



Parent Handbook

2023-2024

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OUR PHILOSOPHY

Middlefield Children's Center is dedicated to providing a safe, supportive, and stable environment for young children and their families. We provide a nurturing setting that encourages children to learn through hands-on, interactive exploration. Learning through play provides a child-centered, teacher-guided curriculum in which children are encouraged to construct their own knowledge. We recognize and respect that each child is special and unique and learns in different ways. By providing open-ended explorations and encouraging wonder and curiosity, we hope to not only prepare children for kindergarten but to develop a passion for learning.

Our program strives to:

- Enhance creativity by offering a variety of materials and experiences in art, music, drama and literature.
- Encourage development of large motor skills through indoor and outdoor activities and fine motor development through the use of manipulative toys, blocks, puzzles and other small tools and utensils.
- Develop language and literacy skills and an appreciation through stories, music and song, dramatic play, problem solving, group discussion and a print rich environment.
- Encourage emotional development through verbal expressions of thoughts and feelings, promote acceptable ways of expressing feelings, and help children learn to recognize and accept emotions in others.
- Nurture a positive self-esteem by providing an environment for successful experiences.
- Provide an inclusive environment meeting the unique and special needs of each child.
- Foster responsibility for oneself in self-help, health, safety and interpersonal relationships and facilitate independence.
- Promote cross-cultural understanding and respect by providing children with experiences in diversity through a multicultural, anti-bias curriculum.
- Stimulate diverse thinking by offering ample opportunities for hands-on problem solving and exchange of ideas.

CURRICULUM

We have chosen the **Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers** based on its developmentally appropriate approach to learning.

The philosophy behind the Creative Curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. Learning isn't just repeating what someone else says; it requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work and to learn firsthand about the world we live in.

In their early years, children explore the world around them by using all their senses (touching, tasting, listening, smelling, and looking).

In using real materials such as blocks and trying out their ideas, children learn about sizes, shapes, and colors, and they notice relationships between things.

While planning, teachers consider the ranges of development within each group and include activities for children at all levels of learning. Our goal is always to support, encourage and scaffold each child's learning, never to frustrate.

Our program addresses the needs of the whole child, taking into account all of their developmental needs: physical, social, emotional and cognitive. We feel that a program that addresses only the cognitive or academic needs of children cannot prepare them with all of the skills they will need for life.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

If a parent observes or visits the classroom, they might think the children are "just playing" - but the way children learn best is through play. As the children are going around and exploring all of the different centers, here are some of the skills they may acquire:

Language Arts (books and flannel boards)

- *Increases vocabulary growth
- *Develops listening skills
- *Develops reading readiness skills
- *Develops oral language skills
- *Encourages an interest in and respect for books
- *Develops an appreciation of good literature
- *Develops imagination
- *Increases attention span

Science

- *Develops observation and discrimination skills
- *Develops a respect for the environment
- *Encourages a child's curiosity

Blocks and Building Materials

- *Provides practice with social skills
- *Develops gross and fine motor skills

- *Teaches mathematical concepts (shape, size, balance, counting)
- *Increases creativity and decision-making skills
- *Develops visual discrimination skills
- *Provides an opportunity for role play
- *Increases communication skills and oral vocabulary

Dramatic Play

- *Provides an opportunity to role play home experiences
- *Increases social development and communication skills
- *Develops small and large muscle coordination
- *Develops self-awareness
- *Develops visual discrimination skills

Art

- *Provides opportunities for creativity and imagination
- *Develops small and large muscle skills
- *Develops color concepts
- *Provides a release of positive and negative feelings
- *Develops reading readiness skills
- *Develops pre-writing skills
- *Encourages an appreciation for the arts

Sand and Water Play/Sensory

- *Develops sense awareness
- *Develops concepts involving space, measurement, volume
- *Increases fine and gross motor skills
- *Provides opportunities for problem solving and creative thinking
- *Encourages children to think, reason, question and experiment

Manipulative (puzzles and other fine motor toys)

- *Develops small muscle coordination
- *Increases social development and communication skills
- *Fosters imagination
- *Teaches mathematical concepts (shapes, sizes, counting)
- *Provides opportunities for problem solving

Large Muscle and Outdoor Play

- *Develops large muscle coordination
- *Increases social development and communication skills
- *Provides opportunities for sharing
- *Provide opportunities for role play
- *Fosters safety awareness

OUTDOOR AND RISKY PLAY POLICY

Taking children outdoors is a healthy, integral part of our daily schedule and curriculum. The children will play outside for at least 90 minutes each morning and for children that spend full days with us, they will have an additional 60-90 minutes outside in the afternoon.

Children will go outside during every season, including cold winter weather and rainy weather. We ask all families to provide a weather appropriate change of clothing. If the temperature is below 20 degrees (actual temperature or with windchill) we will not take children outside. If the temperature is below 32 degrees (actual or with windchill) children MUST be dressed to go outside for a maximum of 20 minutes.

We do use the entire property. This includes nature walks on the driving path through the cemetery, using the large grassy area just beyond our playground space, and we have the opportunity to use the main church building for events that require more space. Any spaces beyond our classrooms and playground are NOT state licensed areas. By signing the Parent Agreement at the end of the handbook, you are acknowledging that we use spaces not licensed and give your permission for your child to be part of the nature walks, and activities that happen in these spaces.

Our playground encourages children to work with real objects. We have tires, wood spools and pallets, as well as bricks and tools. The children are asked to wear child-sized leather gloves when working with some of these materials. With these materials, the children are able to be creative and explore their abilities. Additionally, we do have climbing structures that the children may climb and jump from. We have developed the following information/guidelines for parents and teachers to explain how we will encourage risky play opportunities for each child.

This risky play policy applies to all staff, children, and parents within the program. We recognize that children both need and want to take risks in order to explore limits, venture into new experiences, and develop their capacities.

Aim:

- The aim of this policy is to make sure children are given access to risky play to extend their learning and development while being supported by a capable and confident adult.

Objectives:

- For children to explore and extend their development through taking risks in a controlled environment.
- For staff to supervise children to ensure they are able to access risky play while staying safe.
- For children to become confident in taking risks and developing their skills and independence.

Guidelines for Implementation:

- At MCC, we recognize that taking risks forms a vital part of building children's learning and development.
- We will encourage children to take risks and challenge themselves in the safety of the playground environment.
- It is the role and responsibility of all members of staff to ensure they are aware of any risks on the playground and that they position themselves with the children so that they are able to help, support and encourage as and when needed.
- Every three months, we will carry out an accident analysis to acknowledge where any accidents may have occurred and if there are any areas where a risk assessment or another action needs to be taken. This will be shared with the board and recorded in the official meeting minutes.
- Staff are always alert and aware of the children's needs and will support them as much as they can.
- Each teacher is trained in First Aid to ensure, if a child is injured, that they will be cared for properly.
- Types of risky play that the children may be involved in includes building and using balancing beams, or using natural materials such as wood, bricks and tree stumps.

HOURS OF OPERATION AND RSD 13 CALENDAR

HOURS OF OPERATION

Middlefield Children's Center hours of operation are 7:30am - 6:00pm divided into the following programs:

Early Drop off 7:30am - 8:30am

A.M. Program 8:30am -12:00pm

Extended Day 8:30am - 3:30pm

Full Day 8:30am - 6:00pm

After School (elementary age only) 3:30pm - 6:00pm

“ We kindly ask that all children arrive before 9:00 am in order to decrease disruption of protected learning time.”

SUMMER PROGRAM

Summer hours will be 8-5 with half day or full day options available. Information on the summer programs is available before April.

YEARLY CALENDAR

MCC's school year runs in accordance with **Regional School District 13's calendar** as well as shares the same vacation weeks/days as Regional School District 13.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSING/EARLY DISMISSAL

Just as Middlefield Children's Center operates off Regional School District 13's calendar, MCC also operates off the same inclement weather/school closing/early dismissal schedule as Regional School District 13 (RSD 13).

**If RSD 13 is closed due to inclement weather or has a remote learning day, MCC is closed.*

**If RSD 13 has a delayed opening, MCC will open at 9:30am for the families that pay for early drop off. All other families will arrive at 10:30, reflecting the 2 hour delay.*

**If RSD 13 has an early dismissal due to inclement weather, MCC will close at 2:00pm.*

**If RSD 13 cancels their after school activities due to inclement weather, MCC will close at 4:00 pm.*

**Please call MCC if you are unsure.*

OUR DAILY SCHEDULE

Our daily schedule varies depending on enrollment and length of day. The following is a sample of our full day program:

8:30-9:45	Arrival/Playground
9:45-10:20	Handwashing/Bathroom/Snack
10:20-10:40	Circle Time (books/stories, discussion, sharing, music and movement)
10:40-11:40	Free Play and Centers: art, science, blocks, math and dramatic play
11:40-11:45	Clean-up
11:45-12:00	Circle time: story, music
11:50-12:00	Dismissal
12:00-12:30	Lunch time
12:30-12:40	Bathroom/Handwashing
12:40-2:20	Rest (all children on cots for rest time. Children that do not fall asleep are able to do quiet activities after 20-30 minutes.)
2:200-3:00	Bathroom/Hand washing/Snack
3:00-6:00	Outdoor Play (playground, field, or nature walks)
3:30 and 6	Dismissal Times

Elementary School/After School Schedule

3:30-4:00	Bus Arrival times/Snack/Bathroom
4:00-4:30	Homework on the playground (if children have homework, we do offer time for teachers to assist children)
4:30-6:00	Outdoor Play (playground, field, or nature walks)
6:00	Dismissal

NON CO-OP PROGRAM

NON CO-OP PROGRAM

The non co-op choice is for the families who feel that it may be too difficult to fully participate in the co-op program. The non Co-op option will excuse you from serving on a committee hence the higher tuition rate. Non Co-op families are required to participate in at least one of the main fundraising events. We do ask that a family member attend the August Family meeting as there is a great deal of information shared that is important to all families at MCC.

MANDATORY PARENT MEETINGS

There is ONE mandatory meeting a year, in August for ALL enrolled families. A representative for each Non-CO-OP family is required to attend the August parent meeting. If you are unable to attend and do not send a representative, you will be charged a \$50 fine.

CO-OP PROGRAM

CO-OP PROGRAM

What is a co-op? A parent cooperative preschool is administered and maintained by the parents on a non-profit, non-sectarian basis. Each family helps with maintenance and fundraising which allows them to share in the business operation of the school, thus making it truly a cooperative venture.

MANDATORY PARENT MEETINGS

There are TWO mandatory meetings a year, one in August and one in May. A representative for each CO-OP family is required to attend the August & May parent meeting. If you are unable to attend and do not send a representative, you will be charged a \$50 fine.

CO-OP PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

- Complete **one task per month** from the maintenance list which helps in the general upkeep of the classrooms, school, and outdoor spaces.
- Complete a task for both the **FALL and SPRING fundraisers**. CO-OP families will also participate in at least one of the smaller events that happens mid-year. The number of and timing of fundraisers changes yearly.

FINES FOR INCOMPLETE MONTHLY MAINTENANCE TASK

- Completion of a monthly maintenance co-op task is vital to MCC. Non-completion will result in a \$25 fee. If Non-Completion continues for more than 1 month, you will be charged the NON CO-OP rate for the remainder of the year.

FINES FOR NON PARTICIPATION IN FUNDRAISING EVENTS

- As a participant in the **co-op program**, you are mandated to participate in all fundraising events. This is how we can help keep the tuition rates lower. A fine for non-participation in fundraisers will be determined by the board of directors prior to each fundraising event.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As a cooperative, parent-managed school, the Board of Directors is made up of parents who work together to manage the finances and generally oversee school operations. The board, consisting of 3-8 parents, and may include alumni family members or members of the community that could support our program, works as a team with the Director to help achieve the school’s goals. The Parent Board and Director will meet monthly to focus on goals and business decisions.

Membership Powers and Responsibilities

The owner and ultimate authority of the Middlefield Children’s Center is the cooperative membership. The following positions are held by elected members of the cooperative membership with a term of office of 1 year: **Director, President, Vice President, Secretary, Fundraising Co-chairs**

Board of Directors Collective Responsibilities:

- Each board member is responsible for attending monthly board meetings.
- Provide input/talking points for general membership and executive session agendas
- Schedule the date and time of each board meeting a month prior
- One Board member position fulfills a family’s co-op responsibilities.
- Single families cannot hold more than one elected board position.
- Collectively discuss salary increases yearly under the guidance of the treasurer
- Collectively discuss tuition increases yearly under the guidance of the treasurer
- Each board position has an established email account that you are responsible for maintaining and utilizing for all communications and document sharing.
- Two unexcused absences (by a board member) from board meetings will result in that board member being asked to step down from their board position.

Board of Directors Individual Responsibilities:

President	<p>A. Serve as the central source of communication between all persons associated to and with Middlefield Children’s Center, including the MFC</p> <p>B. Run all meetings of Middlefield Children’s Center</p> <p>C. In conjunction with the Director, create and maintain a maintenance task sign-up each month.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D. Notify families of fines for incomplete monthly maintenance tasks. E. Possess one of the three legal bank signatures of the organization F. Set up online banking and assign access to secretary and treasurer. G. Responsible for acting as church liaison. H. Delegate responsibilities if necessary.
Vice President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Act in the absence of the President B. Take on the role of HR person to support teaching staff. C. Research possible options for a benefit package for teaching staff, including: Savings/Retirement Account, Health, Dental, Life Ins options and present info to the Parent Board to determine best options for supporting our staff. D. Send out both a notice and email of overdue tuition - Notify the board, director, and bookkeeper of any overdue tuition
Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Ensure open communication and full transparency with bookkeeper B. Serve as communicator between bookkeeper, board, and director C. Manage ALL bank transactions including deposits and withdrawals (fundraisers, bonuses, etc) D. Pay bills as they come in E. Maintain Middlefield Children's Center insurance plans (bills, etc) F. Prepare annual budget based on information from bookkeeper G. Order supplies (Amazon, nature explore, by request/approval) H. Review monthly bank account reconciliation done by the bookkeeper I. Submit all approved expenses and bills to bookkeeper J. Possess one of the three legal bank signatures of the organization
Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Be responsible for recording minutes and maintaining the records of all meetings. B. Using Google Doc template, keep a record of both regular and executive session meetings. Share with all members of the board. C. Work with board members to edit minutes until approved by all members. D. Email Co-op families with approved meeting minutes monthly, or agree to send to the Director for email distribution.
Fundraising Co-Chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Oversees all fundraising operations and determines all fundraising opportunities that will be used to raise funds for MCC. B. Act as head of the fundraising committee and delegate fundraising responsibilities required. C. Keep the Board of Directors informed of all fundraising activities and fund status at each monthly Board of Directors meetings. D. Organize all major fundraisers (2-3 annually). E. Responsible for getting money from treasurer for fundraising events F. Responsible for money during fundraisers G. Act as head of the public relations committee and delegate PR responsibilities. H. Organize ways to give back to the community. I. Organize ways for MCC to participate in community events. J. Work with the director to complete all needed advertising.

<p>Bookkeeper</p> <p>(note: not an elected role, Board or Directors votes annually to hire for services)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Knowledge of Quickbooks Online B. Check Tuition Google Sheets (kept up by treasurer) for deposits/paid invoices C. Record all deposits in Quickbooks submitted by treasurer D. Ensure open communication and full transparency with treasurer E. Reconcile bank account monthly - provide reports to treasurer F. Process weekly payroll G. Maintain employee records for payroll in Quickbooks H. Maintain direct deposit accounts for staff I. Process monthly payroll deposits J. Process quarterly federal and state tax payments and filings K. Process annual federal and state payments and filings L. Create/report/disperse W2s annually M. Maintain workers compensation plans, payment, etc N. Provide tax statements to families who have dependent care accounts (upon request) O. Enroll students for quickbooks invoicing/payments, and for budgeting purposes P. Provide Profit & Loss reports to MCC treasurer for budget preparation Q. Process billing for all enrolled students-includes invoicing, processing payment R. Complete annual workers compensation report –requested by insurance company S. Complete and file annual tax return T. Work directly with IRS/State agencies as needed
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The Collective Board of Directors has the following authority:

1. Authorize the establishment of any special committee and define its responsibilities.
2. Authorize the purchase of major equipment.
3. Act in matter of policy not delegated to the committees.
4. Select, appoint, re-appointment or decline to re-appoint any teacher, including Director/Interim Director, and bookkeeper, and negotiate, approve, and execute contracts of employment.
5. By a majority vote, of the Board of Directors and with the consent of a majority of the members attending a duly-called membership meeting, duly sever the connection of any teacher, bookkeeper, or the Director/Interim Director with the school, in a manner consistent with the terms of the employment contract.
6. Discontinue a child’s enrollment for the following reasons: a member’s failure to meet financial, code of conduct, participation responsibilities as agreed; or, upon recommendation of the professional staff, for the child’s inability to adjust to the school program.
7. Consider any change of tuition during the school year and recommend such need to a vote of the general membership; tuition can be changed during the year by two-thirds of the general membership voting agreement.
8. With a majority vote of all members, establish or change auxiliary programs

ENROLLMENT GUIDELINES

CONDITIONS FOR ENROLLMENT

Our program is licensed for children ages 2.9 - 12 years of age. Based on staffing and building availability, our current enrollment is for 2.9 - 8 years of age, or entering second grade.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

The child must be three years old by December 31st of the current year in order to be accepted into the preschool (3-year-old) program.

Toilet Training - Children need to be fully toilet trained to enroll. As we are not licensed for infants and toddlers, we do not have changing stations available for changing diapers and pull-ups. "Fully toilet trained" is defined as:

- Does not wear any kind of diaper or pull-up, except at rest;
- uses/asks to use the toilet independently when needed;
- Is able to manage sitting on the toilet by themselves;
- Is able to manipulate their clothing and underwear effectively so as not to become wet or soiled;
- Is able to wipe themselves, flush the toilet, and wash their hands;
- Has minimal toileting accidents.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

The child must be four years old by December 31st of the current year in order to be accepted into the pre-kindergarten (4-year-old) program. The child must be fully toilet trained.

SCHOOL- AGE PROGRAM

The child must be of kindergarten age to be accepted in the school age program.

- Parents must register in person and complete all necessary forms **by June 1st**. These include:
 - Registration form and fee
 - Enrollment agreement and deposit
 - Emergency card
 - Current physical form
 - Student information form
 - Discipline Policy Acknowledgement form
 - Parent code of conduct.
- In the event that all school slots are filled, a waiting list will be kept in order of application. Openings will be filled from this list on a first-come first-serve basis.

- Enrollment applications will be numbered, indicating the order in which they are received on application days.

REGISTRATION FEES and FINES

Registration Fee

A non-refundable registration fee is due at the time of application: \$100 for new MCC families and \$50 for returning MCC families.

Deposit

To reserve your child’s space at Middlefield Children’s Center, a non-refundable deposit in the amount of **1 month’s tuition** will be due by June 1, 2023. This deposit will cover the tuition for June 2024. If you register AFTER JUNE 1, 2023, a deposit in the amount of 1 month’s tuition is due upon registration.

Monthly Tuition

Your monthly tuition is payable in advance and due by the 1st of each month. Here is the payment schedule:

September 1, 2023	October 1, 2023	November 1, 2023
December 1, 2023	January 1, 2024	February 1, 2024
March 1, 2024	April 1, 2024	May 1, 2024

*Tuition may increase annually to reflect cost of living increases.

Change from CO-OP to NON CO-OP Fee

MCC relies on its CO-OP families. Should you choose to switch from CO-OP to NON CO-OP after Sept 1st, a \$100 fee will be applied.

Discounts

- 10% discount off yearly tuition total if paid in full by September 1st
- 10% discount for multi-child enrollments (monthly, on installments)
*(If combining both discounts, multi-child drops to 5%)

Per Diem Charge

If for any reason you need your child to come for an additional day/program, there is a flat rate charge per program. Please check with us first and give 24 hour notice, so we remain in ratio. Daily charges are as follows:

Preschool Morning Session (8:30-12:00)	\$36
Preschool Extended Day (12:00-3:30)	\$36
Preschool Full day (8:30-6:00)	\$73

Elementary Early Dismissal Early PM (12:30-3:30) \$33

Elementary Early Dismissal PM to close (3:30-6) \$33

****There is NO reduction of fees or substituting your child's day when your child is absent, whether it is due to a vacation, illness, or snow days. We base our tuition on an annual rate, paid in 10 monthly installments.**

LATE PAYMENT FINES: Tuition is due on the 1st of the month.

There will be a **\$25 late fee per child** for any payment not received by the 10th day of the month.

Payment is 30 days late

A meeting with one member of the Board of Directors will be established to determine a payment plan.

Payment is 60 days late

If any family misses **two consecutive months** of tuition payments and has not paid in full by the **first day of the third month**, that family's case will go before the Board of Directors. The President will alert the family of the 9 days they have to pay the balance via bank check, certified check, or cash, or they risk being expelled.

If payment is still not received **on the 10th of the third month**, the family will be notified that the space can no longer be reserved for your child(ren), and care can no longer be provided

for the child(ren) until the balance is current. To reinstate a child, the total outstanding balance (including late fees) must be paid via bank check, certified check, or cash in full with a \$100.00 reinstatement fee. No tuition payment debts may be carried over the summer, and all tuition payment checks must clear before June 15th of the given year.

Payment is 60 days late with no payment plan set

When a payment is delinquent for sixty (60) days and no attempt has been made to set up a payment plan to bring the account current, the space can no longer be reserved for your child(ren), and care can no longer be provided for the child(ren) until the balance is current. To reinstate a child, the total outstanding balance (including late fees) must be paid via bank check, certified check, or cash in full with a \$100.00 reinstatement fee. No tuition payment debts may be carried over the summer, and all tuition payment checks must clear before June 15th of the given year.

FINES FOR LATE PICKUP OF CHILD - 12:00 or 3:30 DISMISSAL

If a parent/guardian picks up their child AFTER the designated pick-up time frame, the family will incur a \$10 fee. If the parent/guardian is more than 20 minutes late, the family will be charged a \$25 fee for the next session, for a total of \$35. If parents are late more than twice a month an additional fee, determined by the Board of Directors, will be billed.

FINES FOR LATE PICKUP OF CHILD - CLOSING TIME

If a parent/guardian fails to arrive by closing time, the child will remain with two staff members until he or she is picked up. A **\$25 charge will be billed**, followed by a \$25 fee per half-hour to cover staff expenses for staying with the child.

Frequent tardiness may result in the family being asked to leave the school. In case of an emergency, the parent should call the school. If the school is unable to contact the parents or any of the emergency contacts within a half hour of school closing, the authorities will be called.

**MCC will always have two staff members on site, at least 18 years of age, until all children have been picked up.

REFUNDABLE FEES

A family who withdraws from the program before September 1st will be refunded any monies paid towards annual tuition. A family who withdraws from the program MUST give a **thirty (30) days written notice** to the Director and all current financial obligations must be met.

No one will be refunded the June 2024 payment as that is your deposit for MCC (as stated in the handbook), except those who withdraw before SEPTEMBER 1, 2023.

If you choose to reinstate your child/children after withdrawing them, it will be handled by the board on a case-by-case basis.

SCHEDULING CHANGES

MCC requires a **one month written notice for any schedule change or request**. If you are reducing your schedule and do not give a 30 day written notice, you are responsible to pay the original amount for the month. The new amount will take effect next month. If you extend your schedule or change your enrollment status from Co-op to Non Co-op, we will require the difference of the monthly tuition to be added to the deposit.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

There will be a one-month (calendar month) probationary period for all children. If staff and parents agree that the placement at MCC is not appropriate for a particular child, the deposit will be refunded and all tuition for the balance of the year will be waived. For example, if the MCC school year begins on September 1st, then the probationary period will end on October 1st.

CLOTHING REQUIREMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Children should dress comfortably, simply and suitably for the weather.

Please bring in weather appropriate clothing for outdoor play – we do go out in the winter – boots, hats, snow pants and mittens.

Our activities can get very messy! Parents are advised to avoid sending children to school in clothes they do not want spoiled. Children will go outside daily where they will not only be building, but they have access to our mud kitchen and sand box. While we do our best to protect the children with smocks, etc., clothes can still get dirty.

Children should also bring a complete change of clothing, well labeled, according to the season, to school in the event that accidents, spills, wet playground and water table play may make changing clothes necessary. Each child has a small bin below the cubbies to store their extra change of clothes.

Within the classroom, children do not wear shoes. Parents/caregivers are asked to please provide either inside shoes or slippers for each child.

Shoes

We encourage families to send their children wearing appropriate shoes. Sneakers are recommended. With children jumping from structures, climbing up and down slides, and manipulating wood and brick objects for building, protecting the children's feet is very important. It is the right of any teacher to limit a child's activities if they are not wearing shoes appropriate for an area on the playground.

***For the safety of the children, please follow the following guidelines**

Sneakers and socks are safest! We do not recommend flip flops, sandals, or CROCS for any outside play. A change of sneakers and socks required.

GENERAL INFORMATION

DAILY COMMUNICATION

Parents and teachers need to communicate! Parents are encouraged to ask about the events that happen each day. The staff is available before and after class on a daily basis to discuss in private any questions or concerns you may have regarding your child and/or the program. Please feel free to talk to your child's teacher at school or email to request a meeting. MCC will provide a private area for these conversations to take place.

MCC uses the Brightwheel app for checking children in and out each day and teachers communicate daily through the app. Notes, photos and videos can be sent directly to families. This app is also used for sending out alerts about weather related closings.

CONFERENCES

Conferences are held in November and May with an optional January conference. A written progress report will accompany the May conference. In addition to these times, you may request a conference as necessary.

REFERRALS

If parents or teachers have concerns about the development of a child, the staff of Middlefield Children's Center will work with parents to make a referral to District 13 or help a parent make a referral to the appropriate district for formal evaluation. If necessary, MCC will meet with parents to review evaluation results and discuss a plan of action to meet the child's developmental needs. The staff will work with any additional professionals required for the child's success. It is our goal to work cooperatively with the parents, other professionals and the child to address all concerns.

SIGN IN POLICY

Teachers will sign children in and out on attendance sheets, as well as the Brightwheel app.

CHANGES IN DISMISSAL PLANS

If someone other than the parent/guardian, or approved pick-up person is to pick-up, the parent must call, email, or write a note authorizing the change in dismissal. MCC reserves the right to ask for photo identification.

ACCIDENT REPORT

If your child is injured during the course of the school day, a note will be sent through the Brightwheel app to notify parents. Additionally, a written report will be given to you with all the details of the incident and any action taken. In case of a medical emergency, a qualified staff member will administer first aid as needed. Attempts will be made to contact the child's parents first as well as their doctor/dentist. If not available, the program's health consultant will be contacted. For extreme emergencies, 911 will be called. An ambulance will take the child to Middlesex Hospital,

unless otherwise noted by the parent to transport to another hospital. A staff member will accompany the child as long as the state mandated ratio is fulfilled. Another staff member will notify parents.

INCIDENT REPORTS

If there is a situation that involves your child injuring another child, we will complete an incident report. These reports are used to track accidents, injuries to children, and behaviors. With this information the program is able to assist children that are struggling to control impulses or behaviors and guide them to productive and acceptable choices and outcomes. This information is not shared beyond the staff working with the child.

STAFF PRESENCE

The MCC Board of Directors can vote to authorize the hiring of additional staff, if needed, based on enrollment numbers to meet Department of Public Health State Licensing Regulations. Current ratios are 10:1.

TEACHER SUBSTITUTES

When a teacher calls in sick, we will find a replacement from the list of teachers/substitutes who signed up to fill in as needed.

REST

For children that stay beyond lunch, we offer a rest/napping period. Children that need to sleep have the chance to sleep in a quiet room. Children that have outgrown napping will be asked to rest on a mat for 20-30 minutes. Rest happens after lunch so it is the perfect time for children to unwind and let their body relax. After the 20-30 minutes time period they will be encouraged to use quiet activities such as: puzzles, play dough, and art.

Each child has a mat to rest on. Children may bring one **small** blanket and one small stuffed animal or doll to rest with. **Any items brought from home for rest time MUST be able to fit inside their cubbies or the bag/container that is provided for their belongings.** These materials should be labeled with the child's name. These items will be in their cubby each day and children will be encouraged to get their own belongings as well as put them away. This helps to build self help skills and independence. Blankets go home each Friday!

TOYS FROM HOME

Sometimes children need to bring special toys to school to "bridge" home and school transitions. On these occasions we will work with you and your child to make it a positive sharing experience. Once the child has settled into the daily routine, any items from home will be moved to their backpack. Past experience has shown us that toys from home create many problems at school. Please encourage your child to leave all personal belongings at home.

If your child's teacher does a share or show and tell with the children, we ask that only items that can fit into their backpacks be brought in and NO toys that represent weapons will be permitted.

DISCRETION WITH OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Please use discretion in arranging playdates, birthday parties or other non-school related activities. In order to avoid hurt feelings, we ask that you do not use the school cubbies for invitations unless the entire class is invited. A class list is provided to contact families at home.

BIRTHDAYS

At MCC, we recognize each child's special birthday, however, we do not have parties for the children. If parents would like to come in to read a story, or choose to bring a birthday treat, we prefer a treat which is nutritious and healthy. If a baked good is brought in, there needs to be a "Nut Free" label on the container. Please contact the teachers about bringing in a treat before the actual birthday. They will have some wonderful suggestions that take into account possible food allergies among the students, therefore no one will be excluded from the celebration.

Currently, foods can be brought in for celebrations that are store bought, sealed and clearly label all ingredients. Parents are asked to speak with their child's teacher to ensure there are no allergies in the classroom.

FOOD ALLERGIES AND SNACK/LUNCH RESTRICTIONS

Each year, based on enrollment we may enforce a nut free policy. This is dependent on the children enrolled in the program. If we do need to be nut free we will provide you with an extended list of foods that can be brought into the program. If MCC determines that it is nut free for the entire school year, then all foods must be peanut/nut free. We do support other food allergies. If any child has a food allergy, parents will all be notified. Since we share bathrooms and the playground, we do school wide limitations to ensure each child is safe and protected from foods that could be harmful.

For children that are here for a half day, parents will pack a snack. For children enrolled in either the extended day program or the full day program, parents will need to pack a morning snack, lunch and an afternoon snack. We do encourage parents to pack fruits, vegetables and proteins as the children are very active each day and need the fuel that healthy foods contain. Please do not pack any form of candy and we suggest that you send in water for your child to drink. We are in agreement with our dental consultant that candy and juice boxes are not the best items to send in as we do not brush teeth during the day and these kinds of foods and drinks can sit on your child's teeth and could potentially cause dental issues.

Please pack 1-3 items for each snack and 2-3 items for lunch. Please keep in mind that as mentioned above, the children play hard and they need foods that will give them energy and they will have days that they eat more or less, but offering enough items will ensure covering those days that they have played hard and need more food.

PARKING

Parents will enter the parking lot through the driveway located closest to the church and then exit only through the driveway located closest to school to ensure safe walkways for all. Vehicles should park in a marked space to allow clearance for emergency vehicles if necessary.

HEALTH GUIDELINES - Revised 5/9/2023

Every child must have a completed medical health form signed by a physician, including all immunization records. All children enrolled at MCC will be required to meet state immunizations guidelines. All health forms must be completed by a physician and returned to school before the first day of school. A child will not be allowed to enter school until the health forms are completed and returned. There is a 30 day allowance for updating physicals during the school year. **As of Sept. 2010, the Department of Public Health has mandated that every child up to 60 months old in a child care center MUST receive the flu vaccine between September 1st and December 31st.** If your child has a well check in August, and you receive the flu vaccine at that time, it will be accepted. **Exemptions from the flu vaccine and all childhood vaccines are medical ONLY.** Written verification must be given from your physician's office that the vaccine was given.

Young children brought together in groups have increased potential for exposure to infectious disease. Please think of the health of the other children, staff and parents.

The following guidelines are a guide for you to know when to keep your child home from school. As a general rule, it is a good idea to keep your child home from school if they do not feel well enough to be able to pay attention and actively participate in the school day. The following is a list of specific illnesses and our policies for when they can return to school:

- **Fever:** any child with a temperature of 100.0 degrees or more should remain home until feeling better and the temperature is normal for 24 hours without medication. If your child feels ill in the morning before school and has a low-grade temperature, keep the child home and see if other symptoms develop.
- **Colds:** coughs and runny noses, and when accompanied by a fever.
- **Vomiting/Diarrhea:** when vomiting or diarrhea occur overnight or in the morning before school, the child should stay home. Children should remain at home for 24 hours after the last episode of fever, vomiting or diarrhea.
- **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):** child may return to school when the affected eye has been treated with antibiotics for 24 hours
- **Strep Throat:** a child diagnosed with strep may return to school without fever after a minimum of 24 hours of antibiotics
- **Ear Infections:** children may return to school after treatment is initiated and they are pain free.
- **Covid:** Individuals that test positive for Covid-19, regardless of symptoms, should isolate at home for 5 days, or longer if symptoms continue; an individual should be fever free for 24 hours WITHOUT intervention (medications) before removing themselves from isolation. On day 6 these individuals may now return to school provided they remain asymptomatic or that their symptoms are improving, and they are masked consistently at school and in the community for the full 10 days.

- **Chickenpox:** children with chickenpox may return to school 5-7 days after the onset of the rash if ALL lesions are dry and scabbed over. If any open sores remain, the child must remain at home.
- **Measles:** MCC will follow state guidelines with a quarantine of 7-21 days.
- **Impetigo:** child may return to school after 24 hours of antibiotics
- **Rashes:** a child with unexplained rash that is spreading, is causing discomfort, persists for more than 2 days or appears to be a blister or filled with liquid under the skin needs to be seen by a physician. A note from the physician stating that the child is not contagious is required for the child to return to school.
- **Scabies/head lice/ringworm:** child may return to school after treatment is administered by a physician along with a note stating the child is cleared to return.
- **Communicable diseases:** please notify staff immediately if a child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease. A note from the physician stating that the child is no longer contagious is required prior to the child returning to school.

- If your child has an open wound or sore, it should be cleaned and properly covered before coming to school.
- If your child has any behavioral, developmental, learning, or mental health concerns, please inform the school and indicate if there are any medications or special healthcare needs for the child.
- Please notify the school about any health conditions, including the following:
 - Allergies - to what, what is the reaction and what medications are required, if any.
 - Significant injuries or accidents
 - Surgeries
 - Special dietary considerations
 - Prescriptions for glasses or contact lenses
 - Hearing problems
 - Special healthcare needs

For any contagious illness or unexplained rash, a doctor's note will be required for your child to return to school. Please ask your child's doctor for a note stating they have been seen, treated, and safe to return to school.

If you are keeping your child at home, please call the school at 860-349-0202.

Sending your child home:

If your child becomes ill while in our care, they may be moved to the office to minimize the chances of spreading illness. A parent will be notified of their child's illness and will be required to make arrangements for the child to be picked up **within one hour** of notification by an authorized person. If we cannot reach you the staff will call those listed on your emergency form.

If you are unreachable, or cannot come within one hour, you will be charged \$10.00 for every fifteen minutes until you are reachable and/or arrive for your sick child. A sick child impacts all children and teachers that are exposed, as well as impacting our child/teacher ratio.

If your child does not seem to be themselves: complains of being tired, falls asleep in the middle of an activity or in the morning hours before rest, complains of a stomach ache, ear ache, or seems to be not feeling well, or if they are not able to be an active member of the group, the parent will be called and asked to pick up the child early. We understand this can cause a conflict in your planned schedule, but to prevent illnesses from spreading, your child will need to go home until their symptoms have improved and they are able to be an active member in the group. **Please remember, MCC is a preschool, not a daycare and we are not able to care for sick children.**

MEDICATIONS

MCC will administer only emergency medication to children. With any medication an order from a doctor is required. This document must be completed by your child's doctor. This form includes: the name of the medication, an outline of the administration times and dosage requirements.

For children with severe allergies that require an Epi-Pen (any brand), the Epi-Pen must be in the original packaging. We will not accept an opened box with only one Epi-Pen from a box of two.

To administer prescription medication, parents must provide a written order from a physician. Please note: ALL medications must be in their original containers with the child's name, physician's name, directions for use and date clearly visible. **NEVER** put medication in your child's backpack or cubby, it must be given directly to the teacher. All medications are labeled and stored in a cabinet out of reach of all children.

Hand/body lotion and chapstick are all considered topical medication and need to have medical forms completed by parents. These items, along with any sunscreen that is provided will be stored out of reach of all children.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANS

MEDICAL

In case of a medical emergency, a qualified staff member will attend to first aid as needed. Another staff member will notify the family of the child. Attempts will be made to consult with the child's physician/dentist. If neither is available, the program's medical consultants will be contacted. For extreme emergencies, 911 will be called. An ambulance will take the child and a staff member to the nearest hospital. The child's emergency permission form will be brought with them. Another staff member will notify the family or alternate pickup person to meet the child at the emergency room. Additional staff will be called in if necessary to maintain required ratios.

In the event a child becomes ill while at the Center, parents will be notified and the child will be moved to the Director's office, with a cot available. A staff person will remain with the child at all times.

WEATHER

In case of a tornado, a weather emergency will be declared. Following shelter-in-place procedures, the staff will bring all the children to the lower level hallway. Staff will have the battery operated radio from the office, cell phones, walkie talkies and classroom backpack kit. Parents will be notified of this emergency procedure via Brightwheel app and notified again when it is safe to travel.

FIRE/BUILDING SAFETY ISSUE

MCC will conduct monthly fire drills in accordance with the Connecticut licensing safety regulations. In the event of a fire, smoke, or building issue which requires all children and staff to evacuate the building for a prolonged period of time, an evacuation procedure will be followed. In case of an evacuation from the school, staff will lead children out of the building, taking the classroom backpacks and roster for the day. We will walk to the safest building: (1) Middlefield Federated Church, (2) the Middlefield Community Center, or (3) the Middlefield Fire House. Attendance will be taken prior to departure and upon arrival. Appropriate authorities (police, fire, repair person) will be notified. Parents

will be notified via Brightwheel app, emailed, and/or called. Two staff members will remain with the children until all have been picked up.

DISASTER

In the event of a disaster, the school will be equipped with a radio in order to hear instructions from the Civil Defense Agency. Shelter-in-place protocols will be followed. Parents are asked **not** to call or come to the school. They should remain in a safe place and listen to the radio for instructions. School staff will follow instructions on the radio. Emergency care will be given by a certified teacher if necessary. Notification and reunification procedures will be communicated via Brightwheel.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Building safety will be enforced with locked doors at both the lower main levels as well as the interior hallway doors at all times. Parents will enter through the front of the building and exit through the back doors to ensure our staircases are not crowded. Only MCC staff will allow entrance into the program.

Beginning September 2023, parents will have the option of being buzzed into the entrance, or parents can pay a deposit fee for a key fob. The key fob deposit is \$50 per fob and parents can request 1-2 fobs per family. The deposit will be returned when the fob is returned. With the key fobs, parents can enter the lower level of the building but will still need to ring the doorbell for entrance into the main hallway.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The below scenarios have detailed action plans within the Staff Handbook. These scenarios will be discussed with all staff, and action plans simulated. Emergency management drills will be conducted with staff and students at an age-appropriate level. Families will be notified via Brightwheel when drills are completed.

Scenarios include:

- Active Shooter/Intruder - Lockdown Procedures OR Evacuation (if outside)
- Suspicious Package Found Inside or Outside of the School - Evacuation (if explosive) OR Lockdown
- Weapon brought into the building - Shelter in place until secure

FAMILY REUNIFICATION PLAN

Communication through the Brightwheel app is the quickest way to send important messages. In the event of a crisis, a notice of crisis and reunification instructions will be sent via Brightwheel.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PROCEDURES

You have entrusted your child's care to the professional staff at Middlefield Children's Center. We are committed to your child's academic growth as well as their safety and well-being. Our staff is trained annually by DCF on abuse and neglect, prevention and detection of child abuse or neglect, and the reporting requirements as mandated reporters.

Occasionally, there are factors in a child's appearance and behavior that lead to suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Connecticut law requires that all childcare professionals, including all staff of this program, report **suspected** abuse or neglect to the authorities so that children may be protected from harm and the family may be helped.

For the safety of your children we are required to report a child left unattended whether the child is indoors, outdoors or left in a car.

Behavior Expectations

ZERO TOLERANCE BULLYING AND THREATENING BEHAVIOR

MCC's goal is to provide children the opportunity and motivation to make choices, function independently, learn and practice social skills, respect the needs of others, adapt to routines, and become a responsible member of a group. We focus on positive, observable behaviors, and encourage children to use words to express their feelings. For a child that is not able to maintain control of their emotions and/or actions, the child may be removed from the group by a staff member for private discussion and problem-solving; the child is then encouraged to return to the group as soon as appropriate.

There is no place for bullying and threatening behavior at MCC. This applies to everyone – teachers, children, and family members. Physically or verbally intimidating, threatening or abusive behaviors may be cause for immediate disenrollment from the center. Depending on the degree and nature of disruptive behavior, the Director may opt to employ one of the following strategies to prevent possible disenrollment:

- Re-assess classroom environment, activities, schedule, and supervision.
- Document and share disruptive behaviors with family.
- Schedule in-person conference to discuss behaviors with family.
- Provide or recommend resources to family (literature, professional consultation, assessment by social work consultant).
- Suspend enrollment for a period agreeable to both the center and family.

If a family fails to support the efforts of the center to remediate their child's disruptive behavior, the center may opt to proceed with disenrollment. This decision will be made by the director of the center after discussing with the Parent Board.

ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS

- No smoking is allowed on school grounds or within the building.
- No dangerous weapons or firearms are allowed on school property. Additionally, no toys that look like real weapons are allowed.

REDIRECTION AND DISCIPLINE

Within the classrooms at Middlefield Children's Center, children will be encouraged to freely explore the classroom environments and material within certain limits. These limits, which will be clearly explained to the children, are set to ensure the child's safety and protect the rights of others.

When a child is acting in such a way as to violate these limits, the teacher will intervene with corrective action. The following guidelines will be implemented as appropriate to each individual situation:

1. Response to unacceptable behavior should be immediate. First priority is given to protecting the safety of the child and others.
2. The child will be clearly told what acceptable behavior is and offered options to his or her unacceptable behavior.
3. The consequences for misbehavior should be immediate and of short duration.
4. It is preferred that the consequences be restrictions of space and restrictions of use, such as which toys they may or may not play with. If this approach does not work, the child will be given the chance to "pause" with a teacher and discuss why the behavior is unacceptable and together, the child and teacher will work to create a plan to prevent these behaviors from happening again. At no point will the child be given a "time-out" or left alone. A teacher's role as a leader and role model is most beneficial to children in helping them develop conflict resolution skills.
5. The best method of discipline is prevention. Teachers can redirect children away from potential conflicts and model appropriate behavior.

Under no circumstances is physical punishment of any kind allowed. It is important that a child's feelings are respected. The child should be encouraged to express his or her negative feelings and should not be made to feel bad or guilty about them. Ridicule and threats can be more harmful to the child's sense of self than physical punishment is to the body. There is always continuous supervision by staff during any disciplinary actions.

PARENT or GUARDIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

As my child's most important educator, I understand that I teach my child best by my own example of reverence, responsibility, and respect. I understand that Middlefield Children's Center is dedicated to serving my family. In order to show my cooperation, support, and thankfulness.....

- I will set a good example in my own speech and behavior.
- I will show respect for the teacher, Director, and any other adult in authority in front of my child at all times regardless of what I may think of their actions or say to them in private.
- I will go through the proper channels when I have a problem.
- I will speak respectfully and with kindness and courtesy to other parents in front of students, especially when there is a disagreement.
- I will follow the school's general and health rules, calendars, and deadlines even when I disagree.
- I will supervise my child at drop off and pick up time.
- I will supervise my child even when I am socializing outside after pick up times.

I will abide by this code of conduct while my child is enrolled at Middlefield Children's Center.

This code of conduct was developed to promote a pleasant learning environment based on the respect of the rights of students, teachers, and parents. Children learn best when they are free of interference by others and know what is expected of them. Teachers are most effective when they use a consistent approach to student behavior and know that the administration and parents support their handlings of the students. Therefore, parents and students both need to be aware of these rules and their relationship to the rights of other people in the school.

Parent or Guardian Name Printed

Parent or Guardian Name Signed

Date

PARENT/GUARDIAN AGREEMENT

I am the parent or legal guardian of _____.

In order to record my understanding of my rights and responsibilities as a parent, guardian or custodian of the above-named child, who is enrolled in the Middlefield Children's Center for the 2023-2024 school year, I agree to abide by the 2023-2024 Parent Handbook.

I have read and understand the programs Health Guidelines and Safety plans and agree to follow these guidelines.

I understand that the deposit/first installment payment will be due by June 1, 2023 or at the time of registration and I understand the withdrawal policy.

In return for this promise of continual fulfillment of all policies, Middlefield Children's Center agrees to provide care for the above-named child who meets the standards and guidelines as set forth below and in the Parent Handbook.

I understand that there is no automatic reduction of fees when my child is on vacation or gone from Middlefield Children's Center for any other reason, including illness.

Additionally, I understand the following:

- No smoking is allowed on school grounds or within the building.
- No dangerous weapons or firearms are allowed on school property. Additionally, no toys that look like real weapons are allowed.

Middlefield Children's Center has disclosed and I fully understand and agree with the Redirection and Discipline Procedure.

Parent or Guardian Name Printed _____

Parent or Guardian Name Signed _____

Date _____