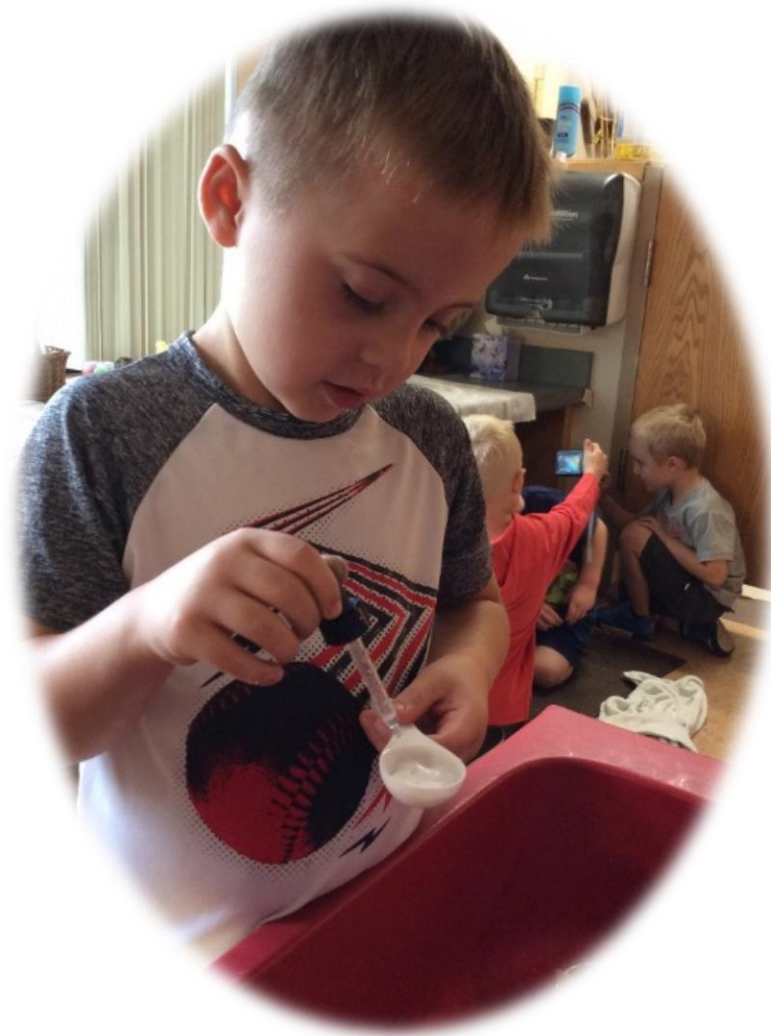




North Idaho College

Children's Center



2023-2024

Family Handbook

Table of Contents

Welcome.....	4
Mission/Vision.....	4
Center Administration and Funding	4
NAEYC Accreditation.....	4
Philosophy	5
Family Partnerships.....	6
Family Policies and Procedures	10
Health and Meals.....	18
Program Description.....	25
Payment and Fees.....	32



For more information visit us on the web!



North Idaho College is committed to its policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, pregnancy, sexual orientation, or status as a Vietnam-era veteran. This policy applies to education programs, services, and facilities, and includes, but is not limited to, admissions, employment, and access to programs and services.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

05/05/2022

WELCOME

Welcome to the North Idaho College Children's Center! We look forward to partnering with you this year and providing a quality program for you and your child. This handbook will answer many of your questions about the operations of the Children's Center, its policies and procedures. The NIC Children's Center welcomes children of all abilities and is committed to partnering with families to ensure each child's success. *Interpretive services are available upon request.*

NORTH IDAHO COLLEGE MISSION

North Idaho College meets the diverse educational needs of students, employers, and the northern Idaho communities it serves through a commitment to student success, educational excellence, community engagement, and lifelong learning.

CHILDREN'S CENTER MISSION

The NIC Children's Center is a nationally accredited lab school providing educational excellence in early childhood education while supporting and promoting post-secondary student success.

VISION

To intentionally engage in and nurture lifelong learning through reflection and collaboration while maintaining quality standards of educational excellence.

CENTER ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

The Children's Center is under and administrated by the Vice President of Student Services. The program is funded with revenue produced from child care tuition, some appropriated College funds, and the Federal USDA Child Care Food Program.

NAEYC ACCREDITATION

The Children's Center has been accredited through the National Association of Early Childhood Programs since September 2000. Accreditation involves a comprehensive process of internal self-study and an external professional review to verify compliance with the Academy's Criteria for High Quality Early Childhood Programs. A high quality childhood program provides a safe and nurturing environment while promoting the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of young children.

PHILOSOPHY

The Children's Center's educational philosophy is inspired by the schools of Reggio Emilia. The 'Reggio' vision of the child as a competent learner has produced a strong child-directed curriculum model. The curriculum has purposeful progression, but not scope and sequence. Teachers follow the children's interests and this drives the curriculum. The Reggio approach has a strong belief that children learn through interaction with others, including parents, staff and peers in a friendly learning environment.

As educators of young children, one of the most important questions we can ask ourselves is...

“What is our image of the child?”

The Children’s Center resoundingly answers that question from a competency based viewpoint:

The child is capable, curious, competent, constantly constructing theories, and is a powerful researcher.

Therefore as a facilitator of learning, the role of the adult is to:

- **Assist in organizing theories, provide resources, and guide the child further in their thinking.**
- **Help provide focus and moving from uncertainty to risk.**

As educators we must also ask ourselves...

“How do young children learn best?”

Children learn best by:

- **Constructing theories about the world, people, and they need time to hypothesize, explore, test, revisit and revise those theories.**
- **Exposure in a social context whereby children interact with peers, disagree, work towards a common goal and share perspectives and experiences.**
- **Experiencing materials that are rich with the possibilities of transformation.**
- **Being given opportunities to express their knowledge through a variety of languages: the spoken word, paint, clay, wire, music, dance, and many more.**

“What children learn does not follow as an automatic result from what is taught. Rather, it is in large part due to the children’s own doing as a consequence of their activities and our resources.”

Loris Malaguzzi, The Hundred Languages of Children

FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

You are your child's first and foremost teacher, and as such we strongly encourage families, teachers, and staff to establish a friendly and open line of communication. The exchange of ideas between families and teachers is essential and enhances the work we all do with your children. We rely on your expertise as the person who knows your child best to maintain a quality program. We put forth a strong effort to maintain dialogue among teachers, administrators and families in the development of our essential partnership together. This happens in a variety of ways:

Welcome Conferences

A unique component of the Children's Center is developing a home and school partnership. Welcome conferences are an important connection when building and fostering strong teacher/family/child relationships. It provides and reinforces a healthy home and school link, which is vital in ensuring consistency in early care. Welcome conferences occur before the child actually begins, so a teacher may get to know important family cultures, languages, rituals, routines, habits and preferences of both the child and their family. This enables the teachers to incorporate these family elements into the classroom and curriculum. During welcome conferences, teachers will also help complete the child's first developmental screeners, the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, set individualized child learning goals, and provide information about the classroom routines, what to expect, and what to bring.

Daily Communication

Conversations between staff and families during drop off and pick up times are an essential time to share information.

The program uses the **Brightwheel** application to communicate on a regular basis with families. For our infants and toddlers, and any other child whose family requests, we use **Brightwheel** to provide information about your child's regular happenings that describes the details of diapering routines, types and quantities of foods eaten and offered, and sleeping details. Teachers can also share important reminders and share classroom happenings in Brightwheel. Teachers in all class will verbally check in with families at drop off to see when the last time your child ate, had a diaper change/went potty, how their night went and any other information that is relevant.

Classroom Entry Areas

Each classroom has a white board and bulletin located in the entry way. This is where you will find daily reminders and a copy of the curriculum plans. Additional classroom information may also be posted here, such as classroom illnesses or field trip information.

Family Bulletin/Resources

The family bulletin board is located in the entry area of the Center. It provides a wide variety of information and is updated daily to maintain current information. This bulletin contains information about illnesses going around, public policies, meeting agendas, curriculum provocations and reflections, family resources, etc.

Conferences

Family/teacher or director conferences are welcomed and encouraged to discuss your child's progress and to mutually share information and insights on your child's needs. The Center holds a minimum of two conferences per year, scheduled at the conclusion of each semester. During conferences, teachers and families discuss your child's development and growth and goals are reviewed and updated. Families can request a conference at any other time to discuss any questions or concerns that require more than just a few moments during drop off or pick up times. Your participation is strongly encouraged!

Visitation and Volunteering

We believe the family to be the foundation of any children's program, therefore we welcome and encourage you to come by at any time to spend time with your child in the program. We welcome and encourage parents to volunteer in all areas of the program, and if you have special talents or interests that you could share with the children please let your child's teacher know! We welcome your ideas, input, wisdom and time! Please note that due to licensing regulations, parents wishing to regularly volunteer (greater than 15 minutes a day) must obtain an Individual Child Care License, which requires both a FBI background check, state of Idaho background check and two sets of fingerprints on file.

Newsletters

A center-wide newsletter is emailed at the beginning of each month. These newsletters have programmatic information, educational articles, and a calendar of events.

Email/Phone Calls/ Facebook

With technology growing, we regularly utilize as many avenues of communication as possible! Teachers regularly email families updates. Facebook is used to share program information, but also to share the amazing investigations of the children. A release to include your child's picture (we don't use names) is included in the enrollment paperwork.

Daily Snapshots

Snapshots for each classroom are sent out daily in order to keep families updated and invested in the current curriculum content. Since the Children's Center utilizes an emergent curriculum, the day-to-day activities are ever changing and have unlimited opportunities. The daily snapshots will serve as a way of keeping families engaged in their child's learning, while also keeping them informed about the learning objectives that are taking place in each classroom.

Children's Center Advisory Committee

The NIC Children's Center Advisory Committee serves as a consultative board, whose objective is to support the NIC Children's Center mission and vision by developing a supporting tasks or projects that support:

- **Fostering Family Engagement:**
Meaningful engagement of families is essential for enhancing a children's learning and family well-being and supports school readiness.
- **Promoting Staff Retention, Professional Growth, and Overall Wellness:**
Continuity helps children create a good self-concept and enhances a child's ability to form healthy relationships with others.
- **Encouraging Community Partnerships:**
Community partnerships are central to the Children's Center philosophy and the NIC mission.
- **Identifying Potential Financial Supports:**
Financial support is essential to maintaining a quality early childhood program and lab school.
- **Participating in Program Assessment and Planning:**
Multiple and diverse perspectives provide the opportunity for continuous improvement and growth.
- **Supporting the Instructional Value for NIC Students:**
The lab school serves an essential function for the early childhood community of North Idaho by providing a model of best practice and a quality instructional program.

Family Participation Opportunities

All families are encouraged to lead and participate in the program whenever possible, either through the tasks and projects organized by the Advisory Committee or through independent tasks and projects.

Opportunities include, but are never limited to:

Volunteering in the classroom

Participating in fun school outings and field trips

Assisting in project or curriculum planning

Attending family socials/workshops

Helping with outdoor or building projects

Fundraising

Program review/planning.

Family Socials and Workshops

An all-family Social/Workshop will be held at least once a semester at the Children's Center. We welcome and encourage participation in these socials and workshops to connect with other families and staff, and to strengthen the home and school connection for you and your child.

In addition to all-family functions, each classroom hosts at least one parent meeting each semester in which topics are chosen based on children's/families' interests or needs. The classroom parent meetings take many different forms, from round table discussions, social opportunities, to educational workshops.

FAMILY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Eligibility and Admission

The Children's Center admits children from 6 weeks through preschool without regard to race, culture, sex, religion, national origin, ancestry, or disability. Student-parents/guardians must be enrolled in classes no later than **4 weeks prior to the start of the semester**. A parent or legal guardian must either be enrolled in 6+ NIC credits or employed teaching a minimum of 9 credits or working a minimum of 19.5 hours per week. A child remains eligible for the program as long as the parent/guardian maintains eligibility status as outlined above. Priority enrollment is always given to students, enrolling faculty and staff children only after the student wait list has been exhausted.

The Children's Center has a limited number of **Head Start slots** for student/faculty/staff parents who meet the Children's Center eligibility requirements as well as the Head Start eligibility requirements. If a child is selected for a Head Start slot, the parents/guardians must ensure that the child is in attendance during the specified Head Start slot, which is provided at no cost to the family.

Probationary Status: If a parent or legal guardian's credit load falls below 6 credits during a semester, the child may still be eligible to remain in the program for the semester under the following conditions:

- Parent/Guardian signs a Letter of Understanding
- Parent/Guardian is still enrolled at NIC and **attending** at least 3 credits
- Parent/Guardian must enroll and maintain 6+ credits the following semester (unless child ages out of the program at the end of the probationary semester).

If a parent/guardian's credit load falls below 6 credits during the following semester, the parent/guardian will be considered ineligible and be given an enrollment cancellation notice, giving the family two weeks to find alternate care. A final bill will be calculated as noted in the "Payment and Fees" section.

Inclusion

The NIC Children's Center welcomes children of all abilities and is committed to partnering with families to ensure each child's success. If your child has a special health need, you will need to complete a "Special Care Plan" in conjunction with your child's health care provider(s). Please refer to the "Special Health Diagnosis/Needs" section under the health section of the handbook.

If a child or family receives services with any other agency, including, but not limited to the Infant Toddler Program or the Developmental Preschool, the teaching staff at the Children's Center ask that families allow them to fully partner with them and the other professional/s by attending goal meetings and implementing services into the child's daily program at the Children's Center. If your child has written assessment results or plans such as an IEP/IFSP, we request copies to include in the child's file that allow staff to fully implement and track progress.

The program will attempt to accommodate children with special needs consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disability Act. If the program is unable to accommodate the child's needs as defined by the child's health care provider(s) or the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)/Individual Education Plan

(IEP) without posing an undue burden as defined by federal law. The program Director will work with the parent or legal guardian to find a suitable environment for the child.

Custody

The Children's Center is a neutral environment providing support to the child and family. Please note that it is the responsibility of the "eligible" parent to ensure that the child care bill is paid in full to ensure that the student account is not placed on hold (see payment information for more details). We will not split a child care bill between two families. If your family has legal custody arrangements, certified copies must be provided in order for the staff of the Children's Center to follow the arrangement. Please note that without the documentation we cannot withhold the child from a custodial parent.

Enrollment Requirements

Enrollment forms are required to be fully completed **prior** to the first day of school, or before the child can attend school. **Failure to fully complete this paperwork or provide required documentation may result in cancellation of your child's slot.** The required registration process includes:

- 1) **Enrollment forms**-contains all contact information, emergency release forms, authorization for medical treatment, child's schedule, custody arrangements with signature, and a contract that verifies review and adherence to all policies and procedures listed in this handbook.
- 2) **Certified copy of custody arrangements or any other pertinent legal documents** (if applicable)
- 3) **Special Health Diagnosis Form and Release of Information Form** (if applicable-REQUIRED PRIOR to start of school if child has life-threatening medical condition, otherwise within first 30 days)
- 4) **Child health assessment form and copy of immunizations**-(within 2 weeks of enrollment-please refer to the health policies listed below for details)
- 5) **CACFP Income Eligibility Form** (if applicable-to be completed within first 2 weeks)
- 6) **CACFP Medical Statement Form** (if applicable-required within one week)
- 7) **Infant Feeding Notification Form** (if applicable-to be completed within first 2 weeks)

Home visit and orientation packets also include information on free developmental screeners and community resources. Additional information on the program's curriculum and philosophy are also included.

Schedules and Schedule Changes

In order to support strong relationships, maintain consistency and continuity for children, **families must maintain their child's enrollment slot for the duration of the school year** (fall and spring semesters). ***Infant enrollment slot must be maintained through the toddler classroom due to no increase in group size.*** If families wish to change their slot mid-year, and space is available, families may be allowed to change their schedule. However, if space is not available, families must maintain their current slot until the space becomes available or withdraw from the program.

In order to maintain ratios, consistent staffing, and classroom routines, families can **only adjust their drop off and pick up times within the first two weeks of the semester.** ALL schedule changes must be approved by administration.

Drop Off Time Limitations

In order to provide an adequate and supportive transition to your child at drop off, we ask that you **refrain from dropping off during meal times or nap.** These are very difficult times for your child to say goodbye to you and enter into the group, and very difficult for the teacher to give your child the individual attention and assistance they may need to say goodbye while also managing the group. Additional staff is not available to provide one on one care for your child if they are dropped off during group nap time. Specific time limitations vary by classroom.

Withdraw from the Program

The Children's Center requires a two week notice when families wish to withdraw from the program. We will ONLY accept full withdrawal from the program with written notice (i.e. verbal notice to a teacher is not permissible). A final bill will be produced as noted in the Payment and Fees section of this handbook. Families will continue to be billed until notification of withdrawal is received.

School Closures and Emergency Notification

We are sometimes required to close school due to weather conditions. Please stay tuned to your local news channels for these closures and make sure you're signed up for Cardinal Contact. If North Idaho College is closed, the Children's Center will also be closed. Tuition charges for any emergency closures are not prorated.

All NIC students and employees are automatically signed up for Cardinal Contact. If you are not a current student or employee (or are a Workforce Training Center student or student from another institution), but would like to receive NIC emergency alerts:

Go to <https://communitycontact.bbcportal.com/>

1. Create a new account.
2. Click the link in the confirmation email to authenticate your account.
3. Answer security questions.
4. Enter your contact information (*you can enter multiple phone numbers and email addresses*).
5. Set subscriptions. *Click the NIC Alerts box to receive emergency alerts.*
6. Set preferences. *You can elect to receive emergency alerts by phone, text, or email.*

You will be notified directly by a Children's Center staff member if the center has unscheduled closures while the program is already in session. On occasion, the emergency alert system will also notify families of emergency closures.

Child Abuse

Idaho State Code, Section 16-1619 requires all adults over the age of 18 to report any indication of child abuse. As a family member of an enrolled child, if you witness any conditions or circumstances which would reasonably constitute neglect or result in physical injury to a child, you should report it by calling 211 within 24 hours. The Center Director can assist you if needed. Children's Center staff are obligated by law to inform the Child Protection Offices of the Department of Health and Welfare within twenty four hours of any conditions or circumstances which would reasonably constitute neglect or result in physical injury to a child. Persons who act upon reasonable cause in reporting child abuse are protected from any liability by Idaho Code, Section 16-1620.

If a report is made to Child Protection Services (CPS), the Center staff making the report are required to maintain and protect child and family confidentiality and are prohibited from discussing the situation with anyone outside of CPS or law enforcement as needed to file the report.

If a staff member is accused of child abuse, policies will be followed to ensure both the children's safety and employee's rights are protected. The staff member may be suspended or put on leave (with/without pay) pending the outcome of the investigation, or may be removed from the classroom and given a job that does not require interaction with children. No accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the CPS investigation is complete. Caregivers found guilty of child abuse will be immediately dismissed.

What to Bring and Not Bring

We will provide a cubby for your child to store personal belongings, art work, etc. Each classroom has a specific list of items to bring, however in general we ask that you bring the following items:

- Diapers and wipes (if applicable) NOTE: Each child will have 5 diapers put away at the beginning of each semester in the event they run out. Your child's teacher will inform you in sufficient time, verbally as well as via notes on Brightwheel, when more diapers will be needed (the 5 will be held for spares and only used if necessary).
- Non-prescription "cosmetics or skin-protectants" such as diaper cream, lotion, sunscreen, lip balm, etc (will require a signed permissions form) labeled with your child's name.
- A complete change of clothes marked with your child's name. This includes pants, shirt, underwear and socks. Please change this set of clothes according to the season.
- Even if your child is not a napper, all children should bring a small blanket and a "snuggly" item such as a favorite bear that often helps quiet time/naptime become more secure and comfortable.

We will provide your child with learning materials and toys. We ask that families keep any special personal items that could be lost or damaged at home. A small, special item from home can help with your child's transition to school, but please note that these items could potentially get lost or damaged. Please limit this transition item to one small item. Children can keep their special items safe in their cubby or on the teacher's desk if needed. Children are responsible for the care and safety of these items, not the teaching staff. You and your child assume all responsibility for the return and safety of any personal toy item. The center will not replace any item that becomes lost or broken.

Please leave all gum, candy and extra snacks at home as well, as these present choking hazards or safety hazards to those children with severe food allergies.

Pedestrian Safety

When entering and exiting our building please make sure you take the following steps to ensure you and your child's safety:

- Children should NEVER be left alone in the car-even older siblings. Please contact center staff if you need assistance dropping off or picking up-we're happy to help
- Always turn off your vehicle's engine

- Always hold your child's hand when walking through the parking lot
- Use the sidewalks to enter the building, not the parking lot
- Walk your child all the way to their classroom-make contact with the teacher before leaving
- Children need to remain with an adult at all times and have an adult with them before opening doors
- Remember to use car seat safety guidelines as indicated on the informational card provided at the home visit by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Idaho Chapter.

Transportation

In operating the Children's Center, our first responsibility is to protect the health and safety of the children in our care. When parents drop off and pick up their children, we want to make sure their children are transported safely. When a parent transports children under the influence of alcohol or drugs or fails to use an appropriate car seat, it creates an unsafe transportation situation for the children. If, in our opinion, a child cannot be safely transported to or from our program, we will ask the parent not to transport the child and will propose the alternatives listed below. If the parent refuses to agree to one of the alternatives and insists on transporting the child, we will immediately call the police and report the unsafe driving situation.

1. We will call someone to pick up the child from the emergency contact list
2. We will call a cab to pick up the child and the parent. The parent will pay the cab fare
3. If the parent has failed to bring an appropriate car seat for the child, we will ask the parent to drive home without the child and return with an appropriate car seat installed in the car. A late pick up charge will be assessed for the second and all subsequent occurrences.
4. Other acceptable alternatives proposed by the parent.

Idaho's Child Restraint Law

[Idaho Code 49-672](#)

Idaho's Child Passenger Safety Law will require that all children 6 years of age or younger be properly restrained in an appropriate child safety restraint. This is a primary law, subject to fines.

Choose the Right Car Seat*	
Child's Age & Weight	Type of Seat
Newborn to approx. 2-years old	Rear-facing Infant or Convertible Seat
2-years old or older	Forward-facing Convertible or Combination Seat
Under 8-years old	High-back or No-back Booster Seat
8-years old or Over 4 ft. 9 in. tall	Lap Belts or Lap/Shoulder Belts

*Refer to your car seat instruction manual for specific guidelines.

Information taken from: <http://itd.idaho.gov/ohs/childsafety/index.html> , June 2014

Key Card System and Security

Please help maintain safety of every child by not holding the door open to any persons when you are coming and going. Only designated Children's Center staff will authorize access to individuals who do not have a key card, even if they are a familiar face.

Please keep in mind that in difference scenarios, such as in custody cases, some familiar faces may not be allowed access to their child. Only designated Children's Center staff would know this information.

Please do NOT share key card with individuals, including those dropping off or picking up your child. Key cards will be distributed to family members who drop off or pick up more than two times per week.

If you misplace or lose your card it is IMPERATIVE that you tell an administrative staff person. This helps to ensure that unauthorized people do not have access into our building.

All families are required to have a key card. Please remember that every time a staff member has to come open the door, it takes them away from their work or classroom. **Out of respect to Children's Center staff, please be considerate and remember to bring your card with you and locate or replace it promptly. Families who don't have their card may have to wait outside until an available staff member can assist them since they are frequently in the classroom, on the phone, attending meetings, etc.**

Arrival and Pick Up

For safety reasons **children must be supervised at all times**. Please make sure your children stay with you, not running ahead. Children should **never** go through the big double doors without a parent, coming or going.

The person responsible for bringing and picking up your child must check the child into and out of the Center each day by checking in with the teaching staff, who will sign the child in and out using the Brightwheel app. Each child must be properly signed in by an authorized adult and physically under the supervision of staff before the Center can assume responsibility for the child's activities while on the premises.

After sign-in, the adult should help the child wash their hands before playing in the classroom.

When picking up your child, please check in with your child's teacher so they are fully aware that the child has left for the day and they can sign them out at the appropriate time. Please remember that children must be supervised at all times and need to stay with you through the building and into the parking lot, even when picking up siblings.

If you want someone else to pick up your child, you **MUST complete the Pick-Up Authorization Form** in the front lobby. Advise the person picking up your child to stop at the front desk to show acceptable identification (i.e. driver's license). **Without your prior consent and proper identification, we will not release your child, not even to people listed on your emergency contact list.** Parents are responsible for advising others who deliver or pick up your child of the sign-in/out procedures. In addition, parents must ensure that the person picking up their child has the proper car seat to adhere to state laws.

If your child is receiving services that require they utilize the school district buses, the program Director is responsible for ensuring that:

- a written schedule is in place for drop off and pick up times,
- staff members are designated for the drop off and pick up of your child, and
- these details are communicated to all staff, including the transportation department and bus driver.

The designated staff member will deliver the child to the bus or pick them up from the bus as the schedule dictates. The bus driver will only release the child to the designated staff member. The designated staff member will sign the child in and out as appropriate. If the staff member receiving the child is not the child's teacher, that staff member is responsible for delivering the child directly to the child's teacher and verbally check in to ensure that the child's teacher is aware the child has arrived.

Cell Phones

In respect of all the children, families and staff utilizing our program, please refrain from cell phone use beyond the big double doors.

Absences

Please call your child's classroom if your child will be out for the day or will miss regularly scheduled times. Center staff will follow up with a phone call if your child is absent and you have not yet notified us. This is very important for planning and maintaining the proper ratio of staff to children each day. Since fees are charged for the entire month, no refunds are given for missed days (see the section on Payment and Fees).

Clothing

Simple, comfortable, washable "fun worthy" clothing that allows your child to physically engage in a variety of activities should be worn. Since we do many messy learning activities, we suggest your child wear clothes that can get dirty.

Confidentiality of Records

For the purpose of confidentiality, the NIC Children's Center will not share or discuss any information about your child outside of our staff without your written consent. Your child's information is kept in their locked confidential file and is available for your review upon request as well as upon request from regulatory authorities. If you wish to share your child's information with other professionals, you will be required to sign a release of information. Also, to protect your child's confidentiality, teachers are required to sign a Confidentiality of Records Agreement.

Statement of Confidentiality

Confidentiality is defined as holding-in-confidence any and all information obtained from an employee, child, parent, or family member or contained in the employee, child or family file. This includes but is not limited to, personally identifiable information, disability records, and financial data. ~NIC Personnel Policy

- We ask that you respect the confidentiality rights of both children and adults. What this means is that we ask you to keep personal information about others to yourself. Young children share family information openly . . . through pretend playing or in conversations with other children or adults.
- If you hear something of concern, be sure to talk with a Center staff member.
Please talk only with them, respecting the privacy rights of our families.

Grievance Procedures

At the Children's Center we value the families as their child's number one teacher and one who knows their child best, and as such, strive to create partnerships in order to give children quality care. Any grievances that pertain to your child's classroom should be addressed to the teacher in the classroom, if you feel comfortable to do so. If you are not comfortable, you may always bring concerns to the Director. If your grievance is with the Director or administrative issues, you are encouraged to bring your concerns to the Director. If that is not a feasible choice, the Supervising V.P. for the Children's Center should be contacted next.

HEALTH AND MEALS

Immunizations

Idaho State law requires that all children be fully immunized. The Center staff will access your child's immunization records utilizing IRIS. If your child's records are not on IRIS you will be required to provide the immunization records within two weeks of the child's first day of attendance. If your child's immunizations are incomplete, you will receive a Conditional Attendance form that outlines immunization requirements in order for your child to remain enrolled while they get caught up or you may choose to sign an Immunization Exemption form if you are choosing to not immunize your child. Unimmunized children with signed exemptions will be excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department. **Children without the documentation will not be permitted to attend the Center after two weeks until documentation is provided.**

Child Health Assessment

Routine preventative health services are required and you are responsible for keeping your child up to date with well-child checks and immunizations. Parents/Legal Guardians will be asked to provide a copy of their child's most recent well-child exam prior to entry into the program, which includes immunizations as well as lead, vision and hearing screening results. Referral services will be provided to children who are behind on any services, and families will be required to provide evidence of an appointment for those services within the child's first two weeks in order for the child to remain enrolled in the program. **Children without evidence of a well child exam, or a scheduled appointment to complete a past-due well child exam, will not be permitted to attend the Center after two weeks until documentation is provided.**

Special Health Diagnosis/Needs

If your child has a special health need or diagnosis that requires the staff to modify any part of the normal program, a Special Health Diagnosis form must be filled out to place into your child's file. This form helps to inform the teachers and staff how to handle your child's special needs, such as restricting diets for food allergies or what to do if your child has a seizure, etc.

The Special Health Diagnosis form requires a physician's signature and incorporates the important information the staff need to take proper care of your child. **This form must be in place before the child can participate in the program.** All staff in the Center will be trained by a licensed medical professional, with the parent's assistance, to ensure that a trained staff member is on site during all hours the child is in care.

In addition to this form, you may be asked to fill out a Release of Information form allowing the physician to complete the form and give information out to the Center.

Emergency medications that are included in the special health plan MUST be on-site when the child is present and stored appropriately as outlined in the medication policy.

If your child has a particular special need that requires specific training on use of equipment, such as Epipens, breathing treatments, or injections, trainings will be provided by a licensed medical professional. Parents are encouraged to assist with this training so that teaching staff are able to individualize their care as needed to the child.

For children with **food allergies or intolerances**, a completed CACFP Medical Statement Form with appropriate signatures and requested accommodations is required in order for us to make accommodations. It is important to have this form completed as quickly as possible in order for us to have appropriate foods and make changes to the menu. Children that have a **medical disability** will be fully accommodated and those requesting an accommodation due to intolerances or family preference will be accommodated within reason, and parents/guardians may be asked to provide appropriate substitutes as appropriate. If children do not have a medical plan in place due to food allergies, a Special Health Diagnosis form is not required. With parent/guardian permission, the child's picture and allergy information will be posted in the kitchen and classroom to help make sure all staff, even subs, help ensure your child's safety.

Note: the Children's Center uses only eco-friendly, non-toxic and fragrance-free cleaning/sanitizing/disinfecting products and laundering detergents.

Playing Outdoors

Children shall play outdoors daily when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. Outdoor play for infants may include riding in a carriage or stroller; however, infants shall be offered opportunities for gross motor play outdoors, as well.

Weather that poses a significant health risk shall include wind chill at or below 15 degrees F and heat index at or above 90 degrees F, as identified by the National Weather Service.

Air quality conditions that pose a significant health risk shall be identified by announcements from local health authorities or through ozone (smog) alerts. Such air quality conditions shall require that children remain indoors where air conditioners ventilate indoor air to the outdoors. Children with respiratory health problems such as asthma shall not play outdoors when local health authorities announce that the air quality is approaching unhealthy levels.

Children shall be protected from the sun by using shade, sun-protective clothing, and sunscreen with UVB-ray and UVA-ray protection of SPF-15 or higher, with permission as described in STANDARD 3.081, during outdoor play. Sun exposure should be limited between the hours of 10 AM and 4 PM when the sun's rays are the strongest. Before prolonged physical activity in warm weather, children shall be well-hydrated and shall be encouraged to drink water during the activity. In warm weather, children's clothing shall be light colored, lightweight, and limited to one layer of absorbent material to facilitate the evaporation of sweat. Children shall wear sun-protective clothing, such as hats, long-sleeved shirts and pants, when playing outdoors between the hours of 10 AM and 2 PM.

Unless otherwise recommended by public health authorities, no insect repellent may be used. If recommended by public health authorities:

- * only repellants containing DEET are used,
- * on children over the age of 2 months,
- * applied no more than once per day, and
- * only with written parental permission.

In cold weather, children's clothing shall be layered and dry. Caregivers shall check children's extremities for maintenance of normal color and warmth at least every 15 minutes when children are outdoors in cold weather.

Sick Policy

To protect the health of your child and others, we ask that you keep your child at home when ill. The following criteria are listed from *Managing Infectious Disease in Child Care and Schools*. This is the book that was written by the Academy of Pediatrics to inform best practices and is what the Center uses to determine if your child needs to be excluded from care.

Should your child become sick while at the Center, we will contact you immediately. It is crucial that you keep us informed with accurate and up-to-date phone numbers, emergency information, and the location you can be reached at while your child is at the Center. Please remember, we are not staffed or equipped for sick care.

Your child needs to be excluded from care if:

- 1) They have or have had a fever of 100.4 or higher in the last 24 hours.
- 2) They do not feel well enough to comfortably participate in all group care activities, including outside activities, without the use of any medication.
- 3) The staff cannot care for your child without interfering with the care of other children (i.e. infants needing to be held all day).
- 4) The child poses an increased risk to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact as defined in Child Care resources from AAP.
- 5) Any other criteria as deemed by public health officials.

Your child may return to care when:

- 1) Once symptoms have been improving for a full 24 hours, **AND**
- 2) Once the child's temp has been under 100.4 without fever-reducing medication for a full 24 hours, **AND**
- 3) The child is able to comfortably participate in all group care activities ***without the use of any type of medication*** OR
- 4) Appropriate treatment has been given and the child meets re-admission criteria as determined by *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools*.

Notifications of Outbreaks

If there is a health outbreak at your center, information for what to watch for will be posted on the front double doors. Emails will also be sent out with the same information. If your child is diagnosed with a contagious health condition, please contact the center as soon as possible. We will then notify all the families. We will never disclose which child is affected by a health condition

Head Lice Policy

The Children's Center maintains a "**nit-free**" policy. Any child contacting head lice will be excluded until the child has received treatment and the Director or designee determines the child to be "**nit-free**."

Injured Children

Should your child become injured at school, we will always record the injury and inform you about the incident, the action taken, and follow-up measures. In the event of a serious injury the **EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION** form, signed as part of the registration process, allows the Center to secure emergency medical treatment for your child should it ever become necessary. We will follow the following emergency procedures:

- If the injury is life-threatening or very serious, such as a head, neck or back injury, EMS will be called immediately, after which you will be contacted.
- If the injury is serious, but not life threatening, such as a broken arm or serious cut, you will be contacted immediately to let you make the decision to either transport them yourself or call an ambulance.
- If you cannot be reached, an ambulance will be called and a familiar adult will accompany your child to the Emergency Room while every effort is made to make contact with you or other listed emergency contacts. ***It is vital that we are able to reach you at ANY time...***

Medication

Due to the high-risk for children and staff associated with administration of medication, the Children's Center staff does not normally administer medications, prescription or OTC, for any reason other than a special health diagnosis, and only then after proper staff training has been provided by a licensed medical professional. In the event of extenuating circumstances and director approval, medications may be administered by properly trained and evaluated staff members. Medications ***MUST*** be directly signed in with a staff member with appropriate paperwork completed. Medication housed at the Center will be required to be in the locked box in the staff room, with the exception of emergency medication (i.e. epipen, inhaler) which are to be stored in the classroom's locked emergency backpacks to allow teachers immediate access.

Emergencies

We make every effort to ensure a safe environment for the children at all times. There is a set of written procedures for emergencies. All staff are required to maintain current pediatric first aid and CPR certification. An emergency evacuation plan is reviewed regularly with staff, and a fire drill is held once a month.

In the event of an emergency that would require evacuation of the building, the children will be evacuated to either another location on campus or off campus based on the situation. In the event of an off-campus evacuation, children will be relocated to one of several predetermined locations to be determined by security staff based on the exact situation.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD DURING AN EVACUATION!

Once at the evacuation site families will be able to pick up their child. Teachers will then make contact with families or emergency contacts to pick up any children whose families have not already come. A more comprehensive evacuation plan is available for review upon request.

Toilet Training

Children are ready to tackle toilet training when the child demonstrates:

- An understanding of the concept of cause and effect;
- An ability to communicate, including sign language;
- The physical ability to remain dry for up to two hours
- An ability to sit on the toilet, to feel/understand the sense of elimination;
- A demonstrated interest in autonomous behavior

Once children demonstrate these skills and interest, teachers and parents/guardians will work together to develop a toilet training plan that supports the child's developmental stage and their success in group care.

Potty training children should continue to wear protective undergarments (diapers/pull ups) while in the program until they are having accidents **less than twice a day**.

A child will be ready to begin wearing underwear at the Children's Center once he/she can consistently keep their underwear dry without reminders for at **least two hours** at a time.

The child will be put back into protective undergarment (diaper/pull up) if they have had two accidents in one day.

Meals

Family style dining is used during all meals at the Children's Center. Family style dining means teacher and children sit down together to share and enjoy a meal. Adults play an important role in making mealtime a time of relaxation and enjoyment. We help create the atmosphere that makes meal time a pleasant experience. Families are welcomed and encouraged to participate in meals with their children! Please let our cooks know if you plan to join a meal so that enough food may be prepared.

By eating together, children learn to socialize and share with others. They develop good eating habits and may be exposed to foods not served in their homes. As they take responsibility for serving themselves and making choices, they develop a sense of self-confidence.

As part of the USDA Child Care Food Program (CACFP), the Center provides a nutritious breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack for your child at no additional cost. Meals are served at:

Breakfast:	9:00 a.m.
Older Infant/Toddler lunch:	11:15 a.m.
Two/Three's lunch:	11:30 a.m.
Four/Five's lunch:	12:00 p.m.
Head Start lunch:	12:00 p.m.
PM snack:	2:00-3:00 p.m.

Infants are also included in the CACFP meal program, as the Center provides a "house formula" and different types and amounts of foods according to the age and developmental readiness of your infant and as prescribed by the USDA and Academy of Pediatrics as best practice:

INFANT MEAL PATTERN		
	0-5 months	6-11 months
Breakfast	4-6 fluid oz breastmilk or formula	6-8 oz breastmilk or formula

		0-4 tbsp infant cereal, meat, fish, poultry, whole eggs, cooked dry beans or peas; or 0-2 oz cheese; or 0-4 oz (volume) cottage cheese; or 0-8 oz yogurt; or a combination*
		0-2 tbsp veggie, fruit, or both*
Lunch	4-6 fluid oz breastmilk or formula	6-8 oz breastmilk or formula 0-4 tbsp infant cereal, meat, fish, poultry, whole eggs, cooked dry beans or peas; or 0-2 oz cheese; or 0-4 oz (volume) cottage cheese; or 0-8 oz yogurt; or a combination* 0-2 tbsp veggie, fruit, or both*
Snack	4-6 fluid oz breastmilk or formula	2-4 oz breastmilk or formula 0-1/2 bread slice; or 0-2 crackers; or 0-4 tbsp infant cereal or ready-to-eat-cereal* 0-2 tbsp veggie, fruit or both*

*Required when infant is developmentally ready.

USDA supports and encourages moms to continue breastfeeding when returning to work or school. For formula fed infants, the Center offers **Similac Advanced** as our “house formula.” **Any infant using a different formula must provide their formula in prepackaged, factory sealed containers (cannot be brought in already open).**

Snacks

Afternoon snacks are provided by the CACFP meal program and are comprised of two food components. Some classrooms may offer morning snack between breakfast and lunch.

Often times another late afternoon snack is offered around 4:30. This is usually a very light snack as well, as we know children go home to dinner. However, this snack usually can carry them through for families to get home and settled before the child is too hungry.

Families are welcome to bring snack donations from home for their child’s classroom snacks, though this is certainly not required. NOTE: classrooms may have children with **food allergies**, so please check with your child’s teacher to determine the best type of snack donation. ***Food brought from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory sealed containers.***

Food Allergies

Refer to Special Health Diagnosis/Needs section above for details on food allergies.

Animals

Some of the classrooms may have small animals. They may include rabbits, rats, gerbils, fish, or guinea pigs. Animals may visit the classroom as well. All animals present at the Center, indoors or outdoors, should be trained/adapted to be with young children, in good health, show no evidence of carrying any disease, fleas or ticks, be fully immunized, and be maintained on an intestinal parasite control program. If your child has allergies or for any reason shouldn’t be around animals, please let the teacher know.

Center Pest and Plant Control

The program uses Integrated Pest Management Systems to maintain facilities free of harmful animals, insect pests and poisonous plants. When possible, we use strategies to prevent unwanted pests and plants, and when needed use the most non-toxic methods for management. In these cases, we (or hired pest-control company) follow the manufacturer's instructions and only apply the pesticide/herbicide when children are not present and in a manner which prevents skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure to children. When pesticides/herbicides are used, parents/guardians are notified.

Tobacco-Free/Vape-Free Guideline

North Idaho College, including Head Start, is committed to maintaining a healthy and safe environment conducive to learning for ALL students, employees, and visitors. The purpose of the tobacco-free/vape-free college guideline is to reduce harm from second hand smoke, provide an environment that encourages individuals to be tobacco-free and establish a college culture of wellness.

Smoking, vaping, tobacco use, and tobacco sales are prohibited on North Idaho College owned, operated, or leased properties including parking lots, walkways, sidewalks, sports venues, and college-owned and private vehicles parked or operated on College property.

For the purposes of this guideline, tobacco/vape is defined as any type of tobacco product including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, electronic cigarettes, pipes, hookahs, smokeless or spit tobacco or snuff/snus.

Dangerous Weapons

In an effort to provide a safe and positive educational environment, North Idaho College Head Start prohibits the possession or use of weapons at Head Start facilities or Head Start activities.

We follow North Idaho College Dangerous Weapons Policy #7.04.01.

Possession or use of weapons (as defined in the associated procedure*), including firearms, while upon properties owned or controlled by the College or where College activities occur, is prohibited. Exceptions to this weapons policy exist where authorized by state law or where specifically authorized by North Idaho College. Violations of this policy may result in discipline, including, as applicable, student suspension or expulsion, termination of employment or exclusion from the College. Violators may also be subject to prosecution under applicable laws.

*Excerpted from Procedure #7.04.01: Weapon: means a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, appears to be or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury, except that such term does not include a pocket knife with a blade of less than 2 1/2 inches in length.

Due to the licensed status of the Children's Center, additional restrictions are mandated for firearms. Idaho Code, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and the City of Coeur d'Alene prohibit the presence of firearms in licensed daycare facilities unless the firearm is in a locked container that is inaccessible to children. Ammunition must be kept in a separate locked container. These rules apply at all times when children are present.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Lab School Responsibilities

As a Lab School, the Children's Center serves as the primary learning facility for our Child Development students. In addition, we serve as a learning facility in which many other NIC students complete a wide variety of their assignments such as psychology observations, nursing practicals, communication assignments, graphic design projects, and many more.

Child Development students work hands-on with children, requiring them to complete a background check and be supervised by Children's Center teaching staff. All other students are required to utilize the observation rooms and are restricted from entering the learning spaces with children, with the exception for outdoor observation.

Head Start

The North Idaho College Children's Center and the North Idaho College Head Start are committed to a partnership which will provide a strong school-readiness foundation for shared families. The partnership will serve a limited number of Head Start families at the NIC Children's Center. It is the intent of both programs to provide seamless education services to the children of families of North Idaho College. For more information, please see the Center Director.

Days and Hours

Children's Center classroom operating hours for most classes are from 6:45am - 5:15pm Monday through Thursday and until 2:45pm on Fridays. Our Infant Classroom is opens at 7:45, and our Head Start operates Monday through Friday. **The Head Start classroom is NOT in operation the last working Friday of each month.** These scheduled dates are addition to the regular campus closures. Exact classroom hours are determined annually by Head Start staff.

The Center is open during regularly scheduled class days for the fall and spring semester, including finals week and advising/curriculum days. The Center follows the student calendar and is closed on student holidays, such as winter break, spring break and summer.

Staff

The Center's professional staff are either full-time or part-time employees of North Idaho College. The staff consists of a Director, Sr. Administrative Assistant, 8 primary teachers, 5-7 part time assistants, and 2 part time cooks. Many college students are also employed with work study funding. All staff are required to be licensed through the City of Coeur d'Alene. This licensing requires a full FBI background check, filed fingerprints, TB test and pediatric first aid and CPR.

Continuity of Care

Continuity and consistency are essential components of quality care. Therefore, staffing patterns are designed to support this critical aspect of the program. Each classroom is staffed with an opening teacher, a closing teacher and a mid-day assistant that are assigned to their class throughout the year. In addition, we have several part time floaters that work in each classroom and know the children, families and routines. They serve as subs in the absence of classroom staff, which contributes to the consistently and

continuity of care by allowing children to stay in their own classrooms with familiar caregivers in a regular routine.

In addition, each child is assigned to a primary caregiver who is primarily responsible for the care and development of your child when at the Center. This teacher is also responsible for daily communication with you and for record keeping, developmental assessments and conferences. Primary teachers are initially assigned based on the child's schedule (who they would spend the most time with), but are ultimately decided based on the child's strongest attachment, therefore your child's primary teacher may change after the initial start of the year if they develop a stronger relationship with the other teacher.

A second way we establish continuity is by making an effort each year to have at least one familiar caregiver stay with your child or move with your child to a new classroom. This individual may not necessarily be your child's primary teacher. When this is not feasible, rest assured that the teachers, who know your child well, will meet with his or her new teacher to share insights and information to ensure a smooth transition. Children are offered opportunities to engage with their new teachers before the transition, usually with their primary teacher, to become familiar with them. Home visits also help you connect with your child's new teachers to ease the transition.

The third way we provide continuity is moving children in groups from one room to another each year. Educational research has shown that familiar children, as well as familiar adults, provide a sense of stability and familiarity to young children in new circumstances. Usually, but not always, children spend both fall and spring semesters in the same classroom with the same children and teachers. As stated above, when a situation arises in which a child would transition from the class at a different time, a transition plan will be made with you to help ensure a smooth transition.

Curriculum

As a Reggio-inspired program, we believe that children, teachers, and parents are partners in learning and that children have the right and the ability to construct their own learning with the support and participation of teachers, families, and their communities. Based on knowledge of children's development, the strengths and needs of individual children in our program, and the cultural context of their families and our community, the curriculum is developed in a "grassroots" emergent style.

An Emergent Curriculum is an approach to curriculum that builds investigations based on children's observed interests. This curricular approach supports and enriches children's learning through in-depth, short-term (one week), and long-term (throughout the school year) investigation work, in which responding, recording, playing, exploring, hypothesis building and testing, and provoking occur. Investigations are child-centered, following their interest, and returning again and again to add new insights. Throughout an investigation, teachers help children make decisions about the direction of study, the ways in which the group will research the topic, and the representational medium that will demonstrate and showcase the topic, all while being reflective and inclusive of our community and families' values, beliefs, and languages.

While the essence of the Center's curriculum is based on emergent investigations, the backbone of the program is the learning centers within the classroom environment. Young children are active hands-on learners, constructing knowledge from their experiences. Play allows them to learn in a way that is most effective for them, gaining new experiences, and coming to new understandings of previous experiences.

Our classrooms are learning-center based with carefully selected materials and areas, arranged to provoke inquiry, discovery, and investigation as children freely explore and engage. The classroom environment is flexible and fluid through curriculum development, allowing teachers to incorporate and build upon emerging interests as well as the values, beliefs, and experiences of the children, their families, and teachers who share this space. We strongly believe children grow and develop best in an atmosphere where they interact with peers, try multiple solutions to problems, are encouraged to explore, and take safe risks. Children choose activities and materials from the learning centers in each classroom that include and provide opportunities that support the development of social and emotional, physical, language, literacy, mathematics, science, technology, the arts, health and safety, and social studies skills.

While the same curricular principles hold true for infants and toddlers, their curriculum is more centered on:

- daily routines,
- growing and maintaining family relationships,
- building relationships,
- exploration and play in a safe opportunity filled environment

Our emphasis begins with the development of strong, warm, trusting relationships. The social environment paves the way for the children to get the most out of the physical environment, as well as our routines and activities.

Curriculum Goals for Children

The staff of the NIC Children's Center believes that the early childhood years are critical for children in:

- Developing a strong and positive sense of self
- Becoming eager and self-directed learners
- Acquiring essential social skills and developing respect for others
- Gathering skills necessary for success in formal schooling

To assist children in meeting these critical needs, the Children's Center staff strives to:

- Build strong partnerships with families
- Provide opportunity for children to experience and learn about the communities in which they live
- Provide and support problem-solving opportunities for children
- Create an environment with both the freedom to explore and appropriate limits in which to feel secure
- Arrange the environment so children have ample opportunities to interact with each other and practice developing social skills

Sample Daily Schedule

While each class is different, the following is a basic schedule. Infants and Toddler's daily schedule is completely individualized.

6:45-8:45	Opening teacher welcomes children; open centers; quiet activities
8:45-9:00	Transition to breakfast; closing teacher arrives
9:00-9:30	Breakfast
9:30-Lunch*	"Core" classroom time; may include group time, small group work, project work, small snack, outside activities
11:00-12:30*	Lunch*
11:30-2:30	"Quiet Time"; all children from the two's class up will have quiet/rest time after lunch. Older non-napping children will have some down time, then will get up and work outside the classroom with teaching staff in small groups.
2:30-5:15	Opening teacher leaves; afternoon snack, open centers, outside activities

*Lunch happens in shifts-see meals section for more detail

Behavior Guidance/Discipline

One of the goals of the Children's Center program is to assist children in learning to guide their own behavior. The role of the teacher is to help children learn to eventually solve their own problems and to provide children with the tools to do so. Teachers act as mediators, suggestors, resources for ideas, a secure base, and will always ensure each child's physical and emotional safety. We encourage children to: Employ problem solving skills such as negotiation and active listening, and to come up with as many creative solutions to a problem as possible.

Use language to express needs and emotions, and to use words to solve differences. Adults help provide key phrases and words for children when the child is unable to do so.

Care for the people and equipment in their environment and enjoy freedom with responsibility.

Safe, reasonable, and age-appropriate limits, together with opportunities for children to practice new social skills, are the cornerstones for gaining self-control and responsibility.

Discipline procedures such as physical punishment will never be used at the Children's Center.

Discipline vs. Problem Solving

Discipline

- Enforcing a set of rules to be obeyed
- Focuses on event and end product-to behave in this situation
- Is an effort to transform another person to be better
- Is adult centered: adult decides what is right or wrong behavior
- Suggests compliance, obedience: focuses on “behave”, “don’t argue”, “know the meaning of the word no.”

Problem Solving

Definition: Using the innate ability to solve problems using inner resources

Focuses on process, not specific event-emphasizes problem solving skills

Child is allowed to do what kids do-both virtues and flaws-but with responsibility

Is child centered: builds on natural impulses and relies on growing intellect and reasoning powers

Suggests learning to understand the meaning of the word why: focuses on possibilities, solutions

Problem Solving:

- ☺...Build self-esteem and self-reliance as the child accomplishes a solution by himself with his own power
- ☺...Encourages the intellect as the mind “probes and searches for ideas and answers”
- ☺...Enhances creativity as children learn to explore multiple options to a problem
- ☺...Allows children to make mistakes, but most importantly, learn from them
- ☺...Shows the child that the adult believes the child to be lovable and worthwhile by allowing them to follow their own natural impulses
- ☺...Builds responsibility and self-control as an outgrowth of the child’s own action
- ☺...Requires time, development, and many experiences!

Challenging Behaviors

When a child in the classroom is demonstrating consistent, serious and challenging behaviors, it is critical that teachers and families work together to implement a behavior plan to ensure the child’s inclusion and success in the classroom environment. The aim is to eliminate the need of suspension and expulsion to the greatest extent possible, and our ultimate goal is for ALL children to be safe and successful. We will take every measure to ensure your child’s success in our program.

If your child is exhibiting a continuous challenging behavior that is disruptive to the learning environment or is unsafe for other children or himself/herself, teachers will first document this behavior on incident reports (you will receive copies of these on the day the incident occurs), then they might arrange a conference with you in order to gather as much information about the situation as possible and share their detailed observations of the child’s behavior. After this conference, another meeting will be scheduled two weeks later in order to create a formalized behavior plan.

During those two weeks, teachers and families will both fill out ASQ and ASQ-SE (formal developmental screening tools) to screen for possible causes of the behavior. Teachers will also continue to track behavior and will communicate with you daily. It is also possible for the child to be referred for more detailed assessment during this time.

For the second meeting, you and your child's teachers will create a positive behavior support plan that will include strategies to prevent and replace the challenging behavior, to reinforce appropriate behaviors, to not reinforce the challenging behavior, and to create evaluation criteria for the plan. A review of the developmental screenings will also happen during this meeting, at which time you would receive a referral to an appropriate agency for further assessment if needed*.

Following this meeting, the teachers will begin to implement the new support plan, including meeting with other professionals as appropriate. It is important for all teaching staff that work with your child to be informed of the exact plan, therefore you will be asked to sign a release of information allowing all program staff access to the information contained in the behavior support plan.

At the specified time, families and teachers will meet again to evaluate the plan and make adjustments as necessary. It is important to understand that all programs are not always a good fit for every child, which should be considered if the challenging behavior continues despite behavior plans.

All efforts will be made to help all children be successful at the NIC Children's Center. Should a situation arise where there is documented evidence that all possible interventions and supports have been exhausted, and it is unanimously determined by the family, teacher, program and other service providers that another setting is more appropriate for the well-being of the child in question, all parties should work together to develop a smooth transition plan. Any exclusionary measures will be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a determination of a serious safety threat that cannot otherwise be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications. If exclusion measures must be taken, The NIC Children's Center will help the family in accessing services and finding alternate arrangements. This policy complies with all federal and state civil rights laws.

Assessment of Child Progress, Individual Child Goals and Referral for Diagnostic Assessment

The NIC Children's Center uses various types of assessments to support children's learning, such as observations, rating scales, and individually administered questionnaires. All teaching staff at the Children's Center have received specialized training and education that prepares them to use these assessment tools and interpret results. Developmental progress is guided by the Teaching Strategies Gold Objectives for Development and Learning. In addition to developmental screeners, children will also receive a vision and hearing screening within the first three months of attendance.

Children are screened using an Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE2) upon enrollment and at the beginning of each semester as appropriate (and when the need arises). These questionnaires

are typically completed by families during their initial welcome conference with the teachers. With this information, teachers assist families in the process of setting individual goals for their child with the guidance from Teaching Strategies Objectives for Development and Learning. After the initial ASQs are complete at the welcome conference, families complete the questionnaires at home and bring them back to the Center for scoring.

The program uses Teaching Strategies Gold (TS Gold) as our main form of assessment. The teachers conduct daily observations of children during play and document their observations using anecdotal records and pictures. These are put into individual documentation and shared with the families, and they are used to inform the formal assessment process of completing “checkpoints” of the child’s growth and development across all domains. In addition, these daily observations guide the teachers in planning for daily curriculum and adapting their practices and the environment in order to best support each individual child. Many of these observations are gathered and shared as Daily Snapshots.

Teachers will spend the first six to eight weeks of the child’s enrollment gathering observations to inform their first TS Gold checkpoint assessment. Upon completion of the first checkpoint, written feedback is provided to families that outline the scoring of the ASQs as well as checkpoints. Checkpoints are completed again mid-year and end of the year. Written reports are provided every time a checkpoint or ASQ is completed.

All screenings and assessments are always done in the child’s natural environment (either the home or the child’s familiar classroom) for the purpose of gaining true feedback on the developmental screening.

The ASQ, the ASQ-SE and the TS Gold Checkpoints are tools that the Children’s Center uses for screening, assessing and referral for diagnostic assessment. If the screening and assessment tools raise concerns about the growth or development of your child, your child’s teacher will communicate in a sensitive, supportive and confidential manner their concern, suggestions for next steps, and also provide information about resources for further assessment.

If a child or family receives services with any other agency, including but not limited to the Infant Toddler Program or the Developmental Preschool, the teaching staff at the Children’s Center ask that families allow them to fully partner with them and the other professional/s by attending goal meetings and implementing services into the child’s daily program at the Children’s Center.

Family/teacher conferences are held at the beginning, middle and end of the year to follow up on goals, share developmental progress and gather input from families for their child’s success. Goal updates are also done throughout the year as children achieve their goals.

At the end of the year, these observations, screenings and assessments, as well as many work samples and other documentation are collected into what is known as a Journey Book. These books ultimately reflect the developmental progress and learning of the child as well as identify their interests and needs.

At the conclusion of each program year, TS Gold are ran and analyzed by teaching staff in order to inform program planning and improvement. For example, if the staff realizes that a large number of children have lower scores in fine motor, plans can be made to increase staff training, focus, and materials that would support the goal of raising the fine motor scores for the following year.

PAYMENT AND FEES

Fee Structure

Daily rates are used to calculate bills for the entire year. The annual total is divided into 9 equal monthly payments, due September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April and May.

NOTE: each month's bill will be the same amount despite the number of days per month. There are no refunds for absences or emergency center closures.

In addition to the daily charges, an annual non-refundable \$25 registration fee per child is due at the time of registration.

Student Discounts and Benefits

NIC students* taking 6+ credits receive a student discount and are eligible for "half day" slots. These slots are reserved for students only, and are not available for faculty or staff children. Student-parents must inform administrative staff immediately if they drop below 6 credits. See eligibility and probationary criteria. Administrative staff will conduct routine checks throughout the semesters to verify credit load.

*The credit load must be held by a single student (i.e. two parents cannot "share" the credit load)

Payment of Tuition

Because the Children's Center relies on child care tuition for support of the program, the timely receipt of parent fees is extremely vital to our ability to provide a quality program and quality care for your child.

Children's Center Policies and Procedures are:

- 1) All tuition is payable in advance
 - a. A bill will be sent to you **via email** on or before the 10th of each month
 - b. Payment in **FULL** must be made **ON OR BEFORE THE 15TH OF EACH MONTH (with the exception of may; due by the 5th).**
 - i. Families with ICCP are responsible for **paying the full child care balance until verification from ICCP has been received by the Center.** After verification has been received, families are only responsible for paying their co-pay by the 15th of each month to avoid the same consequences of non-payment stated above.
 - ii. If at any time ICCP does not make a payment, for whatever reason, the family is **responsible to make the entire child care payment** by the 15th of each month to avoid the same consequences of non-payment stated above.
 - c. It is the sole responsibility of the family to work with ICCP for child care subsidy, including, but not limited to, obtaining the proper paperwork, submission of paperwork and ongoing communication. The Children's Center is **not** responsible for any submission of paperwork or follow up communication.
 - d. **Payments** can be made **online** at MYNIC under the Self-Service tab, where tuition and fees are also paid. In-person payments are made at the **Cardinal Central** in Lee Kildow Hall. The Children's Center cannot accept payment at the Center.
 - e. Any payment made after the 15th of the month will result in a **\$30 late fee** as well as an automatic **HOLD on the student account** and **temporary loss of childcare** until the balance is paid in full and proof of payment has been provided to Children's Center administrative staff.

- a. The child's slot will be held until the end of the month, at the family's expense.
 - i. Outstanding balances past the end of the month will result in dismissal from the program, with the outstanding balance sent to **collections**.
 - ii. Balances sent to collections may increase in amount due to collection fees.
 - b. Please bring any grievances about billing to the Children's Center administrative staff.
- 2) Child care tuition is charged for the child's scheduled days, regardless of absences due to illness, vacation, emergency closures, etc. Rates are never pro-rated.
 - 3) If withdraw from the program occurs, a final bill will be figured and calculated by the total of days your child was scheduled, including the two weeks from written notification. This total will be subtracted/added from what you have already paid to figure your final total. Please note that due to our billing process, giving a two week notice two weeks prior to the end of the month does not guarantee that you will not have a final bill.

Idaho Child Care Program (ICCP)

The Idaho Child Care Program (ICCP) provides child care subsidies for qualified families. These subsidies are given to families who are working, looking for work, and attending training or education programs or need preventative services. Parents pay a percentage of the child care cost, based on the number of children in their home and their monthly income. If you are interested in finding out more, call the Idaho Care Line at 2-1-1.

Enrollment Cancellation by the Center

The Children's Center strives to work with each individual family to make our services meet their needs. However, for various reasons, our program may not be the best fit for every family. The Children's Center reserves the right to cancel a child's enrollment at the Center for several reasons, including but not limited to:

- Hostile or aggressive behavior towards any child, staff member or other family member
- No longer meet eligibility requirements (no longer student, faculty or staff)
- Families habitually picking up their child after their scheduled pick up time.
- If your child is not yet ready for a group experience or his/her needs are not being met in the group setting, we may ask you to withdraw your child after all attempts to support your child's success have been made. We do not believe a child should remain in the program unless he/she can benefit from the experience, and not all programs are a good fit for all children.
- If your child care tuition payments are consistently late, you may be asked to remove your child from the program.
- Failure to provide current immunization records will also be grounds for enrollment cancellation.
- Children and families in Head Start slots will continue to be served during their Head Start hours, but may be subject to the cancellation of extended child care for the same criteria as other families in non-Head Start slots.

Late Pick-Up Charges

Late fees will be assessed when their child remains beyond their scheduled hours. If you are late picking up your child a \$1 per minute (per child) late fee will be assessed and reflected on your next month's child care bill*. It is of utmost importance that your child be picked up on time due to staff/child ratios, teacher schedules and other planned activities throughout the day.

In the event a child or children have not been picked up within a half hour of scheduled pick up time, and further that (1) the parent has not contacted the Center staff as to alternate arrangements and (2) the person, identified by the parent as the emergency contact and authorized person to pick up said child, cannot be reached and/or refuses to pick said child up from the Center, it is the Center's policy to notify the Child Protection Unit of the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare as the facts involved and to implement that Department's authority to care for said child or children (Idaho Code Section 16-1601).