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**PARENT HANDBOOK**

Welcome to Northern Explorers Child Development Center (NECDC)! We are happy you are here and look forward to a positive partnership with you and your child.

**Our Program Philosophy**

Northern Explorers Child Development Center is committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment that encourages children to grow, physically, mentally and emotionally through play-based learning.

**Staff and Volunteers**

All staff members and volunteers are required to pass a criminal background check before having an contact with children.

Any individual who is registered on the public sex offender registry is prohibited from having any contact with any child in care.

**Admissions Policy**

**Required Paperwork due before the child’s first day:**

1. Child Information Record
2. Handbook Acknowledgement Form
3. Parent Contract
4. Licensing Notebook Form
5. Written Information Packet Form
6. Tuition Express Enrollment Form

**Withdrawl Policy**

This program has a mandatory 11 week commitment of: June 13th-August 26th.

NECDC reserves the right to terminate the contract at will. Reasons the provider may choose to terminate the contract include, but are not limited to, the following:

* If we (Andrea, Rachel and child’s lead teacher) feel we are unable or unqualified to meet the needs of the child without additional staff or support services.
* If the child's behavior is destructive, uncontrollable, violent, or threatening to the other children or staff at the center.
* If a parent's behavior is threatening or abusive to the children or staff.
* If the child demonstrates that they are unable to adjust to the classroom setting, after several weeks.
* If parents knowingly bring a child to NECDC ill or medicated to mask a fever or illness.
* If repeated non-compliance with any of the agreed upon contract and center policies is demonstrated.

In the event that Northern Explorers CDC decides to terminate the childcare relationship due to repeated contract violations by the parent or legal guardian, we reserve the legal right to terminate the childcare relationship without notice. To avoid this situation from occurring, parents and legal guardians are required to thoroughly read the entire contract and policy handbook. Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to ask for a detailed explanation of any rules and policies they do not clearly understand prior to enrolling their child at Northern Explorers Child Development Center.

**RATES~**

Northern Explorers Child Development Center (NECDC) charges a weekly fee:

Camp: Monday-Friday 8:30-4:00 $125/week

Early Drop: Monday-Friday 7:30-8:30 +$25/week

Late Pick Up: **Monday-Thursday** 4:00-5:00p +$20/week

(Late pick up is Not available on Fridays)

**Camp + Early Drop + Late Pick up $150/week**

Credits are not given for days your child does not attend, regardless of the reason (including illness and weather.)

**Closed Holidays (paid):**

The following holidays will be paid holidays; this means the daycare will be closed, however rates still apply for the these holidays: New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, **Independence Day AND the day after**, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the following Friday, Christmas Eve 24th, Christmas Day 25th and December 26th. If a holiday falls on a weekend, the daycare may choose to close on a Friday or Monday in observance of the holiday. Parents will be notified at least 30 days in advance.

**Other Closed Dates:**

NECDC reserves the right to close for up to 3 professional development days per year with at least 30 days notice. During this time, our staff attends training to stay current on developmentally appropriate teaching practices.

All scheduled closed date reminders will be posted in the lobby and on Facebook.

**Unexpected Closures:**

Northern Explorers will not close for traditional school snow days, however in the event of unsafe weather we may elect to do so or delay our opening time. If we have to close due to weather or any other unexpected event, announcements will be made on our Facebook page and we will request to be put on the local news list of closures. In the event that we are forced to close due to weather or a power outage, rates will still apply.

**Early Drop Off/Late Pick Up Fees:**

Arriving more than 10 minutes early for drop off will result in a $10 fee and for every additional 10 minutes, another charge of $10 will be added.

Picking up more than 10 minutes late will result in a $10 fee and $1/minute after the said 10 minutes (if you are scheduled to pick up before closing time).

These fees CAN BE AVOIDED by communicating your schedule changes and getting them approved by Rachel and Andrea, with a minimum of 48-hour notice.

Picking up after the center is scheduled to close, will result in a charge of $25 per child regardless of the reason or advanced notice given. Picking up after closing is strictly prohibited, more than 2 late pick ups in less than a month, may result in immediate termination of care. If you incur an unexpected ***emergency*** you MUST call the center ASAP so Andrea or Rachel can be there with your child while you make alternate arrangements for pick up.

**PAYMENTS**

An enrollment contract between NECDC and the family is required before a child can attend the center. The contract will be signed by both parties and specifies the child's schedule, payment amount, and payment policies. Payments are expected in advance based on the signed contract.  Payments are expected to be paid in full every Friday by 6:30pm for the following week.

**FORMS OF PAYMENT ACCEPTED**

* Tuition Express offers reoccurring auto draft payments from bank account to bank account, whether initiated by the center or parents.
* Online via MyProcare Parent portal (processing fees will apply).
* NECDC Lobby: Credit and debit card payments via Procare’s check in machine (processing fees will apply).
* DHHS-we accept child care subsidies through DHHS. Parents should expect to pay the remaining balance not covered by DHHS.

**PARTIAL PAYMENTS**

Payments are expected to be made IN FULL each week for the following weeks care. A partial payment will be accepted, but the unpaid portion will still be considered late and be assessed a late payment fee as described below. Services will still be suspended if an account is delinquent. If your balance is greater than $0 on Friday at 6:30pm, a $15 late fee will be automatically added by our system.

**LATE PAYMENTS**

Payments received Friday after 6:30pm will incur a Late Payment Fee of $15, as mentioned above.

Payments still not received by Monday at Noon will incur an additional $10 fee, to total $25 in Late Payment Fees. Additionally, your child(ren) will not be permitted to attend beginning on Tuesday until your account (including the Late Payment fees) is brought current. Weekly fees will not be prorated due to missing day(s) (care suspension) after a late payment. These fees can be avoided with your timely payments.

**Collections/Small Claims:**

If parents fail to make any payments for services provided, Northern Explorers Child Development Center will pursue alternate means of collecting fees owed, which could include turning the account over to a collection agency that will report on the account holders credit score, or file a claim against you in small claims court which could result in wage garnishment. All filing fees and legal fees NECDC incurs in the process of trying to collect the debt will be added to your account and will be your responsibility to pay.

**Discrimination/ Cultural Competence Policy**

No child will be denied enrollment on the basis of his/her race or religion or income status. At NECDC we respect families’ diverse cultural practices, and encourage you to share with us your traditions and beliefs. It is part of our curriculum to incorporate each child’s family and community cultures as we plan meaningful learning experiences, select materials, and determine appropriate teaching strategies. By doing so, we give children the message that each child is important and worthy of respect.

**Special Needs Policy**

It is our goal to meet the individual needs of each child in our care and we believe it is important that children with special needs have the opportunity of learning alongside their peers. In a high quality learning environment, children with and without disabilities learn to accept people with differences, to be compassionate, and to feel good about helping others. While we strive to provide this for every child, there may be situations or circumstances where our staff or facility is not equipped to meet the special needs of a child. Staff will work with parents to evaluate whether or not the arrangement is working after a 4-week period. If at any time, staff have developmental concerns about your child, we will communicate directly with the parent. If together, we choose to seek services and support from Early On or Char-Em ISD, the staff can assist in making any necessary referrals. We are committed to ensuring care in the best interest of the child.

**ProCare**

ProCare is the software we have chosen for our center. This program provides us with the security tool in the lobby. The door will only open to people with a fingerprint saved into our system. When you arrive you will not only use this fingerprint to gain access to the classrooms but as a means to sign your child in as well.

**Procare Solutions** is provided by ProCare and allows us to provide access to a parent communication portal for staff to send daily reports, photos, activity information, and more, allowing parents the ability to stay connected with their children throughout the day. Parents have the option of communication styles from emails, texts or apps.

MyProCare allows parents to view and update their contact information, view account balances, recent payments and ledger history as well as provides the ability for parents to pay from anywhere.

**Parent Involvement/Volunteers**

Involved parents make a positive impact on a child’s learning ability. Attending center events, knowing what’s happening at our center and in your child’s classroom, and extending your child’s learning at home are all ways you can be involved. While we do not require parents to volunteer or participate in our daily activities, we do have an open door policy. If you would like to volunteer at the center (not to be confused with a quick visit), please let us know and we can discuss how you can best be of service. Additional opportunities for parent involvement will be shared as they come available.

All volunteers are required to pass a criminal background check before having any contact with children.

Any individual who is registered on the public sex offender registry is prohibited from having any contact with any child in care.

**Confidentiality**

Any information concerning you, your child, and family is private and personal. We will be maintaining your privacy and protecting your personal information. Northern Explorers CDC staff will not disclose any personal information, except as required by law or when there is a threat to the health and safety of the individuals and families we serve. In instances such as if a child has lice, we will not divulge the child’s name, so please do not ask.

**Parent Notification of the Licensing Notebook**

Our center will maintain a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection and special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans from the last five years. In addition, licensing inspection and special investigation reports from the past two years are available on the child care licensing website at [**www.michigan.gov/michildcare**](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare). Our licensing notebook will be available to parents for review during regular business hours upon request.

**Smoking and Weapons are Prohibited**

Smoking cigarettes, cigars or the use of vapes are not permitted on the centers property, parking lot or playground.

No firearms, knives or other items deemed as weapons may be brought on NECDC grounds. Anyone who observes such items must report to a lead teacher or one of the directors immediately. The Police Department will be informed on the same day for reporting purposes.

**Reporting Abuse or Neglect**

Under the Child Protective Services Law, mandated reporters (all center staff) are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. Our staff is not required to discuss their suspicions with parents before reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities. Under the Law, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. The Child Protective Services Law is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

**Arrival/Dismissal**

Upon arrival, you will need to sign your child in via ProCare fingerprinting software on the credit card style machine in the lobby. You will not get through the security door if you are not an authorized parent/guardian/nanny in our system. Once done, please hang your child’s belongings in their assigned locker and give your caregivers a quick update on your child. Also be sure to remove your child’s outside shoes and place them on the shoe rack (we want to keep our floors as clean as possible). Slippers or inside shoes will need to be worn inside the classroom for walking children.

Quick drop offs are usually easier on your child than long, drawn-out ones. This is sometimes hard for parents to understand, especially if their child is upset. Extending the drop off time to try to help your child adjust can sometimes escalate their emotions. Consistently practicing a quick drop off helps your child adjust to the routine and can help to prevent a daily struggle. If your child is upset at drop off, we will be sure to give your child some extra attention to distract them and get them acclimated. Usually within minutes, any child that has come in upset is happily playing with their friends.

When picking up your child at the end of the day you will use the same system as checking in. You should collect any art work or projects that need to go home that were placed in their lockers, collect any soiled/dirty clothes that need to be washed, and help your child get dressed to go home (coats/mittens/shoes, etc.). Staff will assist you if they are available. This is also an appropriate time to get a quick update about your child’s day and discuss any minor concerns you may have with your caregivers. If you have something that you need to discuss that will take more than 5 minutes, or should be a private conversation, please let us know and we can schedule a phone meeting. Our caregivers need to be able to attend to the needs of children still in care and will not be able to have lengthy conversations during drop off and pick up times.

Please refrain from dropping off or picking up during our nap/rest time, which takes place between 12:30 and 2:30 in the Toddler-Preschool classrooms. This can cause a commotion within the classroom and interrupt children’s nap routines. Please discuss with your lead teacher if this absolutely cannot be avoided.

**Release of Child Policy**

Children will only be released to parents or guardians programmed into the ProCare system and listed on the child’s emergency card. Please inform us if you have arranged for someone else to pick up your child. If any other person arrives to pick up your child, without prior notification from you, we will call you to make sure it is ok to release your child to them. We will also check their I.D. to verify their identity. Our staff may personally know many people in our community but please don’t expect the person releasing your child to know someone who rarely picks up your child. They should expect to show their I.D.

**Child Discipline/Conflict Resolution Policy**

Staff will also encourage children to do things for themselves throughout the day in an effort to build self-help skills and independence.

Staff shall use conflict resolution procedures to support children as they solve problems with materials and resolve conflicts with peers. Conflict situations with children will be treated matter-of-factly. Staff members will:

* Approach children calmly and stop hurtful actions;
* Acknowledge children’s feelings;
* Involve children in identifying the problem by gathering information from children and restating the problem;
* Ask children for solutions and encourage them to choose together; and
* Give follow-up support when children act on their decisions

“Time outs” are prohibited for children under 3 years of age, per childcare licensing, even if requested by parents.

Placing substances in a child’s mouth is prohibited.  That includes, but it is not limited to soap, hot sauce, and vinegar. (Child Care Licensing requires that we state this-NECDC would never discipline a child in such manner.)

**Toys From Home**

We respectfully ask that personal toys be kept at home. NECDC does not assume responsibility for personal toys. WE DO NOT ALLOW ANY ELECTRONICS.

**Donations**

We invite you to donate “recycled” arts and crafts materials such as baby food jars, fabric pieces, frozen juice lids, egg cartons, toilet paper and paper towel rolls, etc.All donations are gladly accepted and happily utilized.

**What Your Child Should Wear**

Your children will go outside every day - please dress your child in clothes appropriate for play activities inside and outside, as well as for changing weather. Label all belongings. due to safety reasons, children may not wear flip-flops. Closed-toed shoes with a heal strap are required.

**Nutrition**

We feel nutrition is an integral part of each child’s well-being and life-long eating habits. When preparing your child’s lunch and snacks, try to include foods from the major food groups: dairy, meat/protein, fruit and vegetables, and grains and 2 of those food groups for your child’s snack. Per Child Care Licensing, all beverages/food must be labeled with your child’s first and last name and the serving date. NECDC does NOT supply snacks or lunches.

If a parent forgets a childs snack/lunch, they will be required to return with it before the next snack/meal time.

**Allergies**

If your child has special dietary needs or allergies, it must be indicated on the emergency contact form, submitted prior to enrollment.

**Referrals for Special Services**

In our lobby we will have access to free material for parents/guardians regarding resources to assist in meeting child and family needs (i.e. housing assistance, heating assistance, health referrals, etc.). Please let us know if you are in need of resource and referral assistance and we will be happy to help you in anyway we are able physically, emotionally and financially.

**Health & Wellness Policies**

It is important for your child’s overall development that he/she regularly visits a doctor. We ask that you keep us updated on any changes in your child’s health. Health records will be periodically updated so we have the most current information on each child. In addition to the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), we will also provide information to you on typical developmental milestones.

If your child has a slight cough, sneezing or clear runny nose, they may attend the center. However, should your child become so uncomfortable that he/she will not play, eat, whines/cries, or wants to be held constantly, you will be asked to come pick up your child.

If a child is deemed too sick to be in care, by a Lead Teacher or the director, you will be phoned to pick up your child ***within an hour***. We would prefer that your child is picked up as soon as possible to help prevent the spread of illness, but we realize it may take some time to make the appropriate arrangements. We will do our best to keep your child comfortable and separated from the group until you arrive.

If staff are unable to reach the parent/guardian by phone, we will contact the emergency telephone number listed.

If your child is ill enough to require prescription medication for ailments such as pinkeye, strep throat, bronchitis, pneumonia or any other contagious disorder we will require you to keep your children home. We also ask that you inform the center of your child’s contagious illnesses, so we can report them to the Health Department.

If your child has contracted or been exposed to a communicable disease, like chicken pox, strep throat, etc. parents are required to notify the staff promptly so we may contact other families.

**One Should NOT Attend When:**

* Illness prevents the child from outdoor activities or group participation
* Child has a fever of 100 or higher, or has had a fever within the last 24 hours
* Child has had vomiting or diarrhea (3 episodes) during prior 24 hours
* Child exhibits any signs of contagious disease, such as persistent cough, red or itchy eyes with discharge, lice or unidentified rash.

**Children can return after:**

* Child has been fever free for 24 hours
* Child has been symptom free for 24 hours
* Child is no longer contagious and has a doctor’s note to return

The above includes staff and volunteers, with the exception of the fever tempter being 100.4.

**Exclusion:**

NECDC has the authority to exclude a student, staff member or volunteer from school when there is confirmation of him/her having an illness, communicable disease or infection that is known to be spread by any form of casual contact and is considered a health threat to those in the center. The ill child’s parent will be contacted and the child will be separated from the rest of the group until picked up.

**Administering Medication**

Children are not allowed to have any mediation in their possession. This includes pain relievers, cold medicine, allergy medicine, vitamins, and cough drops.

Prescription and over the counter medications may be given with written permission from a parent or a physician only. Medication must be in the original container. Prescription medication must have the pharmacy label, including doctor’s name, patient’s name, dispensing instructions, name and amount of medication to be given. A medication form is available and must be filled out and signed by a parent or guardian.

**Over the Counter Ointments and Lotions**

Parents will be asked to sign a form at enrollment, per licensing rules, allowing the use of over the counter ointments and lotions such as, diaper rash ointment, sunscreen, etc.

**Supplies  
Parents are required to supply their child with:**

* Ointments & lotion, to be restocked as necessary (The center has extras on hand at $1 per diaper, if you forget to restock)
* Weather appropriate outdoor clothing and shoes
* Sunscreen (many children have sensitivities, parents have preferences)
* Swimsuit and towel for water activities.

**Toilet Teaching**

* All children must be fully potty trained.

**Supervision of Volunteers**

Parent volunteers are always welcome. Please discuss opportunities to volunteer with a lead teacher and/or director. If a parent or other volunteer is present, they will be paired with a staff member and supervised by more senior staff. Persons that are not regular staff/employees will never be left alone with children.

**Emergency Plans**

Emergency plans will be posted in the lobby. Emergency procedure drills will be conducted regularly to ensure that children know what to do in the event of an emergency. **Please keep emergency telephone numbers updated**. In the unlikely event of an emergency, and we cannot reach you directly, this number is imperative to the safety and well-being of your child.

**Fire Emergency Procedure**

Fire evacuation plans will be posted in the lobby. In the event of a fire, each child will be evacuated from the building using the emergency exit doors located in each classroom. Staff will retrieve all emergency cards on the way out and will meet on the playground. In case of inclement weather, all staff and children will gather at Mike’s Glass (next door). Staff members will count and verify all children are present. Parents will be notified by phone to pick up their child and meet in the safe, designated area.

Any child with special needs will have one staff member assigned to them to ensure they are able to get to the destination safely.

Fire drills are required by licensing and will be conducted at least once quarterly.

**Tornado Emergency Procedure**

In the event of a tornado, children will be gathered in the main hallway. All children and staff shall remain in this area until the local authorities have given the all-clear message. Staff members will count and verify all children are present. Parents will be notified by phone to pick up their child and meet in the safe, designated area.

Any child with special needs will have one staff member assigned to them to ensure they are able to get to the destination safely.

Tornado drills are required by licensing and will be conducted twice between the months of April through October.

**Accidents, Incidences, Illness, Injuries**

**Bumps and Bruises**

Scratches and scrapes are inevitable when children play and will be treated with soap, water and a band-aid. In case of a minor accident (scraped knee, bumps, bruises, etc.), staff will fill out an Accident Report (under your child’s profile on KidReport) detailing what happened and how it was handled and inform parents at the time of pick-up.

**Medical Emergency**

In the event of a **serious accident/incident/illness/injury**, parents will be notified immediately. If a parent is not available, the emergency person authorized on the Emergency Card will be contacted.

The following steps will be taken in the event of an emergency:

1. First Aid or CPR will be administered by certified staff (if necessary) while other staff keep remaining children calm and away from the scene.
2. Call 911 (if necessary)
3. Attempt to contact parent/guardian. A staff person will stay with child until medical help or parent arrives.
4. Attempt to contact doctor listed on child information card.
5. Attempt to contact persons listed as emergency contacts if the parents cannot be reached.

 Emergency plans are posted in the classroom in accordance with licensing regulations.

In the event of a **non-emergency incident**, we will notify parents via phone or during pick-up on the day of the incident, describing the situation and any follow up action to be taken.

**PESTICIDE USE POLICY**

 On occasion, we may apply pesticides on our grounds.  As a parent or guardian, you have the right to be notified prior to this pesticide application.  The following form, "Advisory to all Parents," is provided for you to read, fill out, and return to your child's teacher.  If a pesticide application is scheduled, you will be notified at least one day before the application.

Tentative Schedule

8:00 Arrival/Free Choice

8:45-9:45 1st activity

9:45-10:15 Snack

10:15-11:15 2nd activity

11:15-12:15 Whole Group free choice

12:15-12:45 Lunch

12:45-1:15 Read aloud

1:15-2:15 3rd activity

2:15-3:15 Playground time

3:15-4:00 Snack/Clean up

**The Director reserves the ability to revise and/or amend the provisions in this handbook as is deemed necessary to maintain an optimal educational environment in the best interest of the children.**

**Receipt of Parent Handbook**

I acknowledge that I have received, read and understand the Northern Explorers Child Development Center Parent Handbook. I understand and agree to follow these policies as they pertain to my child’s Summer Camp experience.

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(Printed name of parent or guardian)

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(Signature of parent or guardian) (Date)

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* My child(ren), \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, is/are in good health without any activity restrictions.
* My child(ren), \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, is/are in good health with the following activity restrictions

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* My child(ren), \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, is/are NOT in good health.

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(Printed name of parent or guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of parent or guardian) (Date)