pm - Classroom Daily Schedules	Summer Program 6:30am-6:00pm
5:00pm-6:00pm – Pick-up	

*These times can guide parents to help them know when the program starts their daily schedule which includes breakfast, circle time, center times, gross motor time, lunch, rest/nap, snack and free play. Drop-off and pick-up don't have to fall within these times. Parents may drop-off and pick-up at any time.

8. Program Goals and Objectives

Goal: MCC will stimulate the development of young children by providing age-appropriate, individualized care in a warm, loving environment.

Objective: Activities are planned to promote the cognitive, social, visual, auditory, tactile, emotional and physical development of each child.

Goal: MCC will help the children thrive by encouraging them to explore and experiment in a nurturing environment.

Objective: The center will find and retain highly qualified caregivers, who can develop a consistent, knowledgeable relationship with each child for whom they care.

Goal: All parents will be involved in their child's early education experience and the on-going operations of the Center.

Objective: Parents will be encouraged to provide their input on their child's development, contribute new ideas, attend social gatherings and teacher meetings, and contribute to fundraising events.

Goal: Everyone involved with our center will be treated equally and respected for diversity.

Objective: The center will treat everyone equally and respect who he or she are by exploring diversity.

9. MCC Classrooms

Infant Room

The Infant Room creates a soothing and loving atmosphere for our babies. Teachers in this classroom will be expected to care for our infants 6 weeks to 12 months old. In this room, the infants learn to explore their surroundings, begin to communicate, develop gross motor skills, and experience a variety of new things. Learning is encouraged through play and interactions with caregivers. There are five different learning "play" areas according to our (very simplified) lesson plan, which allow the babies to explore in different areas of development.

Parents will provide your child with bottles, sippy cup, pacifier, food for breakfast, lunch, and snack, diapers and diaper ointment, and two changes of clothing. Children may hold comfort items when in need of soothing or while falling asleep however blankets will be removed while in the crib for safety purposes. The infants will have their own personal schedules, which can be discussed between the teachers and parents upon arrival. Teachers will give parents a "Getting to Know You" form for them to complete. There will be daily love notes sent home to communicate how your child's day went. In addition, each classroom has wipe boards outside their rooms to communicate daily with all families.

Wobble Room

The Wobble room is a room of transition for children around the ages of 12-18 months. The Wobble room is designed to add a little structure in a child's routine, yet it still allows flexibility to meet individual needs. In this room the children will be introduced to a cot/mat; while they will lay on a cot/mat the providers may rock a child or pat their backs to comfort a child. In this room the children will be introduced to a low chair, which looks like highchair but is low to the ground like the chairs that they will experience in the YT room. This room will provide scheduled eating and sleeping times, however if a child still needs a morning nap or more to eat the option is available. In this class the children will mainly self-feed with some help from the teacher with more runny foods such as yogurt. The children should be able to feed themselves with their hands and the teacher will encourage spoon use as they grow. Parents may communicate a child's individual needs at drop-off, pick-up, or by phone. Daily love notes sent home to communicate how your child's day went. In addition, each classroom has wipe boards outside their rooms to communicate daily with all families.

Each child is provided with a personal cubby to keep a coat, extra clothes, and other belongings. Children will also be provided with breakfast, lunch, and snack. Parents will provide a nap blanket and crib sheet for the cot/mat, diapers, diaper ointment, and extra clothes.

Young Toddler Room

The Young Toddler Room encourages and educates the 1-year old children by exploring and experimenting in new areas. The young toddlers engage in activities to enhance their motor and verbal skills and participate in structured weekly-themed activities. The young toddlers also participate in free play to develop their interaction with other children. Parents will provide a nap blanket and crib sheet for the cot, diapers, diaper ointment, and extra clothes. Breakfast, lunch, and snack is provided. Naps are required for the young toddlers between 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. though daily times may vary slightly. There will be daily love notes sent home to communicate how your child's day went. In addition, each classroom has wipe boards outside their rooms to communicate daily with all families.

Older Toddler Room

Our Older Toddler Room creates a fun learning atmosphere for our 2-year old children. This room promotes cooperative play and recognition of basic numbers, colors, shapes, and letter. The children regularly participate in themed activities that include literacy, art, gross motor, fine motor, math, science, dramatic play, and blocks. The children enjoy free play and are working on their communication skills through play. The Older Toddler Room will follow the parents lead in introducing the potty-training process; parents are welcome to bringing in pull-ups and underwear once the child is ready. There will be daily love notes sent home to communicate how your child's day went. In addition, each classroom has wipe boards outside their rooms to communicate daily with all families.

The center provides a cubby for the child's belongings to be stored. The center also provides breakfast, lunch, and snack. Parents will provide a nap blanket and crib sheet for the cot, diapers/pull-ups/underwear, diaper ointment and extra clothes. Naps are required for the older toddlers between 12:30 p.m. and 2:30p.m; times may slightly vary.

Preschool Room

Our preschool program is divided into four classrooms: two Pre-K Counts classrooms, a 3-5 year old preschool and a 4 and 5 year old Pre-K program. The children regularly participate in themed activities that include literacy, art, gross motor, fine motor, math, science, dramatic play, and blocks. Both preschool rooms help the children participate in activities that promote their independence and self-help skills. Preschoolers' verbal, written, and motor skills are encouraged through interaction with the other children and guidance from the teachers. The Preschool children participate in structured activities throughout the day, including circle time, small group time, and gross motor/music time. The preschoolers' activities are guided by the PA Learning Standards and are demonstrated through weekly themed lesson plans.

The center provides a cubby for your child's belongings along with a notorious breakfast, lunch, and snack. Parents will provide a cot sheet (crib size), and a blanket for naptime. Children are encouraged to leave all pacifiers and bottles at home after their transition to the Preschool. All Preschoolers are encouraged to be potty-trained before coming into the room; if they are not potty trained pull-ups are preferred. Quiet time/nap is provided for the younger preschool class between 12:45 p.m. and 2:45 p.m. There will be optional daily love notes sent home to communicate how your child's day went. In addition, each classroom has wipe boards outside their rooms to communicate daily with all families.

After-School Program

The After-School Program provides children with a safe and secure environment to interact after school. The children regularly participate in themed activities that include literacy, art, gross motor, fine motor, math, science, dramatic play, and blocks. Completion of homework while at Meadville Children's Center is optional, however it is not enforced by MCC.

We will provide transportation from 1st District, 2nd District, and Neason Hill to the after-school program at Meadville Children's Center. Scheduling of transportation will be reviewed each summer for the following

year. All transportation arrangements from Crawford Central schools must be approved by the school district's transportation office.

Afternoon snack is provided to school -age children. On days when the children do not have school and the center is open, the after-school program will be available for the day at a separate price, with breakfast, lunch, and snack provided. An all-day program is also offered throughout the summer, when school is not in session. The summer program includes a daily schedule of centers, projects, classroom meetings. Additionally, summer activities may be discussed and provided. Parents are asked to provide an extra set of clothes and a lunch if it is a full day of care.

10. Classroom's Daily Schedules

Classrooms each have their own individual schedule to meet the needs of that individual age group and learning activities. While schedules are designed to account for each minute of the center's operational hours, schedules are also designed to be flexible, but generally do follow a rational sequence of events that help's children anticipate, follow, and establish routines. Classroom schedules are designed for smooth transitions between daily events and allow for variations in the schedule to meet the needs of each child attending.

Physical Activity

Young children need physical activity to develop healthy bodies (brain and neurologic development, lungs, heart, muscles, bones, and appropriate weight) as well as gross motor and social skills. They sleep, learn, and exhibit greater self-regulation when physical activity is part of their daily routines. Physical activity habits developed in early childhood may last a lifetime. Young children's activity level depends on the opportunities that their teachers and families provide for them. Because the hours spent in child care are such a large part of the child's waking hours, it is essential that child care curriculum includes as much of the total time and type of physical activity children need daily as possible. (The full policy and Procedure is available upon request.)

Screen Time

MCC limits screen time. Tablets may be used for educational references and other approved special occasions with children ages 2 years and older. Screen time should be reflected on the lesson plan and should not exceed a total of 5 minutes daily unless approved otherwise.

11. Curriculum Statement

The staff of MCC is committed to providing a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate and environmentally based. This means that the furnishings, equipment and materials at the center, as well as the way they are made available to the children, are designed to allow the children to explore freely and to develop individually within a nurturing environment. Children are provided with opportunities to make choices and to express initiative. Because children need challenges and opportunities to practice and master many kinds of skills, our curriculum is designed to allow them to practice these skills and to encourage their active learning. We also work to create an accessible environment that is void of bias or stereotype.

Curriculum

At Meadville Children’s Center, our teachers utilize the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards and Creative Curriculum as they plan daily activities for the children in all of the major learning areas: art, science, math, literacy, language, dramatic play, blocks, music and movement. These activities are typically based around a weekly theme. Parents will receive daily information about their child's day through a daily note or information on the classroom white board. Lesson plans are hanging in each classroom and parents are welcome to read the lesson plans.

A Mental Model of Curriculum

Appropriate curriculum promotes a balance between planned experiences that help children progress toward defined goals, the experiences that emerge from children’s interests and unexpected events that are “incorporated into the program in ways that comply with standards and curriculum goals.”

An easy way to understand curriculum is to think about it with this mental model, the curriculum star. Utilizing a star theme, the points of a star outline the important “points” to remember when implementing good curriculum:

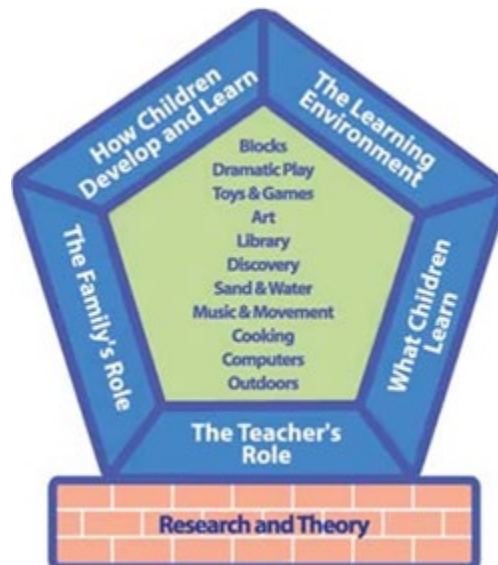


1. Learning environment: Create a classroom environment that reflects the Key Learning Areas of the Learning Standards, is inviting and stimulating and keeps children involved in learning.
2. Teaching methods or instructional practices: Use child observations to make careful, intentional decisions about what children should learn, using the Learning Standards as a guide. Consider the resources needed to develop activities and experiences that motivate children to explore and stay actively engaged.
3. Daily Schedule: Capitalize on both routines and planned experiences to build children’s growth and development and learning opportunities through a balanced and varied schedule that is flexible, yet consistent.
4. Assessment: Assess individual children, the classroom as a group, instructional practices, and the experiences that are provided to determine how children are learning or making progress in skill development. Determine adaptations or revisions that may need to occur to enhance learning.
5. Children’s Goals: Develop individualized goals for children that include experiences and activities that are challenging, yet achievable.

CREATIVE CURRICULUM FOR INFANT AND TODDLERS



CREATIVE CURRICULUM FOR PRESCHOOLERS



For more information on Creative Curriculum, you can go to <http://www.familylifecenters.org/curriculum.htm>.

12. Child Observations/Assessments/Parent & Teacher Conferences

Meadville Children's Center's teachers conduct ongoing observations of the children enrolled at our center. We know how important these observations are to families in order to understand their child's development. The teachers also use the children's observation for their classroom planning. Our MCC teachers will conduct three assessments using Gold and Ages and Stages. The first assessment will occur within the first 45 days of the child's enrollment. Parents are given written information of their child's assessment. MCC offers our families a "getting to know you" meeting within 60 days of the children's enrollment. We offer parents two parent & teacher conferences throughout the year. If your child has an IEP or gets an IEP while at MCC, please make sure to get it to the office, so we can better suit the needs of your children. As the child transitions into another classroom, we will offer a meeting that can include the child's current teacher, new teacher, and parent.

13. Transition Period

Transitions will occur as your child approaches his or her next age or developmental step. Transitions will occur as space in the next classroom permits and as your child is ready for the next change. Parents will be informed of when their child's upcoming transition will be and children will spend time visiting the next classroom up over a period of time before actually moving into the classroom. Parents are invited to be part of this process by having a transition meeting with their child's new teacher. An exit meeting may be requested with the child's former teacher as well. Parents are able to request meetings with their child's teacher and/or the director at any time. Summer and Fall transitions when the typical school year stops and begins is unfortunately a more abrupt transition. However, the teachers discuss the transitions with the children and the child's new teachers.

MCC will provide tools to parents, caregivers, and teachers to ensure that children have a successful transition from their early care environments into the primary grades. When children are enrolled into Kindergarten, parents will also complete a Kindergarten checklist to identify a child's emerging, developing, or mastered skills. As part of our observation and assessment process, each child will have a sample portfolio of their work and developmental skills upon leaving MCC for Kindergarten. We encourage parents to share this information with their child's upcoming teacher.

14. Children's Records

Each child has a classroom and office file. Classroom files will be transferred with a child during transitions. If a child leaves the Center the parent may request information from either file however, it is required by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services that we maintain a copy of children's records for a minimum of one year after their withdrawal or dismissal.

15. Hours of Operation / Calendar

The center is open all year Monday - Friday 6:30 A.M. to 6 P.M.

See the Tuition Price Sheet for cost and current programming.

The Center is closed on the following days:

New Year's Day (observed)
Memorial Day (the day observed)
Independence Day (the day observed)
Labor Day (the day observed)
Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday observed)
December 24 –Jan 1 (Dates may vary depending on the day of the week)

*Note: Monthly tuition rates have been adjusted to give credit for the holidays

16. Tuition and Schedule

The tuition and schedules are set by the Board of Directors. Tuition schedules are available from the director or online at www.meadvillechildrenscenter.org. Tuition is billed monthly and children's schedules must remain the same from week to week. Days may not be alternated or exchanged and drop-in care days are a separate fee from regular monthly tuition. Tuition payments include holiday closures and no credit is applied for months with holiday closings.

The Center accepts clients who receive subsidy for childcare. Information on subsidized care eligibility is available through Child Care Information Services (814-337-8055) or on our information table by the front door.

Tuition is subject to a 2% increase each February.

A 20% discount will be given for siblings of full-time families with 2 or more children, applied to the sibling with the lesser tuition. Discount is only available when payment is received in full by the 1st of the month. A 10% discount is given for siblings of part-time families with 2 or more children, additionally applied to the sibling with the lesser tuition. There are no discounts on drop-in days.

Notes for Clarification:

* Please note that for new children registering, a \$60 deposit is due. This deposit is non-refundable if the child does not attend the center.

* Care is provided on a first-come, first-serve basis and spots are not held for any length of absence.

17. Payments

Payments are due the 20th of each month for the following month's tuition. Parents will receive a bill by the 15th of month. CCIS families with weekly co-pays will receive a bill on a weekly basis. Their weekly co-pay is due by the close of business Friday for the following week.

A late payment fee will be assessed based on the amount due following the schedule: 5% after the 25th of the month. If a family does not pay their child(ren)'s monthly tuition by the 1st of the month, their child(ren) will be asked to take a leave of absence until payment arrangements are made. If there is no payment, the family will be discharged from our program. The families will have to re-enroll their children and are required to pay a registration fee of \$60. See the director if you need to arrange a payment plan.

*** MCC will charge parents \$30 for any check returned to us by the bank for insufficient funds.

18. Client Service Departure Policy

If a family would like to remove their child(ren) from the center, we ask that they notify the director two weeks prior to the removal and complete a withdrawal form. If a family gives the required notice, they are only responsible for the time their child attended the center. However, if a family does not give the center a two-week notice, the family will be responsible for the entire month's tuition.

Meadville Children's Center may ask parents to do an exit parent/guardian survey. This information helps us gather feedback to improve our center.

19. Preventing Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedures

The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education (ED) released a policy statement recommending that states develop policies and practices to increase the inclusion of infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities in high-quality early childhood programs (2015). As a response, Pennsylvania early learning programs were informed of the need to develop program specific policies to prevent, and support the reduction of the suspension and expulsion of young children from their programs (2017). Below is MCC's policy in accordance to OCDEL state regulations

At Meadville Children's Center, we know that children will have typical behaviors at various developmental stages. At times, we may encounter children who have extremely challenging behaviors. Challenging behaviors can correspond with times of stress or other developmental concerns.

At Meadville Children's Center, we create an environment that is developmentally appropriate, predictable, and stable. We make every effort to provide extra support to children facing these times of stress. In a normal development process these behaviors will cease when the stressor is no longer there or they have learned effective coping strategies.

In the event that a child is exhibiting disruptive behaviors, the following behavior plan will be implemented.

- Behavioral concerns will be communicated to guardians through verbal or written communication.
- Teachers and staff will assess the room and individual child behavior using room assessment tools, antidotal notes and the Ages and Stages Tools. Based off of the assessments an action plan will be made.
- If the concerns continue or they have resulted in several incident reports, a meeting with the parent/guardian, teacher, and quality improvement mentor will be arranged. **The meeting will be arranged within a week of the incident** and guardian attendance is required. The meeting will result in a plan of action.

- **Outside professional help may be required** and sought for children who are showing signs of needing more support. This may include MCC seeking services through STARS Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant (ECMH), STARS Infant/Toddler Specialist, STARS Preschool Specialist, or STARS Technical Assistance or parents seeking outside occupational/mental health services (Early Intervention, Intermediate Unit, or a local psychologist). **If a parent does not agree to or seek service per MCC request and their agreement at registration, child care services may be suspended until services are in place or the behavior has discontinued.** If services are not in place or the behavior has not ceased, child care services may be terminated based on our inability to provide for that child's needs.
- **Some behaviors that may result in a plan of action and services include, but are not limited to:**
 - Physical harm to staff or other program participants.
 - Verbal abuse toward staff or other program participants.
 - Indecent physical exposure.
 - Destruction of personal, school, or MCC property.
 - Possession of weapons, firearms, ammunition, and/or explosives.
 - Possession of drugs, tobacco products and/or alcohol.
 - The child is a safety threat to themselves, other children, or the staff.
 - Making terroristic threats.
- If the plan of action is not working or the parent is not cooperating, then the suspension/expulsion may be required.

Challenging /hurtful Behavior

Physically harming behaviors, such as biting, hitting, kicking, pinching, scratching, and hair pulling, are normal behaviors for young children, especially toddlers. There are many reasons why young children hurt, including:

Frustration, teething, anger, needing attention, anxiety/stress, impulsivity, tiredness/fatigue, exploration, defending property or space, lack of motor control, overcrowding, lack of social skills, over stimulation, lack of verbal skills, boredom, peer interaction, not feeling well, cause and effect, lowered coping ability, and hunger.

At Meadville Children's Center, we have a specific way of handling hurtful incidents. Our goal is to help children develop safe and appropriate ways of interacting with others and the environment while children develop tools to solve problems. In order to help prevent hurtful behaviors from occurring the classrooms do many things. Some examples are positive redirection, modeling behavior, limit setting, and structuring activities that promote positive interactions, problem solving, and peer cooperation, as well as health and safety.

We acknowledge the feelings of the child who is hurting, while emphasizing that hurting is not an acceptable behavior, for example: "It looks like you are very angry with Jared, but it is never okay to hit another person. That hurt Jared's body. That made him very sad!" We then try to help the child find a more appropriate way of expressing her/his anger: "If you are mad you can use your words to tell Jared, 'I'm mad!' Or you could stomp your foot if you are mad." The child who was hurting is then redirected to an area way from the area where the hurting occurred. The child who was hurt is given the appropriate first aid when necessary and given more attention than the child who did the hurting. This process varies slightly between individual children and individual circumstances.

Additional Classroom Interventions and Steps Taken to address Behavioral Concerns

- The teachers will research behaviors and current interventions to address behaviors.
- Teachers will receive professional training on challenging behaviors when they are made available. Trainings will include, how to seek Intervention services
- Teachers will be observed twice a year by the administration and training goals will be set in areas that growth is required.
- Teachers will conduct an Ages and Stages assessment and Ages and Stages Assessment within 45 days of enrollment and/or transition to a new classroom. Additional A&S assessments may be completed in the event of concerns
- We will analyze how classroom function affects child behavior. We will look at transitions, daily schedules, physical environment, lesson plans, and assessments.
- We will use the Antecedents, Behavior, and Consequences Assessment tool (A.B.C. assessment) to observe behavior.

Partnership Opportunities with Parents to Build Relationships and Prevent Behaviors

- At intake parents are given an intake questionnaire
- Teachers offer 3 teacher-parent conferences per year
- The Center holds many parent/family events throughout the year
- The parent handbook can be found online or parents can request a paper copy

Outside Recourses Available:

- State Referral Support
 - CONNECT Referral Line
 - 1-800-692-7288
- Local Behavioral Health Facilities:
 - Associates in Counseling (ACCG)
 - 10974 Murray Road, Meadville, PA 16335
 - 814-337-2224 or 724-983-1381
 - Children's Behavioral Health
 - 16269 Conneaut Lake Rd, Meadville, PA 16335
 - 814-333-1602
 - Comprehensive Children and Family Services
 - 15957 Conneaut Lake Road, Meadville PA 16335
 - 814-724-1141 or 1-800-630-2237
 - Family Services of Northwestern PA/Family Based Mental Health
 - 18360 Technology Dr. #200, Meadville, PA 16335
 - 814-724-4800
 - Stairways Behavioral Health
 - 847 North Main Street, Meadville, PA 16335
 - 847-337-8762
 - Achievement Center

- 18257 Industrial Drive, Meadville, PA 16335
- 814-724-1331
- Local Counseling Services:
 - Neighborhood Counseling Services, LLC
 - 16265 Conneaut Lake Road, Meadville, PA 16335
 - 814-807-1330
- Local Developmental Services:
 - Crawford County Early Intervention Program (Birth to 3)
 - 18282 Technology Drive, Suite 101, Meadville, PA 16335
 - 814-724-8380 or 877-334-8793
 - Northwest Tri County Childhood Intervention Intermediate Unit #5
 - 252 Waterford Street, Edinboro, PA 16412
 - 800-677-5610 or 814-734-8461
 - 966 South Main Street, Suite 104
 - 814-724-8401

Additional Parent Resources:

Announcement regarding the Reduction of Expulsion and Suspension in Early Childhood Programs in Pennsylvania: <http://www.pakeys.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/>

Announcement-Reduction-of-expulsion-and-suspension-in-EC-programs-in-PA.pdf

Commonly asked questions about child care centers and the ADA: <https://www.ada.gov/childqanda.htm>

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, Federal Laws and Guidance: <http://ectacenter.org/topics/inclusion/legis/fedlegisl.asp#rehab>

Race Matters: <http://www.pakeys.org/pa-early-learning-initiatives/race-matters/>

Announcement: OCDEL -13 #01, Children Experiencing Homelessness: <http://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Early%20Learning/Early%20Intervention/Laws%20Regulations%20and%20Announcements/Announcements/2013/OCDEL%2013-01%20Children%20Experiencing%20Homelessness%20Announcement.pdf>

Guidelines for Working Effectively with ELL Families: <http://www.pakeys.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/01/Working-Effectively-with-Families.pdf>

EITA's Professional Development Page: <http://www.eita-pa.org/professional-development/>

Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support: <http://www.papbs.org/ContentLoader.aspx?PageID=8409ccdab7ed-4188-87d5-00d1c638dad2>

Paths Training: <http://www.pathstraining.com/main/>

Second Step: <http://www.secondstep.org/early-learning-curriculum>

The Incredible Years: <http://www.incredibleyears.com/>

Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation: <https://www.ecmhc.org/tools/curricula.html>

Prevent Expulsion, Data Collection: <http://preventexpulsion.org/1a-develop-processes-for-data-baseddecision-making/>

Prevent Expulsion, Developing Family-Program: <http://preventexpulsion.org/1b-implement-processesfor-developing-family-program-school-partnerships/>

Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/child-health-development/watch-me-thrive>

Prevent Expulsion, Developmental Screening and Assessment: <http://preventexpulsion.org/1c-integrateddevelopmental-screening-and-assessment-into-the-program-school/>

Pyramid Model: <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, Practical Strategies for Teachers/Caregivers: <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html#teachingskills>

Office of the Administration for Children and Families, Reducing Suspension and Expulsion Practices in Early Childhood Settings: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/child-health-development/reducing-suspensionand-expulsion-practices>

PA Key, Reduction of Expulsions and Suspensions in Early Childhood Settings: <http://www.pakeys.org/pa-early-learning-initiatives/promoting-inclusion-reducing-expulsion-and-suspension/>

Inclusion Statement

Meadville Children's Center includes children of all race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, sex, or level of behavioral health. All children are together with their peers. MCC's teachers write lesson plans to reflect the individual needs of the children.

MCC will work with families to seek external supports in the following areas, social mental health, educational, wellness, and medical services. Families will be given a list of resources and contacts for their individual concern. If a parent would like support in contacting an external agency the office is willing to call on their behalf. Once services are arranged MCC is willing to participate in meetings or host meetings at the Center. With Parental permission, MCC is willing to share information with other agencies and work as a team to address concerns.

Language Inclusion Statement

At MCC all families are welcome. MCC will make every effort to support language and development and academic achievement in children who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Administration and teachers will use free online language translators and in person translators when needed. The teachers will talk to parents, and will implement cultural books into the book center and print off words in the child's language to label items in the classroom. Teachers will use baby sign language with the children and included the parents in

the process. At initial enrollment and as we get to know each other, teachers will ask parents for key words in the child's native language for things like: bathroom, drink, eat, mom, dad, sibling, and pet names.

20. Client Responsibilities and Conduct

Admission and Registration: Children who are 6 weeks through 12 years old may be enrolled at the Center. After an initial consultation with the Office Manager, a child may be enrolled when the following information is returned:

- Application form
- Emergency contact form
- Agreement form
- \$60 one-time registration fee
- **Current health assessment** * * Parents have up to 30 days to bring in a health assessment; however, it is preferred to have it for the first day of attendance
- Health assessment and emergency contact forms are needed for DHS regulations and safe operation of the center. If the child does not have these forms, they may be put on a leave of absence from the center until forms are renewed.

We ask that our parents display professional behavior at all times while visiting our children's center; children are receptive to everything. We need your help as a parent to ensure our center is a safe, loving, and nurturing environment. **Parents are expected to update their child's emergency record and agreement with the Office Manager every six months and the food program application yearly.** This ensures that we have accurate information on your child's paperwork. If you need to make changes on the emergency contact forms, please see the Office Manager immediately. Meadville Children's Center also asks that parents work with the teachers to attend your child(ren)'s development observation meetings. The teachers will do their best to schedule these meetings at convenient times for the families.

MCC also reserves the right to remove a family from the program for any one of the following reasons:

- Parental inability to comply with Center rules.
- Parental inability to pay tuition.
- Failure to submit a physical and immunization record as mandated by regulation within 30 days of the child's first day of enrollment.
- Failure of a parent or guardian to maintain payment schedule.
- Chronic failure to pick-up on time.
- Chronic failure to provide appropriate items for their child(ren) at the Center.

21. Bring Along Items

The items your child needs to bring to the center are based on your child(ren)'s classroom. All personal belongings need to be labeled. Every classroom asks that you bring these items:

Blanket

Sheet (crib sized)

Extra outfits including socks (seasonal appropriate)

Diapers/pull-ups/underwear

Seasonal Appropriate Outwear: Coat, hat, mittens, snow pants, boots and swim suits

*We are not responsible for lost items.

Each parent will receive a list of additional items from their child's classroom. We also ask that you send your child(ren) in comfortable, weather appropriate clothing that is also labeled.

Teachers will send home your child's sheet and blanket to be laundered at home on Fridays. We ask that you bring them back with your child on Monday.

22. Snacks and Lunches

At MCC breakfast, lunch, and snack are provided free of charge and are planned in accordance with CACFP regulations. Starting on January 2, 2018, MCC will only serve food to children that is provided by the Center. In cases of documented food allergies and religious beliefs, MCC will accommodate those children to the best of our abilities. MCC will only allow exemption of participation from the CACFP for allergies, religious beliefs, and strong personal beliefs. All requests for exemption must be submitted to the office in writing with significant documentation. Exemptions will be approved or denied on a case-by-case basis.

MCC and its teachers are committed to healthy eating and the creation of nutritionally purposeful classrooms. MCC has set the follow guidelines:

- MCC will follow the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines when completing the food menus.
- MCC has committed to using fresh fruit and canned fruits packed in 100% fruit juice.
- MCC has committed to using fresh vegetables and flash frozen vegetables.
- MCC will not serve juice at breakfast, lunch, or snack.
- MCC will serve food to the Older Toddler through School Age rooms in the family style method. Infants through the Young Toddler room will receive their meals per plate.
- MCC in cooperation with families will complete a written feeding plan for any child with allergies or special dietary needs.
- MCC requires approved families that need to pack their child's meals to follow the CACFP meal patterns.

Breakfast: 1 Milk 1 Fruit/Vegetables 1 Grain	Lunch: 1 Milk 1 Fruits 1 Vegetables 1 Grain 1 Meat/Meat Alternative
Snack: Must contain a combination of 2 components from the following food groups: Milk, Grain, Fruit/Veg, or Meat	*Water is always available after milk is offered. *Sweets are not permitted.

- MCC encourages the children to regulate their own hunger level or fullness cues by asking them about how their “bellies” feel. At MCC the children will be served all of their food groups at once; they may choose what order to eat their food in; and how much they would like to eat.
- MCC prohibits the practice of parents bringing in food and drinks, with the exception of those families that have been approved for exemption from the food program. Any food or drinks that are brought in will be immediately sent home with the parent or thrown away. State regulations about safety and supervision, cleanliness, and what we feed the children are strict. We encourage parents feed any morning snacks to their child before entering the center. All children will be fed breakfast starting at 8:30am and 9:00am, depending on the classroom.
- Water will be provided to children outside.
- In addition to water being available outside; clean, sanitary drinking water will be readily available indoors throughout the day. If a child is thirsty between meals, the teachers will either provide water to that specific child, or they will clean the tables for a water/snack break, for all children. Water should not be a substitute for milk at meals or snacks where milk is a required food component, unless it is recommended by the child’s primary care provider.
- On hot days, infants receiving human milk in a bottle can be given additional human milk in a bottle but should not be given water, especially in the first six months of life. Infants receiving formula and water can be given additional formula in a bottle.
- Children may bring in an empty water bottle to set on the shelf or in the fridge, however they will not be allowed to have water continuously in hand in a “sippy cup” or bottle. The carrying of “sippy cups” or bottles is not permitted for three reasons:
 - It violates Department of Human services regulations about contamination and the spread of germs.
 - Continuously drinking on a bottle or sippy cup filled with water, in order to soothe themselves, may cause nutritional or in rare instances, electrolyte imbalances.
 - There is a high risk of injury.
- MCC’s expressed milk policy is available upon request and will be provided to parents of infants in their enrollment packet.

What is family style meal service?

To serve meals family style, all the foods need to be placed in serving plates or bowls on a table, and children serve themselves or serve themselves with some help from the staff.

The Benefits of Serving Meals Family Style

- Children learn and practice social and motor skills, such as taking turns, sharing, passing, pouring, grasping, and scooping foods.
- Children may choose to take smaller portions of food and know they can take seconds if they want. The Institute of Medicine recommends serving meals family style because it creates a healthful eating environment that is responsive to children’s hunger and fullness cues.
- Children are encouraged to try new foods by seeing other children and adults eating them.
- Staff act as good role models for children by sitting at the same table and eating the same meal as the children.
- Staff and children can enjoy pleasant conversation with each other.
- It creates an intimate, sharing, family-like environment.

23. Late Pick-up Penalty

The Center closes at 6:00 p.m. Late pick-ups cause the staff to stay past their scheduled hours. Parents should make every effort to inform staff if they will be late picking up their child. The late pick-up fee is \$10.00 for the first 5 minutes and \$1.00 per minute after that. This also applies to parents picking up their child(ren) for half day programs. Picking up your child late may cause two staff members to stay after their scheduled shift.

24. Drop-in Care

Drop-in care is provided only as space is available. All necessary forms for the child must be on file or brought in when the child is dropped off. Drop-in fees are billed separately from monthly tuition. Payment for drop-in care is due the day of service.

25. Request for Care List

Parents must complete an application in order to be placed on the request for care list. If the requested space becomes available before a child is ready to be enrolled at the Center (for example, in the case of a newborn), his or her family may pay tuition to ensure a spot is available. If possible a preference will be given to current families.

*A family may choose to request a space for a future time. The director can advise the family when the space is likely to become available, however the only way to grantee a space is by tuition for that space.

26. Absent Reporting

Please call the center before 8:30AM to let the teachers know if your child is not going to attend or if he or she is running late. Teachers may wait on your children's arrival before going outside to play, so please be considerate and call ahead.

27. Confidentiality Policy

Records and information pertaining to children and staff are confidential. Confidential information regarding children may only be discussed in the course of an employee's job function. As an agency working with many children, parents and staff the center must make every effort to ensure the confidentiality of any individual situation or occurrence as well. This requires involving only the directly involved necessary parties in any confidential situation. If involved parties give their consent for personal information to be released to others, this may be allowed, as long as it respects the rights of and does not divulge pertinent information to other parties involved. Please also keep information that you as a parent may have seen or heard at the center confidential as well. If, for example, a person was reported for suspected child abuse, their rights must be protected as well. Only those individuals directly involved with an incident would be notified and questioned. Those involved should respect the entire situation and keep the matter confidential. This entails refraining from speaking to anyone about the situation except those parties handling the investigation.

28. Weather/Outside Policy

The following are MCC's guidelines for outdoor play based on regulations and best practices.

1. Teachers must take children outside every day for two half hour periods of gross motor play.
2. If the “feels like” temperature is 15°F- 90°F you should be going outside. (i.e., You should not go out if the “feels like” temp is below 15°F or above 90°F). MCC will provide extra clothing to be used if a child is not appropriately dressed for the weather.
3. Outside time may be decreased to 30min per day on the coldest and hottest days. On coldest and hottest days, outings could be broken down into two 15 minute periods or taken as one 30-minute period of play. The outdoor requirement correlates with time for gross motor play outside and does not include putting on/taking off coats/pants/etc. In the case of a truncated outdoor time, 30 minutes of gross motor must be carried out in the classroom to bring the total time of gross motor to 60 minutes.
4. Children should be protected from the sun by using shade, sun-protective clothing, and sunscreen with the written permission of parents/guardians. Sunscreen must be in lotion form, not aerosol. When providing sunscreen please ensure that it is broad-spectrum (UVB-ray and UVA-ray protection), SPF 15 or higher, and is water resistant. Please, avoid sunscreen containing the hormone modifier oxybenzone.
5. Children should wear sun-protective clothing and approved sun screen, when playing outside between the hours of 10 AM and 4 PM. Sunscreen will be applied between the months of April through October or as needed according to weather conditions.
6. Children should be well hydrated before engaging in prolonged periods of physical activity and encouraged to drink during periods of prolonged periods of physical activity. On warm days, the teachers will provide a water break every 30 minutes. The water breaks can be taken as a large group or as a rotation of smaller groups. Water will also be available to children between scheduled break periods.
7. With the appropriate clothing, children may be taken outside to play or walk in light precipitation without the presence of thunder or lightning. Children will not be out in inclement weather.
8. Before the children play outside, staff will inspect outdoor play areas to ensure that they are free of contaminated water, animal excrement, litter, broken toys, and any other safety hazards.

29. Toys / Items from Home

We discourage the bringing of toys from home. They may get broken and sometimes can cause problems in the classroom. Teachers do have special activities where they may request you to bring an item from home in. Your child may bring a special stuffed animal or blanket from home if it is a security item for your child. Please leave all personal items in the cubbies and do not bring them into the classroom. MCC is not responsible for lost items.

30. Celebrations

Birthdays

At the start of the 2018 calendar year, MCC will also discontinue the practice of food related birthday/holiday treats provided by parents. It can be difficult to separate food from celebrations, but current research shows that this separation has a positive impact on reducing childhood obesity. MCC teachers will create a special day for your child on their birthday. Teacher lead celebrations will include: A crown made with the child, a photo opportunity with the child and their favorites recorded on a board, singing Happy Birthday, and the child will have a chance to choose a book or activity for the day. Parents are also welcome to share in this create a memorable experience through a special activity. Parent activities may include things such as reading a book to the class or playing an instrument. MCC will celebrate holidays/seasons through activities and experiences, not food-related treats. On occasion teachers may bake or cook with the children as a science, math, communication, problem solving, literacy, or health lesson, however notice will be sent out before these activities occur.

Anti-Bias Curriculum

MCC will follow the anti-bias curriculum which guides the program in that all enrolled children are receiving effective services no matter what their ethnicity or language they speak. Staff will offer age appropriate experiences for children in our program to learn about other people and cultures than their own, including how people live (food, eating, clothing, shelter), communicate (words, print labels, stories, songs in a variety of languages) and create (art, music, movement, games, rhymes). Classroom environments will be set up to reflect the cultures of the children enrolled in the program, as well as those encountered in the surrounding community, with photographs of families in the classroom and around the world, and common household objects from different cultures. Childhood routines, discipline practices and parents' learning goals for their children will be discussed and incorporated into individual and group curriculum.

Anti-Bias Celebrations

We want every child and family to feel included in the fun regardless of religious background or home culture, therefore we acknowledge holidays but do not celebrate special holidays or teach specific holiday curriculum at our centers.

Holidays are important celebrations of family and community identity which have significance for children at Meadville Children's Center. And families have many different ways that they celebrate family cultural, ethnic, religious and other traditions. Many holiday celebrations reflect cultural and religious traditions that are valued more by some and less by other individual families in our program, and it is believed that these family traditions are best taught within the child's family.

MCC staff will acknowledge and recognize children's right to talk about family experiences and traditions, without discomfort. MCC staff will avoid specific holiday themes and instead chose themes from Creative Curriculum or the children's interest outside of holidays. MCC staff will work with families at their centers to create meaningful everyday activities and events for children that can be appreciated by all families at the center. The classroom will maintain it's routine during the holidays and provide a nurturing, relaxing environment that reduces the stress and tension often created by the excitement of holidays.

While the Center will not have holiday specific themes, the playful spirit of holidays may be offered throughout the year. For example, the fun of dressing up at Halloween can be incorporated throughout the year by

providing dress-up clothes and costumes, like animals & community helpers, which children can use on a regular basis. The tourist approach of recognizing different cultures through their holidays will be avoided because it uses stereotypes which don't accurately reflect the people of these countries and cultures. Activities planned during holiday periods will avoid commercialism, like purchasing valentines or costumes.

31. Program Client Involvement

We believe in the importance of parent involvement in the on-going operations of the center. Parents are encouraged to attend social gatherings, contribute to fundraising events, volunteer, and provide their input and ideas for improving our Center. If volunteering a parent or care giver will be required to obtain their volunteer clearances and provide a current physical with proof of a TB test. Clearance procedures are give later in the handbook.

32. Client Resources

Meadville Children's Center staff members are committed to families and children being able to reach their highest potential. We feel it is important that our Early Childhood Education Program knows and understands the community resources available for families. MCC provides new enrollee families with a list of resources at their child's enrollment. We will continue to refer families to community services.

Center for Family Services 213 Center Street Meadville, PA 16335 (814) 337-8450	Parent to Parent – NW Region 3745 West 12th Street Erie, PA 16505 (814) 833-5599 www.parenttoparent.org
Child Care Information Services 996 S Main St #102 Meadville, PA 16335 (814) 337-8055	CDC Head Start 155 East Bissell Oil City, PA 16301 (814)-670-0838
Community Action Association of PA Crawford County Office of Economic Opportunity PO Box 1130 Franklin, PA 16323 (814) 432-9767	United Way of Western Crawford Co. Outreach Services Center 415 Chestnut Street Meadville, PA 16335 (814) 337-1251 www.uwaywestcc.org
Community Engagement Groups Crawford County YWCA of Meadville 378 Chestnut Street Meadville, PA 16335 (814) 724-6768 thurston1@alltel.net	United Community Programs Crawford County PO Box 437 Meadville, PA 16335 (814) 336-4157
Crawford County Assistance Office	Pennsylvania's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) 1-800-986-KIDS

<p>1084 Water Street Meadville, PA 16335 (814) 333-3400</p> <p>Crawford County Children & Youth Services 18282 Technology Drive Meadville, PA 16335 (814) 333-5040</p> <p>Crawford County Early Intervention Program 452 Pine Street Meadville, PA 16335 (814) 333-5040</p> <p>Crawford County MH/MR Program 944 Liberty St Meadville, PA 16335 (814) 336-4352</p> <p>Northwest PA Autism Society of America, NWPA – ASA PO Box 3923 Erie, PA 16508 (814) 455-3540 www.nwpa-asa.org</p>	<p>Crawford County Health Department 847 N Main St Meadville, PA 16335 Phone: (814)332-6947 Fax: (814)724-6883</p> <p>Women, Infants & Children (WIC) 747 Terrace St Meadville, PA 16335 (814)333-7080</p> <p>Pittsburgh Poison Center University of Pittsburgh Medical Center 200 Lothrop St Pittsburgh, PA 15213 1(800)222-1222</p>
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33. Health Policies

Prevention

Our center will take every measure possible to control the spread of germs. Hand washing is our best defense against spreading germs. Parents are to help their children wash hands when they arrive at the center. Teachers and children will wash hands often: before and after meals and snacks, after toileting and diapering, when completing messy projects, and after outdoor activities.

The center sanitizes and disinfects throughout the day. The teachers disinfect after each diaper change, sanitize before and after tables are used, and sanitize after dishes are hand washed. All toys are sprayed with sanitizer at the end of the day. Any toy that a child puts in his or her mouth is washed and sanitized before available for play again. Meadville Children’s Center uses gloves during diaper changing of children.

The teachers are responsible for keeping their classrooms clean. Our kitchen and bathrooms are also cleaned daily. It is MCC’s expectation that all staff help contribute to a healthy place for children to be.

Teachers are expected to help parents comply with the rules of the center. If a teacher has addressed handwashing with a parent and a parent is refusing to wash their child's hands, teachers must inform the Director so that the Director can speak with the parent.

Health Assessment & Immunizations

Children must submit a health assessment within 30 days of admission. These assessment forms are available in the office. Children under the age of 2, must submit a health assessment every 6 months. Children over the age of 2 must submit a health assessment each year. All immunizations must be reported as received. If a health assessment expires and a note from the Doctor that provides proof of an upcoming appointment cannot be provided, the child with the expired health assessment will be asked to leave the program.

Immunization Exemption

Exemptions from immunizations must be documented as follows: A written, signed and dated statement from: the child's parent or guardian stating religious or strong personal objection equated to a religious belief; or a child's physician, Physician Assistant, or CRNP stating medical need for exemption. **In the event of an infectious outbreak, children without proper immunization may be asked to stay home from the program.**

See Also: *Admission and Exclusion of Children, Permitted Attendance & Care for Mild Illness, and Conditions for Exclusions from Care (on the following pages).*

Medicine Administration and Care Plans

Parents must give all medications, in their original container, to the teacher upon arrival. Parents will be required to fill out a Medication Log with specific instructions on administration. Medicines must be kept out of reach of the children. When a child has an ongoing medical concern or diagnoses, a care plan will be completed with the office and copies will be given to the teachers. MCC consults the textbook "Caring for our Children" for specialized care plans and other individual medical needs. Over the counter medication for children under the age of 2 years requires a note from the doctor stating the amount of medication to be administered.

Admission & Exclusion of Children

Sharing Information – All families are expected to openly share information about their child's behavior, symptoms, or exposure to illness. Families must have a backup plan for care of their children when the child is unable to be in the facility due to illness or injury.

1. Situations That Require a Note From a Health Care Professional –

A note from the child's primary health care professional will be necessary when staff members need advice about any medical condition and/or when a medical condition poses a health risk to others. (Please see conditions for exclusion)

2. Authority for Decision to Admit or Exclude for Acute Illness –

The Center Director or the next assigned person in charge, may make decisions about inclusion/exclusion, taking into account the current staffing situation and what is known about the illness or injury. The decision is informed by what the family and the child's teachers/caregivers share about the child's condition, current references, and daily health checks performed by staff.

3. Criteria to Exclude Children Who Are Acutely Ill or Injured –

The following is considered when deciding to admit or exclude a child:

- **What is the child's ability to participate?** Is the child able to comfortably participate in activities that the facility routinely offers for well children?

- **Does the child need more care?** Does the child's condition require more than the teacher/caregiver can provide without compromising the needs of other children in the group?
- **What risk does the child pose to other children?** Does keeping the child in childcare pose an increased risk to other children or adults within the center?
- **Did the Doctor approve your child being in a child care setting?** If MCC requested that you take your child to the doctor, a note of release to care is required upon return.

Permitted Attendance and Care for Mild Illness – While a note from the child or staff person's primary care physician may be required, **the following are reasonable permissible conditions unless any of the aforementioned questions apply:**

1. Common colds, runny noses (regardless of color or consistency of nasal discharge).
2. A cough not associated with an infectious disease or fever
3. Watery yellow or white discharge or crusting eye discharge without fever, eye pain, or eyelid redness. (See exclusions on next page – Bacterial Pink Eye: Children must be excluded if they are unable to control touching and rubbing their eye – a note from the Doctor is advised)
4. Fevers less than 101°F, without any signs or symptoms of illness, in children who are older than 4 months, regardless of whether acetaminophen or ibuprofen was given. Fevers less than 100.4°F, without any signs or symptoms of illness, for infants younger than 2 months.
5. Rash without fever and behavior changes.
6. Children who had diarrhea and are now able to confine their stool to the toilet or diaper may return to care. For some infectious organisms, exclusion is required until certain guidelines have been met.
7. Children who were vomiting and are free of vomiting for the past 12 hours, and whom are without signs or symptoms of illness.
8. Thrush, once treatment has begun.
9. Fifth Disease (slapped cheek disease, parovirus B19) once the rash has appeared
10. Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) without an infection or illness that would otherwise require exclusion. Known MRSA carriers or colonized individuals should not be excluded.
11. Hand, Foot, and Mouth- Once fever is gone, drooling is contained, and child is able to participate in typical daily activities.
12. Cytomegalovirus infection
13. Chronic hepatitis B infection
14. HIV Infection
15. Children with chronic infectious conditions that can be accommodated in the program according to the legal requirement of federal law in the Americans with Disabilities Act. The act requires that childcare programs make reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses, considering each child individually.

Conditions for Exclusions from Care –

Any child or staff may be excluded from care if any of the aforementioned questions apply and/or at the discretion of the Director based on the current health status of the center and/or by referencing Caring for Our Children Standards in special circumstances.

While a note from the child's primary care physician may be required, **the following are conditions to prohibit care:**

1. Mouth sores associated with an inability to control saliva
2. Rash with a fever or a behavioral change
3. Purulent discharge from the eyes (yellow pus)
4. Productive cough with fever

5. Oral or axillary (armpit) temperature greater than 101°F (Exclusion for care will continue until a child is fever free for 12 hours)
6. Unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing or other signs of severe illness
7. Persistent vomiting
8. Persistent diarrhea
9. Pinkeye (bacterial conjunctivitis) indicated by pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye mucous drainage and matted eyelids after sleep
10. Lice or Nits (Children must be excluded until treated and they are free of lice and live nits. Upon return, a child's heads must be checked by the director or person in charge.)
11. Ringworm
12. Other conditions as made known and/or as recommended for exclusion by a child's/staff's primary physician, such as:

Strep Throat	Hepatitis A	Impetigo
Mumps	Scabies	Whooping Cough (Pertussis)
Pin Worms	Bacterial Pink Eye	Rubella
Stitches	Measles	Chicken Pox
Tuberculosis		

*MCC reserves the right to request additional documentation and/or medical excuses in the event of: an epidemic outbreak, situations where additional medical explanation is indicated, and/or for special care plans related to the child's health.

Some conditions and diseases are reportable to the PA Department of Health. All diagnosed medical conditions must be reported to MCC. Please report your child's absence by 8:30am each day.

Health Assessment

Stop by the office to pick-up a child health assessment form before taking your child(ren) to the doctor for a physical. Meadville Pediatrics has the health assessment form on file if you do forget to pick-up a copy from MCC prior to your doctor appointment.

34. Safety Policies and Procedures

Security

The Center is a secure site with a security system that requires the use of a key card. Parents may purchase a key card for \$10.00 each at the time of registration. If parents cannot pick up their children and have a friend/family member doing so, they will be asked to show identification before picking up the child. If you have lost your key card, your account will be charged for a new card after two weeks.

Arrangements for Drop Off and Pick-Up

Meadville Children's Center has a strict policy on releasing children. The emergency contact form has the names of all the persons allowed to pick up that child. Children may only be released to parents, guardians, or those listed on the child's emergency contact form. If someone else is picking up the child, a parent needs to either: inform a teacher at drop-off time and complete a verbal request for release form or call the center and inform the director in advance so they may complete a verbal request of release form over the phone. All verbal

requests must be signed and dated the next time a parent is present. You may also add or delete persons on your emergency contact form at any time by going to the office, making changes, and then initialing the changes. Any person picking-up that the available staff member does not know, will be asked to show photo identification when he/she arrives at the center. According to the Department of Human Services, the photo ID must match the emergency contact form in name and address. Request for photo identification is done for the protection of your child(ren). A person picking up a child other than a parent must be 18 years of age or older unless otherwise approved by MCC.

Parents and adults bringing a child to the center should never leave until they are sure a teacher knows the child is present. The parents are responsible for signing their child(ren) in for the day. In the same respect, at the end of the day please make sure a teacher is aware the child is leaving and remember to sign the child out for the day. Parents are responsible for their child within the center until they leave the child in care of a teacher. Once parents pick up a child(ren), the child(ren) must stay with the parent and the parent is responsible for what their child do(es) while gathering belongings.

If one parent has sole custody of a child, the child will not be released to the other parent unless permission was given prior from the parent who has custody of the child.

A child will not be released to any parent that seems to be intoxicated. Parents must also have the appropriate car seat for their child(ren) or the center will not permit the child to leave with the parent.

Safety

The center will take all measures to ensure that our center is safe at all times. The staff are responsible to inform the director of any safety concerns that exist at the center. Concerns will be address by the director in a timely manner. Teachers complete end of the month paperwork that includes, a health and safety check list and an injuries and illness log. The end of the month paper work is submitted to the office at the end of the month for their review. The office manager reviews the paperwork advising the director of any safety issues that need addressed.

The Odd fellows building manager and fire department schedule monthly fire drills, in which all present at MCC participate. All employees are trained on our various emergency evacuation procedures. The center asks that if a parent or guardian notices a safety concern at our center, that they please advise a teacher or the director as soon as possible.

Ratio

Ratios are as followed:

Infant 1:4	Naptime: 1:4	-Infants are always placed on their backs to sleep.
Wobble 1:5	Naptime 1:10	
Young Toddler 1:5	Naptime: 1:10	
Older Toddler 1:6	Naptime: 1:12	
Preschooler 1:10	Naptime: 1:20	
School-Age 1:12		

Meadville Children's Center staff supervise the children at all times including trips to the bathrooms. In the supervision of children, we at MCC maintain all DHS child and teacher ratios.

Weapon/Firearm Policy

Meadville Children's Center has a no weapon on premises policy. This would include all individuals who come to our center, except on duty police officers.

Staff Safety Trainings

All employees are trained on our various emergency evacuation procedures first upon employment and then annually after employed. All staff members are required to attend a mandated reporter training per DHS regulations. Trainings will also be available for parents to attend.

Required Clearances

All the teachers, staff, and volunteers that work at Meadville Children's Center have current clearances from the state police, FBI, and Child Line (child abuse clearance). DHS requires that the staff update their clearances every five year.

Clearances are now required for all volunteers and classroom visitors.

They are free for volunteers and can be completed online. If you have gotten your clearances within the last 5 years we can use a copy of them in addition to a copy of our Disclosure Statement that is signed on site. If you plan to volunteer or visit the classroom at any point in the day (including drop off, pick up, and special events) for more than 15 minutes, please get your clearances right away and turn a copy of each in to the center.

☐ **Act 151 - Child Abuse** <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis>

☐ **Act 34 - PA State Police** <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>

*If you have not lived in PA for the past 10 years, you will also need Act 114 –DHS (formerly DPW) – FBI - finger prints. The cost for this is \$25.75 <http://www.cogentid.com/>

Any parent who has been committed of a crime against children may not come to our center. In cases where a parent has been committed of a crime against children, another adult must be responsible for picking-up their child.

35. Child Abuse/ Neglect Reporting

As caregivers of children, MCC staff members are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect. This means that if any staff member that suspects child abuse, by law, he or she must report it.

In the event that a staff member, individual, or parent witnesses an incident or behavior involving staff or parents that he or she feels is inappropriate (inappropriate language, handling of a child, unsafe situation, discipline, etc.), he or she should immediately speak with the director concerning the situation and the situation may be reported to Child Protective Services. If the director is unavailable and child abuse or neglect is suspected, a report will be made to Child Line/Child Protective Services. Center staff will be cooperative with Children and Youth Services during any investigations.

In cases involving staff members, the director will immediately speak to all involved individuals and gather all relevant information. Depending on the circumstances, in any individual case there may be varying results, possibly including, but not limited to:

1. A quick, simple determination may be made immediately after the incident;
2. An employee may receive a written warning;
3. An employee may be placed on probation;
4. An employee may be suspended until further

information can be gathered and a final determination made; or 5. The employee's employment may be terminated from the center.

This process will proceed as quickly as possible. If an incident involving staff is found to be true/plausible, the MCC parents of the children involved will be notified. If a staff person is found guilty of child abuse, they will be immediately terminated.

If a situation is found where a child is abusive to another child, both parents will be notified. Steps will be made to therapeutically help the child.

In any situation, while maintaining confidentiality, the center will continue to cooperate with authorities in instances where they have been notified.

36. Statements of Nondiscrimination

MCC Nondiscrimination Policy Statement for an Equal Employment Opportunity-

An open and equitable personnel system will be established and maintained. Personnel policies, procedures and practices will be designed to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, age or sex.

Employment opportunities shall be provided for applicants with disabilities and reasonable accommodation(s) shall be made to meet the physical or mental limitations of qualified applicants or employees.

Any employee who believes they have been discriminated against may file a complaint of discrimination with any of the following:

Meadville Children's Center 400 North Main Street Meadville, PA 16335	PA Human Relation Commission Pittsburgh Regional Office 301 Fifth Avenue Suite 390, Piatt Place Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Bureau of Equal Opportunity Room 225, Health & Welfare Building PO Box 2675 Harrisburg, PA 17110	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights Suite 372, Public Ledger Building 150 South Independence Mall West Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Bureau of Equal Opportunity Western Regional Office	

301 Fifth Avenue Suite 410, Piatt Place Pittsburgh, PA 15222-1210	
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MCC Nondiscrimination Policy Statement for Nondiscrimination In Services-

Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age or sex.

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Any individual/parent/child (and/or their guardian) who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with:

Meadville Children's Center 400 North Main Street Meadville, PA 16335	PA Human Relation Commission Pittsburgh Regional Office 301 Fifth Avenue Suite 390, Piatt Place Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Bureau of Equal Opportunity Room 225, Health & Welfare Building PO Box 2675 Harrisburg, PA 17110	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights Suite 372, Public Ledger Building 150 South Independence Mall West Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Bureau of Equal Opportunity Western Regional Office 301 Fifth Avenue Suite 410, Piatt Place Pittsburgh, PA 15222-1210	

37. Staff Conduct

The staff at MCC is to adhere to the program's philosophy and mission statement and support MCC's vision.

Confidentiality:

Employees will regard as confidential any information concerning children and their families. It is not permissible to discuss a child's personal information with anyone except authorized staff in the execution of daily duties. Information about children can be released and/or shared only through written parental consent. Employees will respect confidentiality concerning information about staff. All office files are restricted to access by the director, unless the director gives permission to another staff person. Permission must be obtained for each use of the office files. Any complaint of breach of confidentiality

should be referred to the director in writing. Failure to adhere to this confidentiality policy will be grounds for employment review.

Staff Child Discipline Procedures

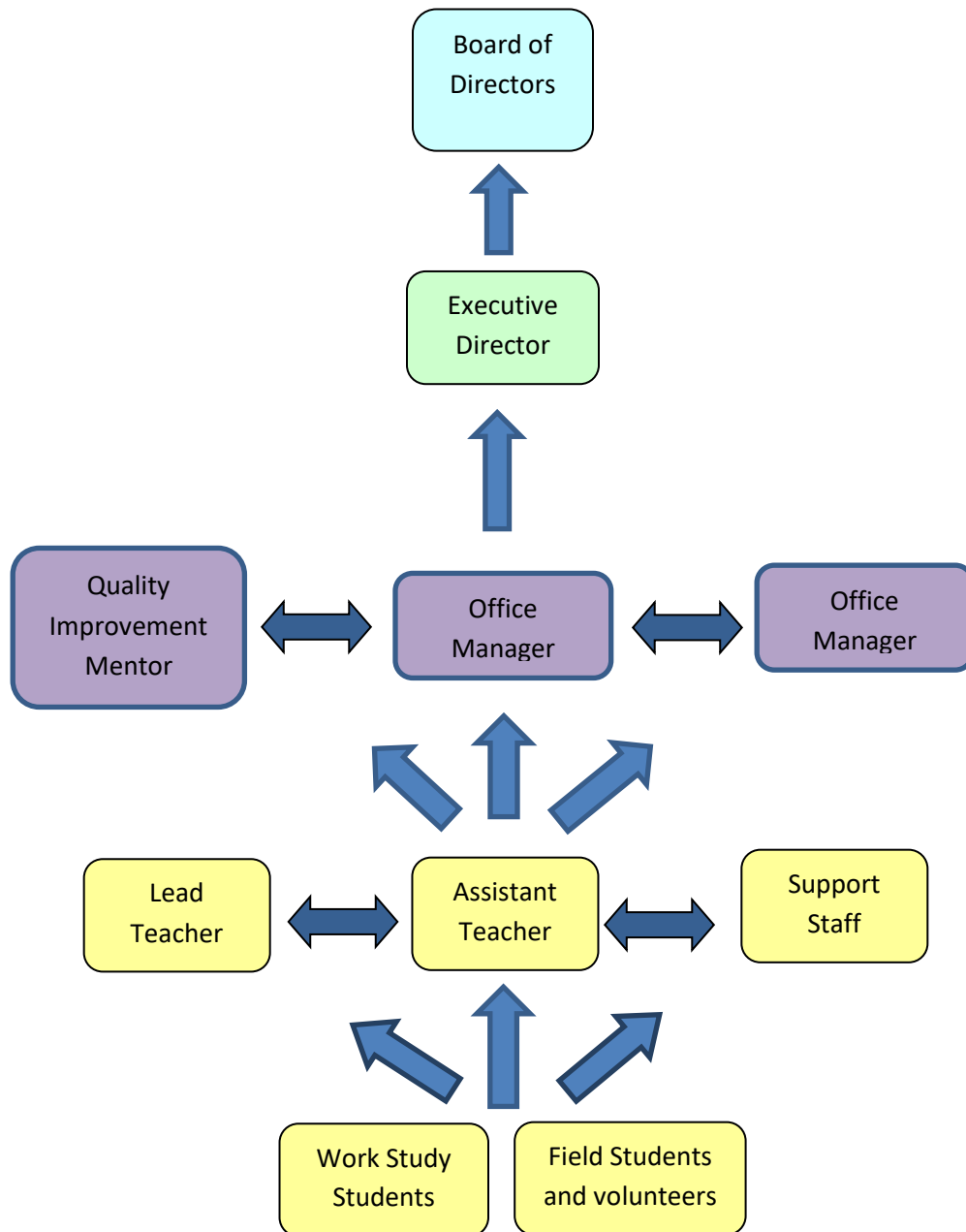
Employees must never use physical punishment when disciplining a child under their care. When a problem situation arises with a child's behavior, teachers tell the child to discontinue the inappropriate behavior, explain why, and redirect the child's attention to another area to play.

For example, if a child hits another child because he wants a toy the other has, the teacher would proceed as follows in a similar manner:

1. Comfort the hurt child.
2. While continuing to comfort, explain to the other child that he hurt his friend; explain that the other child is crying and feels sad because of it; and explain how and why we cannot hurt others.
3. Direct the child who hit to play with another toy.

If attempts at redirection are not effective and the child continues the inappropriate behavior, the child will be removed from the immediate situation. The teacher will review the rules, discuss the problem, and discuss other actions that the child could have taken. The teacher may ask the child to leave the play center in which the incident occurred. The teacher may give the child a choice of another area to play in including table toys. The teacher may ask the child to notify them of which play center they would like to play in once the child is calmed down and ready to engage with others.

38. Meadville Children's Center Organizational Chart



39. Parent Program Evaluation

Annually a program evaluation survey will be made available to parents of children whom attend our center. The center will use the information gathered from the survey to improve our services. The evaluation will cover areas relating to the learning environment, curriculum, staff-client interactions, and staff-administration interactions. If we are in between our surveying period, but a parent would like to give input, they are welcome to complete our online survey, found on the center website (www.meadvillechildrenscenter.org).

40. Communication

If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, the office has an open-door policy. Please don't hesitate to talk to the director or leave a comment in the locked suggestion/concern box on the front table in the lobby.

Each classroom has a cell phone in which they may communicate with parents verbally or through text. When communicating with classroom teachers please keep in mind, that while they communicate they are also supervising children. Listed below is the center contact information.

Classroom / Location	Phone Number
Main Office	814-337-3355
Executive Director's Office	814-795-5152
Center Director/Office Cell	814-795-7484
Infant	814-795-7025
Wobble	814-795-7050
Younger Toddler	814-795-7073
Older Toddler	814-795-7026
Preschool	814-795-7074
Pre-K	814-795-7033
PKCA/ PKC Wrap-Care	814-795-7111
PKCB/ Young SA in Summer	814-795-7116
School-Age	814-795-6298