



Children's Center

OF THE UPPER VALLEY

Family Handbook

Dear CCUV Families:

Welcome to the Children’s Center of the Upper Valley!

Thank you for choosing the Children’s Center of the Upper Valley (CCUV) for your child. We want you to have peace of mind while you are away, confident in the knowledge that your child’s needs are being met.

Our mission is to support parents and serve our community by providing quality child care in a secure, healthy environment which promotes growth and learning in all areas of child development. We continuously do our best to provide high quality child care.

Since 1971, CCUV has been dedicated to providing quality early childhood care and education for families in the greater Lebanon area. By enrolling at The Children’s Center, you are giving your child a new extended family. The upcoming years will be filled with many exciting and fun events, activities, and experiences for you and your child. We are delighted you will be participating in our program.

At CCUV, we believe that all children learn and develop through active involvement with their environment. In this way children construct knowledge of the world, and strategies for interacting with both peers and adults which are an important part of learning during a child’s early years. We plan activities that are designed to be appropriate to each child’s developmental capabilities, and that are implemented with attention to the differing needs, interests, and developmental levels of our children. We also value the rich cultural and ethnic diversity that individual families bring to the Children’s Center.

This family handbook is designed to give you an overview of our program and policies. We encourage you to share questions, concerns, or suggestions; please don’t hesitate to call us. Any member of our staff will be glad to help you. We all – staff, parents, and children – work together as a team, to provide a positive learning experience for your family.

We look forward to having you as part of the CCUV community.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hosmer
Program Director

Debbe Callaghan
Executive Director

OUR FACILITY and CALENDAR

The Children's Center was the first child care facility in New Hampshire to be established with state support. From its start, the Center has operated as a non-profit corporation under a local Board of Directors. All parents of enrolled children are members of the corporation. We have been at our present location on Mechanic Street since 1973. Our old part of our building is an 1850 farmhouse, and includes our toddler and Kindergarten classrooms, food service area, administrative offices, and a combined staff room and learning resource center. A newer wing houses our other three classrooms. The grounds include five different playground areas.

CCUV is licensed by the State of New Hampshire, Bureau of Licensing and Certification, for up to 95 children between the ages of six weeks and 12 years, although our program focuses on the younger children.

The center is open Monday through Friday, from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM.

The Children's Center is open to serve your needs every weekday, with the following exceptions:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day (closing promptly at 3:00 PM on Christmas Eve)

We are also closed on President's Day and the Friday before Labor Day, for center cleaning and maintenance.

In the event that one of the above holidays falls on a weekend, the Center will be closed on the Friday before a Saturday holiday, or the Monday after a Sunday holiday. These are paid staff holidays, and your weekly fee remains the same.

The Children's Center normally remains open in inclement weather. In the rare case that we do close on account of snow or other **severe weather conditions**, schedule changes will be announced on local radio and television stations, including WCAX-TV Channel 3 and WMUR-TV Channel 9. Please check these sources before calling the Center.

OUR PROGRAM

The Children's Center is a year-round program, open to children from the age of six weeks until they enter kindergarten.

The curriculum in each classroom reflects the emotional, physical, social, and cognitive needs of the children. Recognizing that children grow, learn, and develop at different rates, the Children's Center curriculum gives children the opportunity to explore each area of development at their own pace. Health, safety, hygiene, and nutrition are part of each day's learning activities.

Each classroom provides age-based learning and development activities. An important part of your child's early years is a continuing development of knowledge of the social world and of how to interact with peers and adults. Your child's age, developmental stage, and the composition of the classroom are all considered when determining placement.

Our programs are designed to reflect the individual needs and interests of children, and focus on social, emotional, cognitive, language, and motor skill growth and development. At each level, children are encouraged to develop self-esteem, self-help skills, and individuality.

Each classroom features learning centers where children engage in appropriate activities. These include such areas as art, science, math, dramatic play, blocks, and books. We encourage children to make choices and play with others while participating in these centers. Our teachers act as facilitators as they extend the children's play and promote learning by observing, asking questions, and other interaction.

Classrooms have three teachers and assistance from additional staff members. Your child's room has its own schedule, with free play, breakfast, circle time, activity time, outdoor play, lunch, teeth brushing, rest time, snack, music/movement, and other elements.

Teachers at the Children's Center are caring, intelligent individuals with strong experience in Early Childhood Education. All teachers are required to complete 24 hours of continuing education each year, and all are also trained in First Aid and CPR. Classrooms are staffed with three full time teachers with the support of part time staff as well. All of our teachers have your child's health and safety as their primary concern. In addition they strive to create a stimulating and inclusive environment in which your child can thrive.

All children need fresh air, no matter the season. Unless weather conditions are extreme, we go outside every day. In the winter we go outside as long as the temperature or wind chill is 20 degrees Fahrenheit or above. It is our policy that children who are well enough to come to the Center, are well enough to go outdoors. We ask that you please be sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather and bring extra clothes for unpredictable weather.

We are very fortunate to offer five different playgrounds for the children here at the Center. Our youngest children enjoy the playground that is conveniently located next to their classroom which has many stimulating age appropriate toys and structures. All of CCUV's older children rotate between the four other playgrounds, each with a wide range of activities.

The decision to move a child from one age group to the next is made with care and is based first and foremost on the needs of the child. The child's teachers, parents, and the Program Director work together on this decision. We try to plan a transitional period of at least two weeks before the move takes place. We also encourage you to get in touch with the new teachers to learn more about your child's new room.

Parents are welcome to volunteer at the Children's Center. Volunteer opportunities are posted and communicated in teacher letters. Additional volunteer options can be arranged by speaking with the Program Director.

We respect and promote the cultural and religious diversity of our families. We do not offer any religious training, and we do not promote the religious aspect of holiday celebrations.

ENROLLING YOUR CHILD AT CCUV

The Children's Center of the Upper Valley is non-discriminatory, and accords equal treatment and access to services without regard to race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations.

Admission to CCUV is on a space available basis. When you return the completed application form and the \$20 non-refundable application fee you will be placed on the waitlist. The form and fee should be

submitted as soon as possible even if no space is available at the time of your inquiry. Sometimes an opening happens more quickly than we anticipate and we want to be able to meet your needs.

To enroll your child you will also need to complete and return the following:

- Family Profile Form
- Emergency Information, including the names of two persons who can assume responsibility for your child in the event you cannot be reached.
- A record of your child's health and immunizations completed by his/her physician. This information needs to be updated after each yearly exam.
- Food Program Forms.
- Photo Permission Form.
- Verification of Gross Income. If you decide to use CCUV's sliding fee scale, we will need this information to prepare your contract.
- A security deposit equal to one week of service and tuition for the first week of service.

Your child's teacher will contact you to set up an **intake meeting**. This is an opportunity for you to ask any additional questions you may have about the Children's Center and your child's classroom. It will also be when the teacher reviews their classroom routine and program, discusses what they need you to bring for your child's first day, and plan a start date with you. We want to be sure you and your child feel good about coming to the Children's Center.

After you complete and return of all your forms we will prepare a **contract for you to sign**. At this point your security deposit (equal to one week of tuition) and tuition for the first week of service must be paid.

Transition into the Center is based on each child and family. The Program Director works with each new family to determine a transition schedule that meets your child's needs. We know that transitions can be difficult for children as well as adults. When a family has had a difficult transition in the morning, we encourage them to call later to see how their child is managing. We are here to help with this process.

THINGS TO BRING

It is important that children are prepared for whatever may happen in their day. When children are hard at work and play, they get dirty – this is part of healthy growth and development. We ask that you bring the following **to be kept at the Children's Center**:

- **A complete set of seasonally appropriate extra clothing**, labeled with your child's name. This clothing should be replaced occasionally to ensure proper fit and weather suitability.
- **Shoes which are safe for running, playing, and/or climbing**. Shoes that are not safe include (but are not limited to) party shoes, sandals with open toes, or flip-flops.
- **A toothbrush and toothpaste**.
- **A blanket and crib sheet for quiet time**.

Winter requires a long list of extra clothing, including boots, hat, mittens, snow pants, and a warm jacket. It is also helpful to have a pair of indoor shoes/slippers in your child's cubby. Hats and mittens often get lost in the winter. Please **label** everything with your child's name. We do our best to keep items from

getting lost or mislaid, but should an item become missing, we may be able to locate it more easily if it is labeled. There are lost and found boxes on top of the cubbies. ***Please note, the Children's Center is cannot be responsible for any items brought to the Center. We do our best to make sure items are not lost or damaged but we cannot be responsible if loss or damage occurs.***

We strongly **discourage children from bringing in toys** from home except on show and tell days. The staff cannot be responsible for personal toys. Please talk to your child's teacher to get more information on show and tell.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Drop Off and Pick up Times

All parents are required to check in and out with their child's teacher at the beginning and end of the day. This personal "passing of the guard" is essential for children to develop an acceptance of their primary caregiver while they are away from their parents or guardians. As a rule, brief good-byes are best. This is an important time for parents and teachers to talk, but we ask that all conversations be kept brief, as the teachers' attention needs to be on the children. If you need to have a longer discussion, please schedule a time with the classroom teacher. If your child is out on the playground at your pick-up time, please see your child's teacher before taking your child. When you drop off and pick up your child, we document the times on a clipboard. At the end of the week, you are asked to sign to verify that the times noted are accurate to the best of your knowledge.

Please call the Children's Center when -

- Drop-off/Pick-up differs from your normal routine. If anyone different will be picking up your child, you must either call us before the alternate person arrives, or give written permission stating who the person is. We will ask any new person to provide identification.
- There is a change in your child's medications or medical condition,
- Your child will be absent from the Children's Center for any reason.

Problem resolution

Our staff welcomes comments and suggestions. When an area of concern arises, we ask that you bring it to the attention of the Lead Teacher in your child's classroom. The classroom teachers are most likely to be the ones who know the situation, so it is best to contact them first, before asking for outside assistance or guidance. The Lead Teacher will work with you to try to resolve or work through your concern. If you do not reach a satisfactory conclusion, please contact the Program Director.

Communicating with Teachers

Strong communication between the Children's Center and parents is of the utmost importance in meeting the needs your child. Please keep your child's teachers informed of any changes that may affect your child's behavior or of any of your child's needs that should be addressed in the classroom. By staying in close contact with your child's teachers we will be able to understand, communicate, educate, and have fun with your child.

Direct communication with the teachers is ideal, but not always possible every day. Daily sheets will provide you with information on your child's activities during the day as well as eating and sleeping habits. We also use each classroom's bulletin board for special announcements and reminders.

Parent Conferences

The link between parents and teachers is the vital assurance of quality care. Teachers will arrange at least two formal parent conferences during the year to discuss your child's development. Conferences are held in the spring and fall. At the conference, the teacher will review your child's portfolio of work and the teacher's assessments and observations. Additional meetings may be scheduled as the need arises, at the request of either the parent/guardian, or the teacher.

If, during the course of the school year, the CCUV staff becomes concerned about a child's development, the following procedure is followed:

1. The child's Lead Teacher will request a preliminary family meeting, to determine if a formal referral for services is necessary.
2. If the meeting finds that a formal referral is appropriate, CCUV will encourage the parent to make the referral to the appropriate SAU (NH) or Supervisory Union (VT).

The staff will support and advocate for the child and family throughout the process of evaluation and if needed the development of an Individual Education Plan and placement.

CCUV's NUTRITION PROGRAM

The Children's Center serves breakfast, lunch and snack every day for all children. Providing good nutrition and teaching healthy eating habits are an important part of our daily routine. All meals follow United States Department of Agriculture guidelines, and are nutritionally balanced. The Center also participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

All meals are served "family style," and table manners are both taught and expected. Our goal is to use meal times to expand conversational skills as well as to enjoy both the food and the experience of sharing a meal. Menus are posted daily in the main entrance.

Breakfast is served from 8:15 - 9:00am daily. Lunch is from 11:15am - noon. The afternoon snack is served at 2:30pm, just after the children wake from their rest time.

Children are asked to try each item that is served. The teacher serving may ask about the quantity of the serving ("A little?" "A taste?"). When everyone is served, all may begin to eat. Children may serve themselves seconds, with the understanding that they should finish the amount that they take. As children finish the meal, they are asked to scrape their plates into a receptacle. Plates, cups, and utensils are placed in appropriate containers, and the children are excused from the table.

The Children's Center is a **nut-free facility** – not just peanuts, but **all** nuts. We are aware of the tremendous risk both children and adults who are allergic to nuts face, even from the smallest amount of peanut butter or nut, in any form., If your child has consumed any product containing nuts, please wash your child's face and hands before entering the Center. Please do not bring in any outside food.

HEALTH POLICIES AND MEDICAL TREATMENT

Each child at the Children's Center must have a completed Child Health Form, signed by a physician, upon enrollment. The State of New Hampshire mandates an annual physical examination and a regular schedule of immunizations.

Illness/Injury

The State also mandates minimum policies as follows:

1. Child care personnel shall observe each child each day upon arrival and throughout the day for injuries and symptoms of illness which:
 - a. Impair or prohibit the child's participation in the regular child care activities; or
 - b. Require more care than child care personnel are able to provide without compromising the health and safety of the ill or injured child or the other children.

2. The symptoms of illness referenced in (1) above shall include, but are not limited to the following:
 - a. More than one episode of vomiting in one day;
 - b. More than one episode of diarrhea in one day;
 - c. Uncontrolled coughing or wheezing;
 - d. Unusual or extreme fatigue or lethargy;
 - e. Skin lesions which have not been diagnosed or treated by a licensed health care practitioner; or
 - f. An oral temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher or an under the arm temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher combined with any of the following:
 - i. Diarrhea
 - ii. Rash
 - iii. Ear ache
 - iv. Sore throat; or
 - v. Vomiting

The State further mandates reporting and exclusion of certain communicable diseases, including:

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|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Rubella | Mumps | Measles |
| Chicken Pox | Pertussis | Impetigo |
| Hepatitis | Scabies | Scarlet Fever |
| Ringworm | Head Lice | Strep Throat |
| Certain types of Conjunctivitis | | |

Please let the Center know if your child has been diagnosed with any of these communicable diseases so we may post appropriate information in the Center.

Medication

State regulations require that if your child requires prescription or non-prescription medication, you must fill out and provide a Medication Permission Form, and note all special instructions. You must hand the medication to the teacher so that it can be safely stored in a locked cabinet in your child's classroom. Please note the following requirements are for both prescription and non-prescription medications:

- Medications must be in their original container
- Medications must be clearly labeled with your child's name

Classroom staff will maintain a record for all medications administered.

TUITION

CCUV offers a sliding fee scale, based on a family's gross annual income. This option is made possible largely through the support of the Granite United Way. We are proud to be a member agency and recipient of funds raised through the United Way's annual drive.

Children are charged at the infant rate through 17 months of age, at the toddler rate from 18 through 35 months, and at the preschool rate from 36-78 months. Please see the CCUV fee schedule for tuition rates. Changes in tuition are announced in June and are effective July 1, for new families and September 1, for continuing families.

Upon enrollment a security deposit equal to one week's tuition and the first week of tuition must be paid.

Please note that **there is no weekly invoicing**. Tuition is paid in **advance** and is due on the **Friday** or the last day of service for the upcoming week.

CCUV strongly encourages families to set up direct debits from your bank account. This is a convenient, no cost, service we offer to make tuition payments hassle free. Please complete the Automatic Withdrawal Form (in your packet or available from our website) to use this service. Payments can be made weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly.

If you are paying by check or cash please place your payment in the locked payment box located in the main entrance. This box is checked daily. If you pay by cash, a receipt will be left in your child's cubby.

You are expected to pay your full weekly fee even if your child is unable to attend due to illness, vacation, or holidays, or if he/she is absent for any other reason. If your child will be absent from the Center for a period greater than two weeks please speak with the Program Director to discuss possible accommodations.

For families with NH or VT child care subsidies your security deposit will be based on CCUV's sliding fee scale. Please be advised, you are responsible for tuition, at the sliding fee rate, when your account is not active with the state; that is before your subsidy is active or after it has expired. It is your responsibility to manage your subsidy.

A service hold may be placed on your account if your account balance is not paid in full and your account may be referred to a third party collection agency. It is understood that fees equal to 30% of the remaining balance will be added to the amount owed, pursuant to NH Rev. Stat. Ann.S358-C:3 (VIII)(x) and VT Code R. 06 031 044 Rule CF 104.05(b), (c).

A \$25.00 fee may be charged for checks or automatic debits returned for insufficient funds.

You may ask for an annual statement of your yearly total for child care expenses at CCUV. We only provide this information on request and we ask for 10 business days advance notice to prepare the report. Please submit a written request to the office, including your name, your child's name, and your current address.

LATE PICK UP FEE

The Center closes promptly at 6:00 PM. If you extend the closing of the Center by your late arrival, a late fee will be assessed as follows: a fee of \$1.00 per minute for the first 10 minutes, a fee of \$2.00 per minutes for the next 10 minutes, and a fee of \$3.00 per minute for any additional time. You will need to pay this fee as soon as invoiced. The late charge will be based on the classroom clock.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

When withdrawing your child from enrollment at the Children's Center, we require a minimum of two weeks' written notice prior to the date of withdrawal. This time is necessary for both the child and the Center. Your child needs to prepare for leaving and saying good-byes. We need time to make a final evaluation and collect the records for future use in your child's new school. Failure to give two weeks' written notice will result in the forfeiture of your security deposit, and you will be charged for the two weeks' tuition, as well as any outstanding balance.

MOONLIGHTING

CCUV discourages our staff from "moonlighting" – caring for a child attending CCUV outside of the Children's Center. This practice can create unwanted conflicts for both the teacher and the child. Please note that

should you hire a CCUV teacher to care for your child outside of the Center, the Children's Center of the Upper Valley is not responsible for the actions of the teacher in such a situations.

NH State Licensing Policy Statement

"The licensing authority for this program is the Bureau of Licensing and Certification, Child Care Licensing Unit. Child care programs are required to post a copy of findings and corrective action plan for the most recent visit in a location which is accessible to parents, and must maintain copies of the statement of findings and corrective action plan for the preceding visit and make them available for parents to review upon request. Statements of findings and corrective action plans are also available on-line at <https://nhlicenses.nh.gov/verification/Search.aspx?facility='Y>, or by calling the unit at 603 271-9025 or at 1-800-852-3345, extension 9025

"During licensing, monitoring, and complaint investigation visits to licensed programs the department shall speak with children regarding the care they receive at the program if in the judgment of the licensing specialist the children's response would be valuable in determining compliance with licensing rules. Licensing staff are experienced in working with children and training to interview in a manner that is respectful and non-leading. However, if you do not want your child interviewed, or if you wish to be informed prior to your child being interviewed you must give the family child care provider, center director, site director or designee, and update annually, a signed dated statement indicating your preference."

Parent/Guardian Agreement:

We further understand CCUV reserves the right to modify, revoke, and/or suspend any or all of the policies and procedures summarized in this document from time to time, with or without notice. Thus, future changes to CCUV policies and procedures, as changes in applicable federal or state laws and regulations, may cause parts of this document to become outdated or inaccurate. Updates will be made available to CCUV families as soon as possible. Any changes will apply to all families, regardless of enrollment date, on the stated effective date of such changes.

By signing below, I/we hereby acknowledge that I/we have read, and understand and agree to all of the policies set forth in the CCUV Family Handbook.

X _____

X _____

PARENT or GUARDIAN / DATE

PARENT or GUARDIAN / DATE