

Childhood Quality Matters, Inc.

Nurture and Nature Children's Center

Parent's Handbook 2017-2018

Welcome to Nurture and Nature Children's Center! We look forward to providing your child with a stimulating, safe, caring, and developmentally appropriate learning environment. To ensure the best possible care for your child, we ask that you please read through the established policies and procedures. By signing your child's enrollment contract, you are agreeing to abide by these policies and procedures. If at any time you have questions about your child's day, please consult with the teachers and director. Parents are welcome to visit the center at any time during their child's day. Our goal is to make this experience one of positive growth for both child and family.

Thank you!

***CQM, Inc. (Childhood Quality Matters) a Not-for-Profit organization
Rte 85, Newfields, NH 03856
(603) 772-3811***

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Childhood Quality Matters, Inc. (CQM, Inc.), d/b/a Nurture & Nature Children's Center, Route 85, Newfields, NH 03856, is to continuously strive to provide a consistent and high quality educational environment for children and their families without regard to race, color, creed, sex or origin.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Nurture & Nature Children's Center is owned and operated by Childhood Quality Matters, Inc., a New Hampshire not-for-profit agency. Childhood Quality members include the administration team of Nurture & Nature and parent volunteers serving in positions on the board of directors. The board may also be comprised of community members who have an interest in childcare. The executive committee of the board meets frequently with the Executive Director of Nurture & Nature to keep lines of communication open. Community board members with specialties are consulted as needed. Community members may include a pediatrician, accountant, public relations advisor, community leader, child development specialist, or lawyer.

The executive committee hires the on-site Executive Director to manage the day to day operations at the center. All other staff report to the Executive Director who carries out the mission of the organization. The Executive Director in turn reports to the executive committee.

COMMUNICATIONS & PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Nurture & Nature Children's Center has an open-door policy for all parents. Daily highlights of each child's day will be posted outside classrooms and through direct communication with teachers at drop-off and pick up. Developmental progress reports will also be sent home periodically to assess each child's social, physical, and cognitive growth. Parent/Teacher conferences may be arranged at this time, or at any other time throughout the year at the parent's/teacher's request.

Communication between home and school is further enhanced through parent mailboxes, monthly email newsletters, Facebook updates, open houses, bulletin board articles/notices and daily conversations. Parents are also welcome to borrow resource books/articles which are available on a variety of developmental issues.

Parent feedback regarding our program throughout the year is encouraged. The staff will utilize this feedback when formulating program goals each year.

CENTER'S PHILOSOPHY

Parents are the first and most important teachers of every child. The center's goal is to support parents by creating close communication between home and the center. Parent involvement is necessary to provide the best possible care for each child. Parents are involved in the center through daily communication, helping with special events and projects, field trips, fundraising, and volunteering as members of the board.

The center separates children by age and stage of development and provides appropriate learning environments accordingly. **Each child is respected as a unique individual.** Children learn through play, and are encouraged to explore, create, and manipulate objects in a relaxed, unhurried environment. Children are encouraged to learn and exhibit self-control and are empowered to manage their own behavior.

LICENSED PLUS

Nurture & Nature is a Licensed Plus program. Licensed Plus is a quality rating system that recognizes NH child care programs for efforts to improve the quality of care for young children and rewards programs that strive to improve their practices and staff qualifications. It also allows families to identify programs with higher quality. Levels build from a foundation of minimum standards for licensing to full national accreditation. The Licensed Plus Program was developed by a public-private partnership that included child care providers. The program is administered by the Child Development Bureau.

ORIENTATION

To help ease a child's transition to the center, families are invited to visit the center at least once before a child's start date. During this visit, a child will be introduced to their new classmates and teachers. Also during this time, enrollment paperwork and parent orientation packet will be reviewed. Please plan on this visit to last 30 minutes to an hour.

CURRICULUM DESIGN

Classrooms are divided into the following groups: Infants, Pre-toddlers, Toddlers, Preschool and Pre-K. Our curriculum design begins with a universal theme as a basis for the monthly, weekly and daily offerings. A universal theme lends itself to a common language between classrooms and families. The teachers develop the curriculum offerings in each classroom not only with developmental appropriateness in mind but to reflect the individual children and their families.

Each classroom is prepared weekly by the teaching staff to support the center theme and the needs of the children within the classroom. The prepared environment is developed by the staff in each room. Each learning center is organized and inviting, welcoming children to explore at their own discretion and speed. Teachers balance each day with

group / individual time, teacher directed time, free choice time and outdoor recess periods. Activity plans are posted weekly on the bulletin board. Daily routines are also posted and maintained to provide a secure and consistent environment for each child.

Goals for the children include:

1. Allowing each child the opportunity to grow to his/her fullest potential by recognizing stages of development and preparing play/learning environments that nurture and facilitate their growth.
2. Giving each child the opportunity to express their feelings, to gradually understand them and develop self-control.
3. Helping children develop a strong sense of respect for themselves, other children and adults, and the environment around them.

TRANSITIONS

Transitions are handled with great care and attention to individual needs when moving from one classroom to the next. Teachers meet with the Executive Director to discuss a transition plan for each child. Parents are consulted about the transition process well in advance and are invited to plan a visit to the new classroom to meet teachers and learn about the daily routine, if desired. Once the child's plan is in place, parents are notified of the transition visits, official "moving up" date and are supplied with some information about the new classroom.

PRIMARY CAREGIVER (INFANT AND PRE-TODDLER ROOMS)

Nurture & Nature actively seeks ways in which to increase the depth and quality of care provided to our families. In accordance with best practices and recommendations from the Department of Health and Human Services, Nurture & Nature follows a Primary Caregiver model to achieve these goals:

1. Assigning a Primary Caregiver to each child enrolled in our Infant and Pre-toddler classrooms
2. Including a daily communication sheet for our Infant and Pre-toddler children

Lead teachers in these classrooms will be observing new students and/or transitioning students for cues to see which teacher is best suited for this honor. After this period of observation, parents will be notified of a child's assigned Primary Caregiver. The Primary Caregiver will be the person to connect, observe and document the child's progress day to day. Additionally, they will help the child transition smoothly into the care of the next classroom when the time comes.

It is important to note, all staff are committed to the highest quality of care and parents should feel free to communicate with any and all staff who work with their child. The

goal is to identify the teacher who best knows the child and is focused on the child's individual development and success.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The ultimate goal of discipline is to help each child learn self-control, and to empower each child to direct their own behavior. **Physical punishment is not allowed.** The teachers' help children take steps towards responsible self-direction as would be developmentally appropriate. Natural or logical consequences are demonstrated where appropriate. Books, songs and other materials of correcting behavioral difficulties in a positive, empowering manner are utilized. Positive methods of guidance used include:

1. Structuring the environment to encourage positive behaviors, timing of teacher intervention, re-direction, offering choices of duplicate toys and enforcing logical consequences for their actions.
2. "Ground rules" are established for each age group (where appropriate) and they are stated in a reasonable, clear the way for children to understand. Ground rules are established for the children's safety and to protect the rights of others.
3. When a child infringes on the rights of another, the other child is encouraged to talk about how the act makes them feel with teacher support.
4. Teachers may request a parent/teacher conference to discuss behavioral challenges and to formulate a unified, supportive approach to address concerns.

STAFF

The center is staffed with child care professionals that are trained in child development. Staff meet and in some cases exceed the educational requirements for teachers as described by the NH Child Care Licensing Bureau. Additionally, staff are required to follow all state licensing guidelines and obtain the minimum annual professional development in accordance with the state regulations. The center meets or exceeds state standards for teacher-to-child ratios for all age groups. Most staff are trained in First Aid and CPR.

CENTER DAYS/HOURS

The center is open from 6:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday. The center is open year round, with the exception of the following days: (For specific dates, please review the annual contract)

New Year's Day
MLK Day for Professional Development
Memorial Day
Independence Day

First Friday in August for Professional Development
Labor Day
The United Way Day of Caring (Sept)
Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday
Holiday Break from 12/24-1/1

The center will be closed for Snow Days at the discretion of the Executive Director.

CONTRACTS

A contract is required for all children attending the center. To ensure appropriate staffing ratios, families must indicate the hours of attendance each day the child is enrolled. Standard enrollment is not to exceed 9 hours per day, unless contracted for additional hours at the rate of \$10 per hour. The tuition rate will not be altered when child is out sick, on vacation or when the Center is closed for a holiday or snow day. Any change from the original contract will need to be approved by the director and may require a new contract.

Priority enrollment goes to currently enrolled families and Hutchinson Automotive employees. A yearly registration fee of \$125 per child is payable upon signing the annual contract which is renewed July 1, of each year.

WAIT LIST

A \$75.00 deposit is required to be placed on the Center's waiting list. Once a space becomes available and is accepted, the \$ 75.00 deposit will be credited toward the registration fee. If a family chooses to be removed from the waiting list, the deposit will not be refunded.

REGISTRATION

It is required that the following registration forms be on file at the center before a child begins attending:

1. Child Registration and Emergency Information Form
2. Medical Health Form (to be completed by a physician)
3. Child/Family Personal History
4. Parental Agreement Form
5. Parents' Consent Form for Treatment of Minor
6. Signed Child Care Contract

Medical Health Forms and Registration Forms will need to be updated annually.

PAYMENTS

Tuition is to be paid by check or cash each Friday in advance for the week following. Tuition is considered late if received after 10:00am Monday and will be assessed a \$5.00/day late charge. Late tuition payments in excess of two weeks may result in termination of the contract. Returned checks are subject to a \$30.00 fee. Full-time families with more than one child enrolled will be given a 10% discount on the rate of the older child. **Parents are responsible for payment for each week. This includes scheduled closings as well as Snow Days.**

PARENT "PITCH-IN" PROJECTS

Families are required to "pitch-in" 10 hours of time/materials to assist with center projects or needs throughout the year. Examples of "pitch-in" contributions include: monthly donations to the pantry, painting, planting flowers, spring and fall cleaning events, attending board meetings, chaperoning field trips, classroom assistance, fundraising, etc. A list of current projects is included in the monthly e-newsletter. **In lieu of the 10 hours of service, parents may opt to pay an additional \$150 fee (\$15 per hour of service not completed). If parents do not complete their 10 hrs. of service by the time contracts are renewed, fees owed will be added to the end of contract billing statement.** (Fees owed by parents terminating a contract would be calculated according to length of time of the contract i.e. If a child was at the center 3 months and no pitch in time was completed, the family would owe \$37.50—\$12.50/month x 3 months).

PANTRY LIST

To help reduce our overall operational costs, all families are requested to bring in 2-3 food items or other supplies **monthly**. **Parents are notified of what items are needed on the monthly calendar of events.** Items may be delivered to the kitchen and a Pantry List is posted on the refrigerator for tracking these contributions. Examples of pantry items include: fresh or canned fruit/veg, box of crackers, box of tissue.

TERMINATION

The center reserves the right to immediately terminate a contract because of abusive treatment, language, or behavior toward any child, staff member, board member or employee. There will be no refund of any fees already paid.

CALL-INS

In the event of a change in attendance, drop off or pick up, families are requested to notify staff by phone with ample notice. Awareness of changes to the daily routine will help us to better support families through various transitions and is part of our safety protocol. Please call to notify staff of changes if the following circumstances occur:

1. If a child will be absent.
2. If the child will be dropped off or picked up earlier or later than their typical schedule. As this may impact the teacher to student ratio, advanced notice is required. Fees may be assigned.
3. If an alternate adult will be picking up a child -- staff will not release the child until:
 - a. Written notice or phone call from the parent is received including the name and description of the adult who will pick up the child from the center.
 - b. The adult picking up the child must display a picture ID. Staff will check this against the Alternate and Emergency Pick-up documentation included in the child's file.

WHEN BRINGING YOUR CHILD TO THE CENTER EACH DAY:

1. Please turn vehicle ignition off while bringing children into the center each day.
2. Sign the attendance roster located in the entryway upon entering and exiting the building each day
3. Accompany the child to their cubby to unpack items for the day and deliver each child to their classroom, letting the teacher know the child has arrived. Sharing information about a child's evening and/or early morning aides the teachers in assisting each child through the transition from home to school.

WHAT YOUR CHILD WILL NEED:

All Children:

- * 2 sets of spare clothing, including: socks, underwear (or training pants), pants, and shirts
- * a small crib sheet for mat or crib
- * a small blanket
- * stuffed animal for naptime (optional)
- * small pillow for naptime (optional)
- * toothbrush (children over age 2 1/2)

Infants:

- * bottles of breast milk/formula, and/or solid foods
- * feeding guidelines
- * diapers
- * wipes
- * powder and/or ointment (optional)

Toddlers:

- * diapers
- * wipes
- * powder and/or ointment (optional)

Wintertime:

- * ski pants (or snow suit)
- * warm jacket
- * gloves/mittens
- * hat
- * boots
- * extra socks
- * slippers

Summertime:

- * sunscreen
- * bathing suit
- * towel
- * water shoes/sandals that can get wet
- * sun-hat
- * insect repellent

Please remember that children are taken outdoors daily (weather permitting), so an extra set of clothing should be kept at the Center at all times. If wet or dry clothes are sent home, please return a clean set of clothing the next morning. **All clothing and belongings should be labeled with the child's name.**

PROMOTING A HEALTHY & SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Maintaining a healthy environment is important. The center promotes healthy routines in the following ways.

1. Hand washing among children and staff, particularly before and after meals, after messy activities, after nose blowing and bathroom use.
2. Taking particular care during diaper changes, including: child hygiene, gloves by staff, hand washing and disinfecting changing area.
3. Posting educational units for children to look at, on healthy habits such as nutrition, how to dress appropriately for weather, how to say no to unsafe and uncomfortable situations.
4. Role modeling by adults of healthy, safe practices.

ILLNESS POLICY

State regulations require that children/teachers be excluded from the center when they are ill. This is not only in the best interest of the ill individual, but of the group as well. The following guidelines are used in excluding children/teachers:

1. A temperature of 101 degrees or above. **A child may return after 24 hours have passed with no fever and no need for fever reducing medication.**

2. Two or more episodes of vomiting or diarrhea. **A child can return 24 hours after symptom have subsided.**
3. Some of the more common childhood illnesses for exclusion are: conjunctivitis, impetigo, chickenpox, head lice, measles. Exclusion time varies based on the illness. The director will notify families based on state/medical/center policy regarding when the child can return to the group setting. A physician's note may be necessary for a child to return.
4. Severe cough or difficulty breathing to the point **the child cannot keep up with the group.**
5. Infants under 3 months may not remain in the center when displaying any indications of illness. The infant may return when they are symptom free.
6. If any of the above conditions continue while the child is at the center, parents will be called to remove the child from the center unless we have a signed note from the child's doctor stating that the condition is not contagious. The center director, however, has the right to override any doctor's notes if the child is obviously unwell and **unable to keep up with the day's activities.**
7. Children who are teething or who have a non-threatening condition which might prompt low-grade fevers and/or diarrhea, may return to the center and remain at the center as long as a note from the doctor stating that the condition is not contagious is provided. A written note or prescription to administer medication must be provided and all medications must be in the original container with clearly labeled instructions for administration to the child.
8. Parents must notify teachers if a child is taking any medications at home. This will help in the event the child has an unexpected adverse reaction to the medication.
9. A parent who refuses to abide by or acknowledge the illness policy risks termination of the child care contract.

When a contagious illness is identified, all parents will be informed concerning developing symptoms. During the height of cold and flu season, it is strongly suggest that families have a backup person to count on to reduce stress on mildly ill days.

Most members are trained in first aid and CPR to handle any injuries or emergencies that may occur. Emergency procedures are posted in each classroom, including who to contact in the event of such an emergency. Parents will be notified in the event that their child needs to be taken by ambulance to the nearest hospital (Exeter Hospital), so they will have the option of taking the child themselves, or meeting staff at the hospital. The staff member most familiar with the child will accompany them to the hospital, as well.

MEDICATIONS

Our teachers are permitted by state law to administer prescription medications to children, provided the medication is brought to the program in the original prescription

bottle, accompanied by an appropriately completed and signed medication permission form. **The following guidelines are to be followed when administering medication:**

1. The first dose of any new medication must be administered at home by the parent so that the child may be observed closely.
2. Prescription containers must note the child's name, name of medicine, dosage, expiration date, name of physician and pharmacy. The signed and completed medication form must accompany each medication. These forms are then posted.
3. **All medications and ointments must be given directly to a teacher and may not be stored within reach of children.** Medications are placed in medication boxes located in the refrigerator or in a designated classroom location. The medications are stored in approved covered containers and labeled with the child's name, name of the drug, dosage, expiration date and directions for administration.
4. The staff member assigned to give medications will individually administer medications following posted guidelines. A properly sanitized medication measuring spoon must be used. A medication spoon provided by the parents and kept in a zip-lock storage bag with the medication can also be utilized.
5. **Medications will not be administered in bottles/cups or mixed with any foods/drinks to insure proper dosage has been received by the child.**
6. For all children under 2 years old (or 24 lbs), medication forms must be signed by a physician in addition to the parent's signature. A physician's signature is also required for non-prescription drugs for which dosages on the bottle state that for this age group "consult a physician".

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

Children with special needs will be considered individually for the program by the directors. Outside consultants may be contacted to help determine needs of the child and whether our center has the facilities and staffing to meet the child's individual needs. There may be times when the center is not adequately staffed to meet the individual needs of a child with special needs.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Children benefit physically, emotionally and learn a great deal from playing outdoors throughout the seasons of the year. For these reasons, the children go outside daily unless a wind chill factor or serious rainstorms are present. Please be sure to send the appropriate clothing for outdoor time. Also, clothing should be suitable for the environment and may become soiled in the process of play. Staff will encourage children to be outside unless it would present a health risk.

Staff will apply sunscreen and insect repellent to the children before each recess period.

Parents are required to sign an annual permission form allowing teachers to apply the sunscreen and insect repellent. Parents are required to supply these materials in the original container. Staff must adhere to the expiration dates printed on the label by the manufacturer. Expired materials will be returned or discarded. **Sunscreen and bug spray must be handed directly to a teacher and may not be stored within reach of children.**

NUTRITION/MEALS AND SNACKS

The center follows the USDA guidelines in the types and amounts of foods served to the children. Menu guidelines for breakfasts and snacks are posted in the kitchen. Breakfast is served from approximately 7 to 8 am. Parents desiring their child to eat breakfast at the center are requested to be here by this time. Morning snack is served around 9 to 9:30 Am., and lunch is served at approximately 11:30 to 12pm. Afternoon snack will be served as the children awaken from nap generally around 2:30 pm. Families are required to provide lunch. The center will provide each child with milk to go along with lunch. On Mondays, pizza is delivered for those who wish to participate and the fee is \$2.00 per child. Payments can be included in the weekly tuition check. Families that do not wish to participate in pizza day, may provide lunch as usual.

TOYS AND CANDY

Please do not send in toys, candy, or gum from home, unless a "Show & Tell " day has been announced by the child's teacher (This does not include naptime "buddies"). Please do not send in toy weapons, or any other items that promote aggression. Nurture & Nature cannot be held responsible for any damages or lost belongings.

BIRTHDAYS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Parents are welcome to send in a group lunch, dessert or any other treat to share with their child's friends on birthdays or special occasions. Teachers are happy to assist or offer ideas to help children celebrate their special day at school. Please be sure to inquire with the room teachers about any food related allergy restrictions.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned on occasion (weather permitting) to enhance the children's learning experiences. Parents are asked to sign up to assist in providing transportation, but must carry appropriate insurance coverage to do so, and be over 21 years of age. A copy of insurance coverage is to be given in advance to the director if a parent will be

transporting children other than their own. Parents must also sign permission slips before their child can attend a field trip. **Parents and staff members shall ensure that all children are properly restrained in car seats when transporting to and from field trip destinations.**

NAPTIME

Naps are approximately 1.5 to 2 hours long. During this time children are required to rest quietly. A child may have a special stuffed animal, doll, or blanket to make naptime more comforting where appropriate. It is our policy that a child shall not be kept awake if their body is in need of a nap. If a child does not fall asleep after 1/2 hour of rest, they will be offered quiet activities while the others sleep. Rest time in the Infant Room will occur on an individual schedule, as needed. Teachers will provide daily napping documentation for Infant and Pre-toddler classrooms.

EVACUATION DRILLS

Evacuation drills will be conducted on a monthly basis to familiarize children with the procedures in the event of an emergency. Childcare centers are required to have a minimum of 10 evacuation drills per year. Emergency and safety procedures are posted in all classrooms detailing our response plan.

WHEN PICKING UP YOUR CHILD IN THE AFTERNOON

1. Teachers will be looking to share information about your child's day.
2. Teachers will assist families in the transition to home to the best of their ability. Please be aware that each child's teacher has a group of children in their care needing constant supervision. Once parents have removed a child from the classroom or playground, the child is no longer counted in the ratio and is under the supervision of the parent. Please be sure that children are closely supervised at this time. For their safety, children must always be in the company of an adult.
3. Items needing to be laundered should go home on Fridays, or the last day of attendance each week -- including sheets, blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, towels, etc.
4. Please make sure to sign children out each evening on the master roster located in the entry way.

LATE PICK-UPS

The center closes at 5:30pm Monday through Friday. Parents should call the center if they expect to be delayed. There is a \$10 per quarter hour late fee for parents who are late picking up their child. Parents are requested to include all late fees with their following week's payment.

ALCOHOL/ ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES POLICY

Alcohol or illegal substances are not allowed in the building or on the center's property. If a staff member detects the odor of an alcohol or other substances on a parent/guardian's person, we reserve the right not to release the child to that person as that person's ability to operate a motor vehicle may be impaired. A child's safety is of greatest importance.

WITHDRAWALS

Parents may withdraw their child from the program at any time. A paid two-week notice is required to cover transition costs. No fees will be reimbursed at that time.

NON-VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWALS

An important goal at the center is to meet the developmental needs of each individual child, while also considering the needs of the group as a whole. If a child's behavior consistently compromises the quality of care or threatens the safety of the group, parents will be required to meet with staff to discuss the behaviors and needs of the child. A working plan will be developed to establish consistency between home and school regarding the child's daily routines and discipline techniques. Schedule changes may be necessary to accommodate the needs of the child and of the group. A request for withdrawal from the center may be necessary only after all other measures to minimize disruptive behavior have been exhausted, or if the parents are not willing to participate or abide by the agreed upon plan of action. As stated previously, the center maintains the right to terminate a child care contract, particularly if the needs of the group as a whole are compromised.

UTILIZATION OF STAFF FOR PERSONAL CHILDCARE

Parents may utilize employees for child care (babysitting) in their home if the employee is interested and willing. The staff members and families are made aware that, though an employee may be "off-duty", they are still obligated to maintain confidentiality regarding discussions of other families, staff members, or Nurture and Nature business. Solicitation of employees from the center for personal in home child care is unacceptable (ie. hiring a teacher away from the center for full time care in your home). Contracts will be terminated immediately in this instance with no refund.

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