



# Otter Creek Child Center Family Handbook

(Update July 2024)



**Otter Creek Child Center, Inc.**  
**FAMILY HANDBOOK**

Welcome to the Otter Creek family. We are honored that you have chosen our program for your child and look forward to working together and getting to know you. We are excited about sharing ideas and learning from each other so that together we can provide your child with the best education experience.

There is much to learn and remember about a program. The ongoing exchange of information and support between families and staff is an essential part of the Otter Creek experience. We have developed this handbook to explain our goals, philosophy, and program policies. We hope that the information in this booklet will serve as a basic orientation to our program, please take the time to read it thoroughly. If you have any questions, feel free to ask at any time.

Information in the preferred language of the family will be made available upon request, either in written form or through translation.

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**Vision:**

To help children grow into healthy, strong-minded, independent, confident individuals who will shape the future of the world.

**Mission**

To support young children and families in achieving their goals by providing high quality early care and education.

**Philosophy**

- Each child is an individual who deserves to be treated with love and respect at all times.
- Feeling loved, cared about and safe are the most important aspects of good development.
- Children will let us know what they need to learn.
- In our very hurried world, children need time to be children in an unhurried way.
- Helping children grow into healthy adults is a very important aspect of shaping the future of the world.
- Discipline is an attitude, not just a variety of techniques one uses with children.
- Diversity is essential to a healthy developmental experience.
- Family is the foundation of a child's wellbeing.

**Goals**

- To foster the intellectual, social, physical, and emotional well-being of each child.
- To provide affordable childcare within the constraints of fiscal solvency.
- To support families in meeting the needs of their children.

**BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

Otter Creek Child Center (OCCC) was founded in 1984 and provides a home-like setting for children 6 weeks through six years old. Otter Creek is a NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) accredited program that offers a play-based emergent curriculum nurturing the emotional, intellectual, social and physical development of children within a safe, warm, healthy environment staffed by loving professionals and supported by a collaborative community of family and friends. Otter Creek Child Center respects and values the individual differences in children and works closely with families to ensure that all children are filled with wonder and joy. We believe that children learn best through play. Otter Creek believes the role of the teacher is to be a loving facilitator of play, a nurturing supportive caregiver who supports the children as they explore their environment through all of their senses according to their individual interests and needs.

**ORGANIZATION**

Otter Creek Child Center is staffed by an Executive Director, a Program Director, and 14 Teachers supported by work study students, and part time substitute staff. All teachers are CPR and First Aid certified, and participate in professional development opportunities on a regular basis.

The Executive Director is responsible for providing leadership to the Otter Creek community to ensure the mission and policies are understood, and to facilitate the implementation of the vision, curriculum and programmatic support of our center. In addition, the Executive Director is responsible for maintaining the financial and business aspects of our center.

Otter Creek Child Center is overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors, which is comprised of Otter Creek parents and community members. The Board is responsible for the center's financial stability and overall long-term viability. Board members are elected annually, and attend monthly board and committee meetings.

## DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Honoring diversity is one of the core values of the philosophy of Otter Creek Child Center. At the heart of our teaching is a center wide culture that is developed as children, families and staff come together to learn. We believe that as we all work together to form a community, we are engendering a cultural model, which our children may carry with them into the larger world as they grow. We foster a community based on understanding and appreciation of diversity in learning styles and abilities, opinions, varied cultural, ethnic, ideological and socio-economic backgrounds. We believe that compassion, creativity, and non-violent problem solving are the working values of such a community and that diversity is the central supporting element of a healthy environment for all.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Otter Creek Child Center does not discriminate against individuals (children, families, employees) based on race, creed, color, national origin, religion, disability, gender or the parents' marital status, or gender identification. Otter Creek Child Center complies with all Federal and State civil rights laws.

## PROGRAM PLACEMENT

Children at Otter Creek Child Center are placed in one of four groups shown below:

Sea Pups	Infants (under 1 by September 1 <sup>st</sup> )	(8 children/3 teachers)
Otters	Toddlers (1-2s)	(8 children/3 teachers)
Tigers	Two and three year olds (2-3s)	(10 children/3 teachers)
Eagles	Preschoolers (3-5 year olds)	(16-19 children/3 teachers)

## HOURS OF OPERATION

Otter Creek Child Center offers full year enrollment in our early care and education program. The center is open each weekday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., except on the days listed in our yearly calendar. In consideration of the staff and children, we ask that the center's hours be respected as follows:

- Under no circumstances may children be dropped off earlier than 7:30 a.m.
- We encourage families to arrive before **9:30 a.m.**, if you cannot make it to the center before 9:30 a.m., your **child will miss the opportunity to eat breakfast for the day.**
- If your child has a doctor appointment or service needs (speech, OT, PT, etc.) that require them to arrive after 9:30 a.m. please speak to your child's teacher to make late arrival arrangements. \*
- Arriving late for extracurricular activities, such as swim lessons, dance, etc., may mean your child may miss breakfast or lunch and you may be responsible for finding your child's classroom if they are out and about in the community. Your child's ability to transition smoothly back to Otter Creek will be taken into consideration as well.
- If your child returns to OCCC from an appointment or activity and is having a difficult time transitioning after 45 minutes you may need to pick your child up for the day.
- Families should call the center if their child is not attending by 9:30 a.m.
- If your child has an appointment or needs to leave for an appointment and is returning to Otter Creek after 9:30, (breakfast) or 12:30 (lunch) will not be served.
- If you arrive after 9:30, you will be responsible for tracking down your child's class if they are out and about in the community (Library, Middlebury Track, Marble Works etc.) and delivering your child to that location.

***ALL children and families must be out of the building by 4:45 p.m.***

## DAILY SCHEDULE

In general, each group follows a schedule similar to the following:

7:30-9:30	Arrival/Choice Time
9:30	Breakfast
9:30-11:30	Choice Time, Field Trips, Walks, Outside Play, Gym, Library
11:30-12:00	Lunch
12:00-3:00	Rest
2:30-3:00	Snack
3:00-4:45	Afternoon Activities, Free Play

This schedule is meant to be a guide, recognizing children's need for time and to not be hurried from one activity to the next. We do not want to rush children or inhibit what could be a valuable learning experience or interaction. The notable exception to this schedule is the Sea pup classroom, whose schedule varies with the needs of the individual children.

## ENROLLMENT FILES

Each child's file shall be complete with all required information within the *first week the child begins to attend care or within the first week of a new school year*. **If required information is not returned, your child will not be able to attend until all required information is returned.** Enrollment files shall contain the following information:

- A completed child's registration form;
- The child's name, current home address and current home telephone number;
- The child's date of birth;
- Name, address, and current telephone numbers for parents/guardians;
- Name, address and current telephone numbers for at least two (2) people designated by the family as emergency contacts;
- Names for all persons authorized to pick the child up;
- Record of annual physical and health history that includes the name and telephone number of the child's primary health care and dental care providers;
- A description of any special medical, developmental, emotional, or education needs of the child including allergies, existing illnesses or injuries, previous serious illnesses or injuries and any prescribed medication including those for emergency situations;
- Written authorization from the parent for OCCC to be able to obtain emergency medical care and transportation;
- Child's current immunization record; and
- If applicable, a copy of court orders on custody and visitation arrangements.

## EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

It is important that families inform the teachers whenever there is a change of address, phone number, or a change in the daily schedule. In case of illness or accident, families are notified immediately. We need to have all current phone numbers to reach you or your emergency contact daily.

Only those people listed on the Child Admission Form (CAF) will be allowed to pick up your child from the center. You must fill out a Pick-up Authorization Form each time someone other than yourself will be picking up your child. These forms are available from the teachers and in the appendix.

Children will be released to either parent unless there is a court order in the child's enrollment file that prohibits release to a particular parent.

If, in an emergency, (such as an accident), you must have someone other than those listed on the CAF pick up your child, and you are unable to fill out a Pick-Up Authorization Form, we must have your verbal authorization. We will ask for photo identification before releasing your child to anyone other than yourself. This is for your child's protection.

### **SIBLINGS AT DROP OFF AND PICK UP TIMES**

A child or sibling cannot be left unattended, in the building or in the parking lot, while you are picking up or dropping off your children at Otter Creek Child Center. Children *must* remain with their grown-up at all times, as required by Vermont State Licensing Regulations.

### **EMERGENT CURRICULUM**

At Otter Creek Child Center, we use an approach to curriculum development that reflects the individual child's curiosity; it is tailored to meet the developmental levels of the children and incorporates the latest theories and research findings within the field of early childhood education. Emergent curriculum is based on the idea that children actively engage in the construction of their own knowledge. To respect this notion, teachers carefully observe, listen to, document and seek to understand what children are wondering about. The teachers use this information to create a culture of inquiry that provides opportunities for each child to learn the answers to his or her questions in their own way.

### **THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER**

The teachers at Otter Creek Child Center seek to know more about the new information in the field of Early Childhood Development, from theory to practical applications. They spend a great deal of time closely listening to and observing the children in their respective programs. Teachers are researchers. They listen to what children are talking about, what they are interested in, and what they have questions about. They observe which developmental stage of play each child is in, what toys each child selects, and how that child uses those toys within his or her play. This information is then used to provide the conversation, necessary equipment and environmental supports necessary for children to explore and express their new learning. The role of the teacher is not to provide information but to create a culture of inquiry. In a critical and fundamental way, this helps set the stage for life-long learning.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY**

In addition, integral to Otter Creek's curriculum and philosophy is the understanding that children's accumulation of knowledge is the strongest when it is the result of their interactions with their physical and social environments. For young children, this interaction comes in the form of play. As children play with various materials and with each other, they are constantly rehearsing something they have just mastered or practicing something that they are just learning. As they play with each other, they are learning the role that they take as a member of a group. In other words, play is the vehicle through which children can experiment with their world, assimilating and accommodating information at their own pace, to meet their own developmental needs.

## **ASSESSMENT**

### **Purpose of Assessment**

The overall purpose of assessment at Otter Creek is to help teachers make appropriate curriculum decisions to meet the needs and interests of children in their classrooms. Assessments are not used to compare children developmentally with peers. Assessment is not “testing”. Young children learn and exhibit their learning in different ways than older children. They learn by doing and exhibit their learning through play.

Assessments are conducted to:

- Find out what children are interested in.
- Find out each child’s strength and areas of difficulty
- Make informed decisions about interventions and the possible need for a referral
- Discover how the children are changing over time
- Make sure the curriculum is responsive and appropriate, matching children’s abilities, skills, and interests
- Serve as a basis to report to families
- Plan activities that meet the needs and interests of the children
- Inform planning for overall program improvements

Assessment is NOT conducted to classify the child’s “readiness” and assessment is DEFINITELY NOT conducted to exclude the child from preschool or kindergarten. It IS conducted to plan beneficial opportunities for each child.

### **Assessment Tools**

Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ): ASQ is a developmental screening that evaluates language, cognitive, gross motor, fine motor, and social and emotional development. ASQs are conducted once a year in the fall or upon enrollment.

Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG): TSG is an ongoing, observation-based assessment system designed to assess children from birth to third grade. TSG is grounded in the most current research about how children develop and learn. It is aligned with the *Common State Standards*, state early learning guidelines, and the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework*. It assesses six (6) areas of development and learning; Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, and Mathematics.

The classroom teachers, whom the children are familiar and comfortable with, conduct all assessments.

Teachers are all trained in the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD and must complete the GOLD interrater reliability test to ensure that the assessment tool is being utilized properly.

### **Assessment Timeline**

- In-Take meetings, August, before the start of the new school year
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire, once a year, in the fall or within 30 days of a child enrolling
- Teaching Strategies GOLD Checkpoints, twice a year (December and June)
- Assessment Reports, twice a year (December and June)
- Family Conferences, twice a year (December and June)



**Family Conferences** are held two times each year, once in the fall and again in the spring. Families will receive a developmental report twice a year and have the opportunity to have a conference with the teachers about your child's development. Families may, however, request a conference at any time during the year. The request shall be accommodated within ten (10) business days of the request. We pride ourselves on having regular communication with families, and we enjoy regular dialogue with all of our families. The conferences provide an additional opportunity to sit down and reflect with teachers on the overall development of your child.

### **CHILD SUPERVISION**

All staff must position themselves so that they can see the greatest number of children possible. A teacher should be positioned near structures children climb, swing, or jump from.

Sea Pups, Otters, and Tigers under the age of three must be supervised by sight and sound at all times without the use of monitoring devices such as mirrors or baby monitors.

Staff must be aware of and positioned so that they can hear and see any sleeping children for whom they are responsible, especially when they are actively engaged with children who are awake.

Eagle children are supervised by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible, as long as teachers check frequently on children who are out of sight, (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently and those who are napping.)

### **POSITIVE GUIDANCE & BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

We believe that positive guidance and behavior management is an attitude, not just a set of techniques that one uses with children, it is a positive process of teaching children what is acceptable behavior at the center and as a way of demonstrating how loving, caring people treat each other in the world. Our interactions with children always reflect these values.

### **HOW WE DISCIPLINE**

At Otter Creek Child Center, positive guidance and behavior management is always approached with a solid understanding of a child's developmental abilities and needs and with respect for each child's self-esteem and self-confidence. Staff provides each child with guidance that helps the child acquire self-control and self-discipline, as well as positive self-concept. Positive guidance and behavior management used by each teacher will at all times will be constructive, positive and suited to the age of the child.

Positive guidance and behavior management in pre-school classrooms have two primary goals. First, Otter Creek Child Center strives to find a solution to the current situation. Second, Otter Creek Child Center attempts to help the child process feelings, recognize consequences, explore alternative solutions and outcomes, and develop internal self-control. To accomplish these goals we use the following techniques on a daily basis.

### **Prevention:**

A well-designed and well-equipped classroom tailored to the developmental level of the children prevents frustration, interruption, and hazards. It offers privacy, independence and easy adult supervision. Children have free access to all materials that are at their level in their space. In this way, children have a safe and stimulating environment in which they are free to explore without corrective intervention from adults. In addition, the daily routine provides enough time for play, a sense of security, little waiting and few transitions.

**Positive Re-direction:**

The basic procedure in all classrooms is positive redirection, which is redirecting unacceptable behavior to an acceptable alternative. We involve children in another activity, read a book, or find something else for them to do. We help them wait until it can be their turn, and then praise them for being so patient. For younger children, it is important to select materials in which there are multiples for the classroom.

**Positive Attention:**

At Otter Creek Child Center, we give children positive attention. Teachers notice and acknowledge when children do positive things, such as take turns or follow directions. Rather than telling children what *not* to do, children are given ideas about where it is safe to climb, what they can throw, that they can give their friends gentle touches, where and what to draw with.

**Modeling:**

Teacher-modeled appropriate behavior and communication, as well as positive peer models, are provided to help children learn responsibility for their actions. For non-verbal children, teachers' model verbal communication and problem solving, as children's verbal skills increase, the teachers help them learn problem-solving strategies and strategies for conflict resolution. As always, the goal is to develop independent communication skills so that children can interact with each other in a caring and respectful way.

**Limit Setting:**

We have a few clear, simple rules that vary according to the developmental level of the children. In establishing rules, each teacher follows these guidelines:

1. Tell children in a positive tone what they are to do.
2. Explain rules to children and apply those rules consistently.

In this way, all children know what is expected of them at the center.

**Problem Solving:**

We appeal to the growing intellectual and moral reasoning by using natural and logical consequences and asking questions to encourage problem solving. Teachers help children identify their needs, feelings, causes, alternatives, and choices. We provide cues that are developmentally appropriate to each child.

**A Word about Time Outs:**

Time out is a punitive action used to manage unacceptable behavior on the part of a child. At Otter Creek, we do not use time-outs; we want all discipline to be positive and corrective. Time out teaches nothing to a child except that he or she will be removed and get negative attention for not doing what the adult wants.

**Managing Behavior:**

When a child has a physical or emotional outburst, we provide comfort and privacy. This allows the child to regain composure and insures the safety of other children and staff. This method also encourages children to develop the internal controls that are the basis for self-discipline. If a child appears to be consistently or unusually stressed, anxious, or otherwise motivated to engage in negative behaviors, families will be consulted.

***No form of inappropriate discipline or corporal punishment shall be used with children such as but not limited to:***

- Hitting, shaking, biting pinching;
- Restricting a child's movements through binding, tying, or use of any other mechanical restraint;
- Withholding of food, water, or toilet use;
- Confining a child in an enclosed or darkened area, such as a closet or a locked room;
- Inflicting mental or emotional punishment such as humiliating, shaming, threatening, or frightening a child;

- Making disparaging remarks regarding a child or his/her family;
- Punitive action for not going to sleep, for toileting accidents, for failure to eat all or part of a meal, or for failure to complete a prescribed activity

### **Addressing Problem Behaviors:**

Otter Creek strives to support all children when they are displaying challenging behaviors. At Otter Creek, we believe that all behavior is communication, that through their behavior children are expressing their wants, needs, and feelings. We believe that, as their teachers it is our responsibility to help children learn appropriate ways to communicate their wants and needs and how to express their feelings. Teachers as outlined in the Positive Guidance and Behavior Management section of this handbook will address all behaviors. When a challenging behavior arises, the following steps will be taken:

1. Teachers will document the behavior to help ascertain any patterns or precipitating factors of the challenging behavior.
2. Teachers will meet with administration when the challenging behavior is continuous. Together the teachers and administration will develop a plan to address the challenging behavior more directly
3. If the challenging behavior is still not resolved, a meeting with the child's family will be requested. With the family, teachers and administration will further strategies around how best to support the child and address the challenging behavior. After the plan is put into place, the teachers will keep both the administration and the family up-to-date on how the plan is working.
4. If teachers feel that they need further support in resolving the challenging behavior, Otter Creek may, with parental permission, request the assistance of an outside agency or a referral for evaluation for a special need. If the parental permission is refused, and the challenging behavior continues, the continued enrollment of the child will be reconsidered with the provisions laid out below (#6)
5. If parental permission is given to work with an outside agency, Otter Creek will do everything within our limits to meet the recommendations of the outside agency and work as part of the larger team.
6. If all of the above steps fail to resolve the challenging behavior, Otter Creek may terminate care.

Again, it is Otter Creek's goal to accommodate and support every child that enters our doors. We strive to help every child, regardless of ability or behavior, to grow and learn to its full potential.

### **Expulsion Prevention Policy**

In accordance with State and Federal Child Care Regulations, Otter Creek Child Center has developed an Expulsion Policy, which ideally prevents the need to ask any child or family to leave our care. We strive to provide nurturing and responsive care, which supports each child's unique strengths and interests. We do this in partnership with families, cultivating nurturing, trusting relationships through open and caring communication. Exchanging relevant information, observations and wondering questions will allow support children's optimal development and compassionately us to develop shared understandings with strategies that effectively, respectfully.

As early childhood professionals, we are committed to implementing what is considered best practice in the field of early care and education by providing nurturing and responsive relationships within a supportive environment for all children and families. There may be times when experiences and circumstances in a child(ren)'s lives are such that we need to call on the support and expertise of local resources to help in problem- solving and developing strategies to support all of us working through a developmental need.

Our goal is ongoing communication with families, which promotes collaboration, shared problem solving and facilitates decision-making that best supports children's overall well-being.

Process:

- OCCC supports our staff by cultivating a caring, respectful, and responsive environment that promotes well-being and professional development.
- We strive to cultivate community with families and ensure that all are aware of program policies and community resources.
- We strive to create a caring community by promoting the Strengthening Families 5 Protective Factors-
  - Parental resilience
  - Social connections
  - Knowledge of parenting and child development
  - Concrete support in times of need
  - Social and emotional competence of children
- Parents/guardians and staff will communicate regularly, as well as participate in individual parent conferences two times per year or when requested by either party.
- Parents/guardians and staff agree that should a situation arise where a need is identified, community resources, such as Children’s Integrated Services (CIS), will be utilized.
- Exclusionary measures will be used as a last resort when there is a determination that OCCC is not the appropriate setting for a specific child.
- In the case that the program cannot meet the needs of a child, families and staff will work together to develop a seamless transition plan and will use the plan to implement a smooth transition for the child and family.

**The purpose of this policy**, in addition to complying with State and Federal Regulations, is to help create a community in which the well-being of all children and families is nurtured and supported.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY**

*“Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports.”*

**Definition of Early Childhood Inclusion**, excerpted from: “A Joint Position Statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), April 2009”

Otter Creek strives to support learners at every level of ability, and believes that a community of diverse abilities is enriching for all. Otter Creek will make every effort to include individuals of differing abilities.

Otter Creek works with all families to create and implement a plan to work towards meeting the individual needs of each child. Otter Creek makes all reasonable accommodations to provide a fully inclusive early childhood program for children with special needs and the center will work collaboratively with service providers to ensure the greatest consistency and best possible delivery of services for every child. With that said it is important to remember the following points:

- In some cases, a school system may recommend that a child be enrolled in a different program, where there may be more resources available to provide early intervention.

- In some cases, certain adaptations to our program may be impossible (a one-on-one aid, at the cost of Otter Creek or the family, for example) and we may recommend a different placement for the child. Please know that wherever possible, we will draw upon all resources to meet the child’s needs.
- Otter Creek may determine that we are not able to serve the child. Teachers and administration will work closely with the family regarding this discussion and will let the family know of the choice to terminate care as soon as possible in order for the family to make other child care arrangements.
- When struggling with the decision to terminate care, Otter Creek will take the following things into consideration:
  - Has implementation of strategies over time resulted in improvement, or have the concerns persisted or escalated?
  - Is Otter Creek able to meet the needs of the individual child and the needs of the group as a whole?
  - Is there a safety issue regarding the child or other children in the classroom?

Each case is considered on a case-by-case basis, and Otter Creek will apply every recommended strategy to support the child’s progress before considering termination of care.

**Abuse or Neglect of a Child at OCCC:**

Current hiring practices and staffing patterns are designed to prevent the possibility of abuse or neglect of a child by a staff person. Background and reference checks are conducted. Spaces are designed to be visible by someone outside the space, staff persons are grouped in teams. Discipline policy and techniques are clearly outlined for new staff members during orientation, as well as OCCC’s expectation that children be treated with love and respect.

In all cases, suspected abuse or neglect, or witnessed abuse or neglect by a staff person is to be reported to the Executive Director. The child’s parents will be notified, as well as the State Licensing Authority. A report will be made to the Child Abuse Hotline, and the staff person in question will be notified.

In cases where the abuse or neglect is suspected, or witnessed, the staff person will be placed on leave until the Department of Children and Families reports back that the case is unsubstantiated. If the case is substantiated the staff person will then be dismissed.

**SEPARATION ANXIETY**

Separation anxiety can be difficult for both families and children, especially as you and your child transition from home to an early childhood center. Take heart: separation anxiety is very common.

Here are some things that you can do before your child starts attending Otter Creek to ease the transition between home and childcare, help your child to develop confidence and trust and prepare your child for his or her stay:

- Talk to your child about Otter Creek before you start coming. Even nonverbal children benefit from this.
- Drive by the center before you start coming and tell your child that he or she will be going there.
- Talk about the type of day your child will have at Otter Creek (for example, “You will play games, paint a picture, sing songs, have lunch, and take a nap”).
- Talk about the people who will be taking care of your child. Say their names so your child will know them when you arrive.
- Tell your child how much fun Otter Creek will be.
- Visit the center with your child before he or she starts attending.

- Please let your child know when you will be leaving.
- Explain to your child that you will always come back.

Teachers are trained and prepared to help a child with separating from his or her grown-up. As always, feel free to call us if your child had a difficult drop-off and you want to know how she/he is doing.

### **TOYS FROM HOME**

We ask that the number of items being brought **from home be kept to two (2) security items** (special blanket, doll, stuffed animal or other comfort object). We also ask that all security items are small enough to fit in your child's cubby. This helps with clutter as well as ensuring all items brought from home are kept safe.

All other toys, dress up clothing and accessories, video games, electronic games, books, and misc. objects should be kept at home or in the car.

### **SIGN IN/OUT PROCEDURES**

Parents/legal guardians or an authorized individual *must* bring the child into the center, sign their child in, and check in with the teacher when they arrive. Likewise, the individual picking up your child *must sign out* on the attendance sheet and tell the teacher before they leave with the child. This is to comply with licensing regulations.

### **HAND WASHING REGULATION**

It is a Vermont State Child Care Regulation that *all* children and adults wash their hands upon arrival at the center. The individual dropping off the child in the morning should help the child wash their hands.

### **FAMILY/TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

Parents and guardians are warmly encouraged to spend as much time as possible at our center. Your children, especially if they attend full time, spend many hours at Otter Creek. We feel that it is crucial to develop a strong link between the center and home in order to provide the best possible learning experience.

Information regarding feeding (type and quantity of food), diapering, resting, and daily activities that took place in the classroom will be shared with families through the Family Communication App, for children under twenty-four (24) months of age.

Information regarding feeding (type and quantity of food) will be shared with families through the Family Communication App, for all children, no matter the age, whom have special feeding needs.

If you can, spend time with your child's group occasionally. We encourage you to participate in our activities and attend field trips. In this way, you have the opportunity to know what your child's day is like at Otter Creek. Additionally, it is important for us to know what is happening with your child at home in order to support him or her here at school. We value direct and open communication between people, so please ask about anything and everything. If you have a concern, we encourage you to speak directly to your child's teacher. We welcome the opportunity to explain why we do things a certain way and invite your perspective and your participation as an advocate for your child and family and for our Otter Creek community.

If families would like to speak with teachers in depth, often it is better to make an appointment, rather than to talk during drop off and pick up; arrival and departure times tend to be hectic and teachers need to focus their attention on the children at those times. Families can also leave a note for teachers or send an email to the classroom email account.

If you need support in approaching your child's teachers, you can ask the Director for help. Should you feel your concerns have not been properly addressed after speaking with your child's teachers and the Director, you have the right to file a grievance. (See Grievance Procedures).

Vermont's toll free number for parental concerns regarding childcare is 1-800-540-7942. This service has been established to assist families with major concerns regarding childcare issues.

Each family has a mailbox in the center. Be sure to check yours daily for notes, announcements, articles, tuition bills and newsletters.

The family information bulletin boards are located near the entrance of each classroom. The family information boards include lesson plans, daily and weekly updates of what is happening in your child's classrooms, and any sign-up sheets and announcements.

### **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

We encourage families to become actively involved in all aspects of Otter Creek community life. We rely heavily on family participation, and we value the contributions you make to strengthen and support Otter Creek. The importance we place on this is reflected in our desire for all families to contribute a minimum amount of their time (8 hours) to the center each year. This can be done by participating on an OCCC Board Committees, spending time in the classroom or on a field trip, or assisting the administrative office with various tasks (i.e. mailings).

Family and teacher participation fosters a sense of community within our center and gives everyone an opportunity to understand and participate in their child's experience at Otter Creek. Families may select the aspect of the center experience in which they would like to participate. In this way, families can contribute according to their interests, ability, and schedules.

### **INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Below is a list of several options in which you may choose to participate. We always welcome suggestions and any special skills that you might be able to bring to the center that extend beyond the following opportunities.

The **Fundraising Committee** is great for those who are interested in event planning, fundraising and working with the local community to raise funds for our center.

The **Buildings & Grounds Committee** is a good choice for those who are handy, knowledgeable in the building trades or are interested in gardening and landscaping. The committee works to maintain and improve Otter Creek's buildings, grounds and gardens. The group participates in center workdays for building maintenance and repairs.

Becoming a **member of the Board of Directors** is for those individuals who have experience in fundraising, the legal and finance sectors, not-for-profits, business or board experience, and/or long term planning and development. Board members are nominated and elected to serve and oversee the center's financial stability and long-term viability. Members of the board work closely with the director and serve on committees that support the center program.

There are many opportunities for **classroom involvement**. Some ways to participate in your child's classroom are by volunteering, by making monetary donations for classroom supplies or by gathering supplies for special projects. Please inquire with your child's teacher for further ideas.

Two or three times a year there are opportunities to **participate in Family Work Days**. The work might include seasonal cleaning, painting, small construction projects or gardening. This is one way we can all help the center keep costs down, and a way for families to get to know one another.

**Family Program Questionnaires** are sent out once a year in each program. We encourage family members to answer questions honestly and to let us know your perspective on how the program is working for your child. We value your feedback and continually seek new ways to improve our program.

## **PAYMENT POLICIES**

Otter Creek Child Center is a non-profit organization relying on tuition fees for most of its operating expenses. It is essential that fees be paid promptly and regularly.

Tuition is based on enrollment schedule rather than on actual attendance. Families are responsible for payment of all enrolled hours, even if the child is absent (due to sickness, vacation, etc.) or if the center is closed during the year for in-service days, holidays or inclement weather.

Please keep in mind that monthly bills are not sent out. It is your responsibility to pay your child's tuition on time.

Checks may be deposited in the box located by the main entrance. Cash payments can be made directly to the Executive Director. Upon request by the family, monthly receipts will be given.

All questions related to tuition payments can be directed to the Executive Director.

## **TUITION & YEARLY CONTRACTS**

Families sign a yearly contract, which runs from September to August. This is a bound contract stating that tuition will be paid throughout the year. It is expected that tuition payments will be paid in advance on a bi-monthly or monthly basis. Bi-monthly payments are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month and monthly payments are due on the first of each month. Families make the decision whether to make monthly or bi-monthly payments at the beginning of the contract year.

## **DEPOSIT**

A deposit equal to half of the monthly tuition payment is paid upon execution of the Enrollment and Registration Contract, and prior to the child's attendance at the center. A deposit will be collected for each child enrolled. If a child leaves at the end of the contract year the family has the option of applying the deposit to their child's last tuition payment, having it refunded directly to them or making a tax-deductible donation to the center.

## **WITHDRAWAL**

If a family chooses to withdraw their child from the center before the expiration of the time period contracted for, the center will retain the deposit.

## **HOLDING A SPOT**

Families can choose to hold a spot for no more than 3 months at a time and at a rate of 50% of tuition. Holding a spot typically happens at the start of a new school year when a child is not old enough to begin care. Families may also choose to hold their spot during the summer months, if they wish to take the summer off and their child is returning in the fall. Holding a spot is dependent on approval from the Executive Director and must have at least two months' notice.



## **LATE PAYMENT FEES**

A late payment of 14 days will require the center to immediately apply a \$20.00 late fee to cover the administrative cost and in general, to discourage late payments. If the tuition payments become late on a regular basis, the center reserves the right to render the child ineligible for early education services immediately.

## **CHARGE FOR ADDITIONAL DAYS**

If a family chooses to utilize days available beyond their contract this can be done with the prior approval of the Executive Director and classroom teachers. The family will receive notice of the cost and payment is due by the additional day. Fill out the Extra Time Request Form (in Appendix) and return to your child's teacher with full payment.

## **NSF CHECKS**

There will be a \$20.00 handling fee for the processing of any check returned to the center due to insufficient funds. Upon receipt of the second NSF check, cash, cashier's check or money order must pay all future early education tuition payments.

## **CHANGES IN FAMILY FINANCIAL SITUATION**

If a family's financial situation changes, the situation should be discussed with the Executive Director in order to prevent late tuition payments from occurring. All financial discussions with families are kept confidential.

## **PROGRAM NOTICE OF TERMINATION OF CARE**

In the event that any of the following situations occur, early education services may be terminated:

1. Non-payment of fees by parent or guardian, i.e. 4 weeks in arrears.
2. Failure to provide the required health, immunization and/or emergency information.
3. Abusive behaviors and/or verbal threats towards staff, children, other families or property of the Center.
4. Inability of staff to care adequately for or to meet the child's needs.
5. Lack of cooperation from parents/guardians with the program's efforts to resolve differences and/or to meet the child's needs through parent/staff meetings, conferences or use of outside services.
6. Chronic lateness in picking up a child at the end of the day.
7. Outdated, incomplete or incorrect numbers on the Emergency contact list resulting in not being reachable within an hour of trying, for the third time in an enrollment year.
8. Failure to pick up an injured or ill child within an hour of being notified, for the third time in an enrollment year.

A written notice will be sent to the family as soon as possible after the occurrence of any of these events. The Director will inform the Board of Director's President that a termination notice has been given and provide the board and the parents/guardians of the child for whom services are being terminated, a copy of the grievance procedures. A parent/guardian may grieve the notice of termination within two working days of receiving notice.

## **LATE PICK-UP POLICY**

Otter Creek Child Center closes at 4:45 pm. All children are expected to be picked up by a parent or authorized guardian by 4:45 pm. If a parent/guardian arrives after 4:45 pm., families will be charged a designated late fee. There will be no exceptions or warnings. If a parent/guardian is late for whatever reason (flat tire, heavy traffic, weather conditions etc.) a late charge will be issued. A "no exceptions" policy makes it easier to apply the late policy to everyone consistently and fairly.

**LATE PICK-UP PROCEDURE:**

If you know you are running late, please contact your child's teacher and let them know the anticipated time of pick-up. It is helpful for teachers to know in advance so they can help your child adjust to the late departure. It also helps the teacher plan for staff coverage during the minutes the child is remaining in the program. If there is more than one child remaining past 4:45 p.m., we may combine the remaining children to one group. If a child is moved to a different area of the school a note will be posted on the outside of the site location's door indicating the location of pick-up. The child's belongings will be with the child at the pick-up point.

If the family has not contacted their classroom teacher by 4:45, the teacher will follow the contact protocol below:

1. First, the parent/legal guardian will be called.
2. If the parent/legal guardian cannot be reached, we will call from the child's authorized emergency contact list. We will continue to attempt contact with the parent/legal guardian and/or the authorized emergency contacts until 5:15 p.m.
3. If by 5:15 p.m., we are still not able to reach any parent/legal guardian and/or an authorized emergency contact, we will call Child Protective Services and/or the local police department.
4. Child Protective Services can be reached at: 1-800-649-5285
5. Middlebury Police Department: 802-388-3191

Parent must sign out their child with the accurate time of pick-up on the 'Late Pick-up Form'. Pick-up time is determined from the Programs clock setting.

The teacher assigned to supervise the remaining child/ren will complete the Late-Pickup Report and the parent/guardian will be asked to sign it. The teacher will give the report to our accounting department for processing and a copy of the report will be given to the parent/guardian when billed.

If you are having consistent difficulties in picking up your child by 4:45 p.m., please talk to your child's Teacher or the Executive Director to help you find resources or assist to find solutions for prompt departure.

Consistent late pick-ups without significant communication may lead to dismissal from the program.

**LATE PICK-UP POLICY FEE AND PROCEDURE:**

1. First 5 minutes: Automatic flat \$10.00 late fee is charged
2. After 5 minutes: A \$1.00 per minute late fee is charged
3. Example #1: If a child is picked up two minutes late, it is a flat \$10 late fee.
4. Example #2: If a parent/guardian arrives at 4:52, the charge is \$10.00 for the first 5 minutes, and \$7.00 for the additional 7 minutes. Total late fee charge would be \$17.

**CHANGE IN SCHEDULE**

If a family chooses to make changes to their contract by adding or dropping days, they must speak with the Executive Director for approval. The Change of Schedule Form must be filled out (in Appendix) and the Executive Director will meet the family's needs as best as possible. Changes in schedules depend on classroom schedules and may not always be doable.

**SIBLING DISCOUNT**

For families with multiple children there will be a 5% discount for the second child. The first child's tuition will be based on the full tuition rate and the second child's annual tuition will be reduced by the 5% discount rate.

Families who qualify for CC FAP will not be eligible for a sibling discount.

## **UNIVERSAL PRE-KINDERGARTEN**

Otter Creek Child Center seeks to collaborate with local school districts to provide publicly funded Pre-kindergarten programming. Families whose children are included in the count for these partnerships will receive a reduction in tuition, September through May. The reduction will be based on the rate paid by the school district and the actual cost to the center for providing the program. Current partnerships are held with:

- Addison Central Supervisory Union (Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton)
- Mt. Abe Union (Bristol, Monkton, New Haven, Lincoln, Starksboro)
- Addison Northwest Supervisory Union (Addison, Ferrisburg, Panton, Vergennes, Waltham)
- Chittenden South Supervisory Union (Charlotte, Hinesburg, Shelburne, St. George, Williston)
- Addison Rutland Supervisory Union (Fair Haven)

## **CHILD CARE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Otter Creek accepts payments from the State of Vermont Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CC FAP). State funding assistance may be available for early education expenses if a parent/guardian is working or attending school and meets the monetary guidelines set forth by the State of Vermont. Please do not hesitate to ask for information concerning eligibility for this program. Families receiving this service will be billed for their portion of the fee or absences beyond those allowed by the program in accordance with the guidelines for committed time set forth by the State of Vermont. If your family qualifies for subsidy, your tuition payment will be either what the state calls "family share" or current tuition rates (whatever is lower).

To gain more information about CC FAP please call 802-388-4304 or visit <http://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/ccfap>

## **HANDLING OF CHILD CUSTODY SITUATIONS**

Otter Creek's legal position regarding child custody is as follows:

Both parents have equal custody rights unless:

- You were never married and always had sole custody.
- You have a legal separation or divorce agreement stating otherwise.
- You have a court restraining order or some other legal document stating which parent may or may not pick up the child. [**The center must have copies of these documents in order to enforce limited or no access to a child.**]

There have been times when parents are in the process of separation and divorce and have asked for our business records for use in court, or for us to testify as part of their legal case. We firmly believe that during times of family stress, the center's role is to support the child by providing a neutral zone and safe haven. Because of this belief, we will not be involved in legal matters concerning separation and divorce. In accordance with Vermont state law, each parent will have access to the school and child unless a court order is on file in the child's folder that prohibits parental access.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY PROCEDURE**

Confidentiality is to be maintained at all times by all OCCC employees. OCCC employees shall not disclose or permit the use of any information regarding an individual child or family gained through OCCC interaction with the child and family, or OCCC records, files, videotaping, tape recording, photographing, assessments or any type of documentation unless parental permission is specifically granted, except to the Child Development Division or other entities with statutory authority for issues relating to the health, safety, and protection of children.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

This social media policy applies to families, members of staff, committee members and volunteers at OCCC/CSCC.

This policy includes (but is not limited to) the following technologies:

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, SnapChat, Twitter, TikTok)
- Blogs
- Discussion forums
- Collaborative online spaces
- Media Sharing services (i.e. You Tube)
- Micro-blogging (i.e. Twitter)

**As part of our duty to safeguard children, it is essential to maintain the privacy and security of all our families.** We therefore require that:

Photographs taken within OCCC/CSCC or at OCCC/CSCC special events and outings with the children are not to be posted for public viewing, except those of your own child. This includes photos that are shared through the family communication app.

Families are advised that they do not have the right to photograph anyone else's child or to upload photos of anyone else's children on a public platform.

No public discussions are to be held or comments made on social media sites regarding OCCC/CSCC children, families, or staff that could be construed to have any impact on OCCC/CSCC's reputation or that would offend any member of staff or family using OCCC/CSCC.

## **FAMILY GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

The family grievance procedure provides a means of encouraging families of children at Otter Creek Child Center to feel comfortable with expressing doubts or problems, which may occur during the program year with center staff or policies.

A grievance may be a complaint relating to a staff member who is not performing to the expectations according to defined roles and responsibilities, conditions of the center, or center policies that are considered unfair.

The objectives of the grievance procedure shall be to:

1. Promote harmony in the working relationships of our families and staff.
2. Provide and acknowledge an orderly process for the handling of family grievances.
3. Resolve grievances as quickly as possible before they become unduly exaggerated and disruptive to the program.
4. Resolve the grievance at the family/teacher level if possible.
5. Correct the cause of the grievance.
6. Provide free expression of views and open dialogue between families and staff.

Step 1: When a family member has a complaint, it should be brought to the attention of the child's teacher. The teacher will do his or her best to address respectfully the concerns of the family member, and take corrective action if warranted. If no satisfaction to the family:

Step 2: The family member can bring the complaint to the Executive Director, who will in turn respectfully address the concerns of the family, and take corrective action if warranted. If no satisfaction to the family:

Step 3: The family member can bring the complaint to the Board of Directors. The board president will form a committee consisting of three board members to investigate the complaint. The investigation will consist at a minimum of interviews with the family and all other parties to the complaint. If the complaint is against center policy, the committee will familiarize itself with the policy and the reasons for its instatement.

Step 4: The committee will recommend to the board a plan for resolution of the complaint. The board will vote to accept or decline the committee's recommendation, and the Board decision will be final.

*To fill a Civil Rights Complaint please refer to the procedures outlined on pages 38 and 39.*

## **CELEBRATIONS**

### **Birthdays:**

Each classroom may celebrate birthdays in a special way such as creating a birthday crown or decorating a special card for children to treasure. We have a birthday book box and your child will be invited to choose one book to be read aloud and then bring home as a present from all of us here at Otter Creek.

Families sometimes use the children's mailboxes to distribute party invitations. To honor the feelings of all children at Otter Creek Child Center, we ask that if you are planning a party for your child at home and want to invite children from the center, please use center mailboxes only if you are inviting *the whole group*. Children know when they are left out, and we want to avoid hurt feelings.

### **Holidays:**

In our culture, holidays are a busy, stressful time. It is the policy of Otter Creek Child Center to provide a calm, predictable, supportive space in the midst of this stress. Otter Creek does not celebrate holidays of any type but children may share their own individual experiences with teachers and other children without censure. Children learn to respect and appreciate cultural differences through child-initiated sharing.

## **PARKING LOT SAFETY AND USAGE**

Please hold your child's hand in the parking lot. We do not want any child injured – please help us keep them safe. Due to the smallness of our parking lot, we are asking that between the hours of 7:30 a.m. thru 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. thru 4:45 p.m. vehicles are left in the parking lot only long enough for you to drop off or pick up your child. This will allow everyone the opportunity to utilize our parking lot and attempt to minimize having to park on the street. *Please do not park in front of the porch, block in other vehicles, and **no idling**.* Also, please remember to drive slowly in and out of the driveway!

## **WEAPON FREE ZONE**

To ensure that OCCC maintains a safe and free of violence environment for all community members, the company prohibits the possession or use of dangerous weapons on company property. "Dangerous weapons" include firearms, explosives, knives, and other weapons that might be considered dangerous or that could cause harm. Employees are responsible for making sure that any item possessed by the employee is not prohibited by this policy.

OCCC reserves the right at any time and at its discretion to search all packages, containers, briefcases, purses, bags, desks, enclosures and person entering its property, for the purpose of determining whether any weapon is being, or has been, brought onto its property or premises in violation of this policy.

## **DRUG, SMOKING, ALOCOHOL USE**

OCCC buildings and grounds are designated as no smoking areas.

Otter Creek Child Center, Inc. is committed to maintaining an environment free of substance abuse. No individual is allowed to consume, possess, sell, purchase, or be impaired by alcohol or illegal drugs, as defined

under federal and/or state law, on any property owned by or leased on behalf of Otter Creek Child Center, Inc. or in any vehicle owned or leased on behalf of Otter Creek Child Center, Inc.

## CLOTHING

Children should come to the center dressed in clothing suitable for a day of active engagement with materials like paint, play dough, markers, sensory materials like water and sand, and the outdoor environment. Clothing that can be easily put on and taken off will facilitate the development of your child's independent skills. **It is very important for your child to have clearly marked extra clothing**, on hand for those times when a change is needed. Items that often need changing are socks, underwear and pants for older children and everything for those still in diapers. Children's extra clothes need to be replaced according to our changing seasons.

## OUTDOOR PLAY

We are outside every day, weather permitting. Please send your child prepared for the outdoors. Children's enjoyment of the outdoors is directly related to their comfort. We make a decision to go outside based on the age of the children, their activity level, the temperature and the wind chill factor in the wintertime, and the temperature and humidity level in the summer time. Children are allowed to make the decision about whether to wear a jacket or not when the weather is cool but not cold (55 degrees or so). This is to accommodate individual differences in activity level and sensitivity to heat and cold. Jackets will always be available so that children can change their minds, and a child who is showing obvious signs of being cold will be asked to wear a jacket. In the summer, children will need to have their own sunscreen (labeled with child's name on it) and hats.

### Winter Clothing:

Boots	Snow Pants	Gloves/Mittens	Winter Hat	Winter Coat
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### Summer Clothing:

Closed toed shoes	Layers	Swimsuits	Towels	Sun hats
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### Raining Days:

Rain boots	Rain coats
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### Cool Days:

Layers	Light coat
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## SHOES

It is important that your child always have a pair of shoes that are **closed toed** and good for walking/running. In the summer time, flip-flops are fine to wear to school but please have a pair of closed toed shoes/sandals for your child to wear during walks. Shoes that easily fall off feet are unsafe and become dangerous when a child is walking around town or running outside.

## WALKS AND FIELD TRIPS

Walks provide children with experiences outside the center. Walks are a regular part of the daily schedule and the center has developed specific guidelines to ensure the safety of the children while they are away from the center. Children may go to the library, the downtown area, the college, or the woods behind the center.

Special field trips to the orchard, fire station, etc. will be occasionally scheduled. Any field trip that requires children to ride in cars will require a permission slip and teachers will ask families to leave car seats and to help with the driving. Please let us know if you would like to be involved in any special field trips.

## SCHOOL CANCELLATION/ WEATHER EMERGENCY POLICY

Our population of children and staff are from all over Addison County and we will make our decision for school closing based on the safety and well-being of all of our families, children and staff.

A decision will be made by 6:30 a.m. Please check before you leave for the center on mornings when there is inclement weather. We will post our center closings on Television: Channels 3, 5, and 22. Radio: WOKO and WJOY

If severe weather arises during the day while children are at the center, the children's safety and well-being will be the prime concern of the directors and teachers. If the decision is made to close the center, families will be notified immediately and asked to pick up their child. In the event children and teachers need to immediately evacuate due to other types of severe weather or a fire at school, children will go to the Middlebury Town Offices. Families will be notified and asked to immediately pick up their child.

### **MEALS AND SNACKS**

Otter Creek participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) through the Agency of Education. Otter Creek will provide Breakfast, Lunch, and Afternoon Snack to all children attending; including infants. The following regulations will be followed when creating menus:

- Meals and snacks provided will meet current USDA/CACFP meal pattern requirements
- No juice will be served
- Whole Milk will be served to children 1 to 2 years of age, with 1% Milk being served to children over 2 years of age
- Monthly menus will be posted in each classroom

Meal times are an important part of our day at Otter Creek. It is an opportunity to take a break and socialize with friends. Nutritious meals help children get the nourishment and energy they need to be healthy and to learn.

All children in attendance for the day will receive breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack at no extra cost to the family. Families may also choose to pack lunches. When lunches are packed we ask that families following these guidelines in order for Otter Creek to stay within compliance of both State Child Care Licensing Regulations and CACFP requirements:

- **NO CANDY, SODA, CHOCOLATE OR SOLID SUGAR FOODS.**
- We discourage foods high in sugar, salt and fat and low in nutrients (chips, cheese puffs, sweets, etc.)
- 1 vegetable is included
- 1 fruit is included
- 1 grain is included
- 1 meat or meat alternative is included
- Otter Creek will still provide milk when families are asked to pack
- No Juice

### **FOOD SAFETY**

We urge caution when sending foods for children under four, to avoid incidents of choking. Grapes, hotdogs, carrots and other foods should be cut up when sent to school, avoiding the "coin" style cut, instead cutting in quarters or strips. Foods that most often cause choking are:

- Hot dogs (whole or sliced into rounds)
- Raw whole carrots or carrot rounds
- Whole grapes
- Raw peas
- Hard pretzels
- Chips

- Popcorn
- Chunks of meat larger than can be swallowed whole

If these foods are in your child's lunch, we may return them to you with an explanatory note.

Teachers will practice the following food safety procedures:

- All hot food and drinks shall be kept out of children's reach
- Wash fruit and vegetables before preparing and eating
- Discard any foods with expired dates
- Never use plastic or Styrofoam containers, plates, bags or wraps when microwaving
- All breastmilk or formula that is unfinished and unrefrigerated will be discarded after 1 hour

### **Infant Feeding:**

There are several options for feeding infants (children 6 weeks to 11 months old) at Otter Creek. Families have the following choices:

- **Formula/Breast Milk:**
  - Provide breast milk (labeled with the child's full name and date expressed)
  - Provide formula of your choice
  - Use the iron-fortified formula provided by Otter Creek Child Center
- **Infant Cereal:**
  - Provide infant cereal
  - Use the iron-fortified infant cereal provided by Otter Creek Child Center
- **Infant Food:**
  - Provide infant food
  - Use the infant food provided by Otter Creek Child Center

All families will be asked to fill out a detailed permission slip regarding the food choices you are making for your infant. Regardless of what choice you make we will work with families to meet individual needs and requests. It is our goal to honor families' personal choices when it comes to feeding their child during the first year of their life, we want to support and help each child become a successful independent eater.

### **FOOD ALLERGIES**

At this time no peanuts, tree nuts or foods containing nuts or nut oils including foods, which have been preprocessed on the same line as peanuts or tree nuts, can be allowed at the center. This is to protect children who attend the center and who have an identified allergy.

Otter Creek is dedicated to protecting children with food allergies and will work with families to best serve children who have a known food allergies.

### **NAPS AND REST TIME**

Children in all classrooms are provided with an opportunity for resting/napping. We realize that as some children get older, they may outgrow naps. In that case, we offer a quiet time to just rest their bodies. We will arrange naps for children in the infant room whenever they are tired. Infants sleep in cribs and older children on washable mats. As infants get older, teachers will work toward a regular naptime after lunch. Individual variations will be happily accommodated. We welcome your suggestions about ways to help your child fall asleep. Pacifiers will be given to any child whose families supply them.



Families of all children need to provide blankets, any comfort item that your child uses for rest time, or a sleeping bag for napping purposes. These should be taken home each Friday to be washed by families, and returned to the center on Monday.

### **Infant Safe Sleep Practices**

The following safe sleep practices will be followed in the Sea Pup Classroom, with all children under 12 months of age:

- Infants shall be placed on their backs to sleep;
- If an infant falls asleep in a swing, car seat, chair, or on the floor, they will be moved to their crib;
- Soft objects, toys, or loose bedding shall not be used in infants' sleep areas. Soft or loose bedding includes: bumper pads, pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, blankets, flat sheets, cloth diapers, and bibs;
- Infants shall not be swaddled for sleep;
- Clothing sacks or similar clothing designed for safe sleep may be used;
- Bibs, necklaces, and garments with ties or hoods shall be removed from the child prior to placing the child in the crib;
- No positioning devices shall be used unless required by the child's health care provider; and
- Pacifiers are permitted in cribs with parental written permission

### **TOILET LEARNING AND DIAPERING PROCEDURES**

#### **Diapers:**

If you choose to use cloth diapers, please bring an individual diaper pail or medium-sized plastic bags with your supply of cloth diapers. You are required to take soiled cloth diapers home daily, as teachers cannot wash out the diapers.

Our ordinary cleaning procedure during diapering is to wash the child's bottom with clear water, and soap if needed, and a paper towel. We will use wipes to clean your child's diaper area if you prefer, and if you provide wipes to the center. For diaper rash or redness, we will apply whatever you suggest and supply.

#### **Toilet Learning:**

It is the belief of Otter Creek Child Center that toilet training should begin at home with the child's family and at a time when there are not a lot of changes in the child's life. Life must be fairly stress free during this time for the child. Otter Creek Child Center will assist your child-becoming toilet trained once the child is showing the following signs of readiness both at home and at Otter Creek:

1. The child tells you when he/she has wet his/her diaper (recognizes he/she is wet).
2. The child tells you when he/she is wetting his/her diaper (recognizes the sensation of wetting a diaper)
3. The child tells you that he/she needs to wet (can control self and go to use the toilet)
4. Child stays dry for a long time- able to hold their urines or bowel movements
5. Has bowel movements at regular times. The child chooses when to have a bowel movement
6. Adult can recognize when the child is having a bowel movement
7. The child can undress and pull up their own clothing/pants
8. Child initiates using the toilet and asks to wear underwear. This is also a sign of wanting to be independent, which is very important.
9. Emotionally ready and open to learning
10. Can follow three or four step instructions. This is critical to learning to pee, wipe, flush, and wash hands.

When toilet training begins, the following guidelines will be followed:

1. Your child **must** wear loose fitting clothing that is easy for the child to pull up and down.
2. A supply of clothing *with no less than 3* changes of clothing including socks and shoes (1 pair) will be kept at the center in case of accidents.
3. Keep a small supply of diapers or pull-ups at the center. If your child has three accidents while in underwear, they will be placed in a diaper or pull-up for the rest of the day.
4. If your child has been switched back to a diaper/pull-up 3 days in a row a conversation with the teachers and family will be had about the child's true readiness.
5. Otter Creek does not rinse out or wash soiled clothing so any clothing that becomes soiled during the day will need to go home that afternoon.

It is important to remember that often time children will show a readiness and have success with toilet training at home before signs of readiness are seen at the center. It is highly likely that there will be a time when your child is toilet trained at home but not at the center, this is perfectly normal. Toilet training should be a positive experience for everyone involved. It should only take a short period of time if and when your child is truly ready. Problems arise when the adults do not pay attention to the child's lack of readiness. There is no right or wrong age to toilet train a child. It is an individual as learning to walk. No two children will toilet train in exactly the same time frame or even in the same manner. Patience is the key thing when it comes to toilet training!

### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY**

Child abuse and neglect is against the law. **All employees of OCCC are mandated by law (33 V.S.A. §4913) to report suspected cases of abuse or neglect to the Vermont Department of Children and Families via the Child Abuse Hotline.** The report must be made within twenty-four (24) hours of the time information regarding the suspected abuse or neglect was first received or observed.

All OCCC Employees shall be trained:

- In prevention, identification and mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect.
- In prevention of child sexual abuse; in signs and symptoms of sexual abuse, sexual violence, and grooming processes; in recognizing the dangers of child sexual abuse in and close to the home; and other predatory behaviors of sex offenders.

All OCCC Employees must submit a Records Check Authorization, including fingerprinting, through the Child Development Division and are not allowed to be left alone with children until approval from the Child Development Division has been given.

### **CENTER HARASSMENT POLICY**

(Adopted January 1998, revised May 2005 by the Otter Creek Child Center Board of Directors and Executive Director)

#### **Philosophy and Procedure**

It is the right of all people to enjoy freedom from abusive and threatening behaviors. If an individual harasses another individual at Otter Creek, the subject of the harassment should convey to the offender her/his desire for the behavior to stop. The person believing they are the subject of harassing behavior should make a report to the Executive Director or the Board President. If the behavior continues, an investigation will be conducted. The Board of Directors will determine the action to be taken.

#### **Definitions**

Harassing behavior is any action taken by one person toward another that is offensive, threatening, intimidating, coercive, disruptive, and/or causes fearfulness. These behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Unwanted physical contact
- Foul language

- Badgering
- Slander
- Stalking
- Physical aggression or force
- Threats of force
- Offensive or derogatory jokes, remarks, and gestures
- Unwanted verbal contact, such as phone calls or e-mails

### **Scope of Policy**

This policy is intended to protect the community of Otter Creek Child Center, its employees and families on or off the premises of Otter Creek Child Center.

### **OCCC Rights**

If, at any time, an employee of Otter Creek is the subject of harassment by a parent or guardian, Otter Creek maintains the absolute right to require the immediate withdrawal of that family from its program. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, or the full Board of Directors, will make final decisions regarding such a withdrawal.

## **Otter Creek Child Center, Inc. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN**

### **Prevention**

Facility Maintenance includes regularly cleaning and checking heating, cooling, gas and electrical systems to verify that they are in good working order. The building is equipped with carbon monoxide and smoke detectors as well as fire extinguishers, which are regularly checked. The fire extinguishers are properly charged, mounted and easy to reach in case of fire, staff members are trained in proper usage.

Doorways are kept clear of obstructions for safe exits from the building.

Otter Creek Child Center conducts Emergency Evacuation Drills monthly. The drills are one of the following:

- Sheltering-in-Place due to severe wind/storm
- Lock Down
- Evacuation of the building due to other emergencies
- Evacuation of the building due to Fire (Fire Drills)

One drill per year will take place during rest time hours.

All visitors to the center who are not immediately known by staff are directed to the office.

### **Emergency Supplies and Information**

Each classroom has an emergency contact list for children enrolled. These lists are taken with teachers when building is evacuated. The phone in the front hall also keeps emergency contact lists for all children in the center. One teacher from each classroom will be in charge of notifying parents/guardians of any emergency as well as where to pick up their child. The director, if possible, will send out an email to all parents/guardians notifying them of the emergency, procedures that have been followed, and where to pick up their child.

Each classroom maintains an emergency backpack to be taken in the case of evacuation.

There is also an emergency box in the basement. This contains emergency lists, first aid supplies, blankets, and personal hygiene and sanitation supplies, in case of a shelter-in-place emergency.

An adequate supply of water is maintained for use in the case of an emergency. A battery operated radio and flashlights are kept on the premises at all times

### **Designated Authority During Emergency:**

During an emergency, the executive director has authority. If the executive director is not present or is unable to carry out the duties of administrator, the program director will be in authority. If both program director and executive director are not present, they will designate a staff person as being in authority before leaving the premises.

### **Diagram of the Building**

The diagrams posted in each room of the Center show the primary and secondary exits for each group of children. Since we sometimes use rooms other than our primary rooms, in case of evacuation, the procedure applies to whichever room the children happen to be using at that time.

Primary exits are marked in blue and should be used first unless they are blocked by fire. In that case, the secondary exit marked in red should be used. **ONLY IN AN EXTREME EMERGENCY SHOULD CHILDREN BE REMOVED THROUGH THE WINDOWS.**

### **General Evacuation Procedures**

In the event of a fire, inclement weather, building emergency, bomb threat, or any other situation that results in the building needing to be evacuated, all staff should adhere to the following:

1. The director or designee will call 911, *if appropriate*, and indicate the need for assistance.
2. Evacuate all children and staff members to a designated safe area away from the building as quickly as possible. ***Designated Safe Area:*** East end of the property between the infant/toddler play yard and the Court Street parking lot ***Designated off site Evacuation Place:*** Middlebury Town Offices
3. Before leaving the grounds, confirm attendance by conducting a Roll Call to ensure all children and staff members are accounted for. Bring attendance sheets, emergency contact information for all children and staff members, and first aid backpacks to evacuation site.
4. During the evacuation, children and staff should adhere to predetermined evacuation routes as much as possible. However, staff should not hesitate to alter the designated route if it is unsafe.
5. Staff will evacuate children as follows:
  - Infants- Put up to four non-mobile babies in an evacuation crib, Administration will help the infant room evacuate
  - Toddlers and Preschool- gather children in a group and supervise an orderly evacuations to the designated assembly area
  - Children with Special Needs- These children will be assisted by specific staff members who have been trained in their role to evacuate children.
6. Once children and staff report to the designated safe area, a second roll call should be made to ensure that everyone has exited the building safely.
7. No person should return into the building until it is deemed safe by the proper authorities
8. The director or designee will carry a cellular phone to notify children's families of the situation and the pick-up point for the children.
9. The director will notify The Child Development Division

***Under no circumstances*** are staff members to stop for any of their own or children's personal belongings, including, jackets, shoes, etc.

### **Fire**

In case of a fire:

1. The area should be evacuated immediately
2. Fire alarm should be pulled
3. 911 should be notified of fire location

Life safety is the first priority. No matter how small or large the fire is, 911 should be called and an evacuation should begin.

If the fire is small and is not located in a room where children are present, a fire extinguisher may be used to put out the fire. This should only be done if the staff responding to the fire has received the proper training. In addition, the staff should not fight the fire if there is any imminent threat to their safety.

Fire Extinguishers are located in the following areas:

- Front Hall
- Upstairs Hall
- Sea Pup 2 classroom
- Carriage House Entry
- Basement

1. A Roll call of all children and staff should be taken to ensure that everyone is out of the building. If there is any threat to the children and staff at the designated evacuation site, an immediate evacuation to a different location is necessary.
2. The director or designee should go to a visible location to help direct the fire department to the facility. Once the fire department arrives on scene, the director or designee should establish contact with the fire department official to discuss what information is needed by the fire department.
3. When possible all windows and doors in the building should be shut, and all electrical switches should be in the off position. This should be done while keeping in mind that both the children and staff need to be evacuated in the shortest time possible, under 3 minutes
4. The director or designee should make sure no child or staff member attempts to reenter the building until cleared by the fire department.
5. The director will notify The Child Development Division

**Always remember these important rules in case of fire:**

1. **Stay calm!** Young children are frightened by the loud noise and the flashing lights of our fire alarm. They sometimes freeze and are unable to move when the alarm is sounding. You need to maintain a calm exterior in order to help the children in this situation. They depend on you for this safety and their security. If you are calm and matter of fact, they will be calm.
2. If there is a large amount of smoke, stay close to the floor. The air is cleaner there because smoke will rise to the ceiling. Place a cloth (preferably damp) over your nose, mouth, the child's nose, and mouth to facilitate breathing.
3. If a door is closed, always place your hand on it to see if it is hot **before you open it!** If it feels hot to the touch, **do not open it!** Find another way to exit the room.
4. If your clothing catches on fire, **stop, drop to the floor, and roll** until the fire is extinguished. Do the same for a child whose clothing has caught on fire. If the child is struggling against you, roll him or her in a blanket to extinguish the flames.

**Emergency Lock-Down Procedures**

Lock-down procedures will be used in situations that may result in harm to persons inside the building, such as a shooting, hostage incident, intruder, trespassing, disturbance, or at the discretion of the building director, designee or public safety personnel.

1. The director or designee will announce the "Lock-down". The alert may be a using a pre-selected code word: Burnt Toast
2. Call 911
3. In a "Lock-Down" situation all children are kept in designated classrooms that are away from the danger
4. Staff members will shut and lock all possible doors on the way to the designated safe area.

5. Staff members are responsible for accounting for children and ensuring that no one leaves the safe area. Attendance Sheets and emergency backpacks should be taken.
6. Secure building entrances, ensuring that no unauthorized individuals leave or enter the building
7. Staff and children remain in the designated safe area locking the door, if possible, turning off the lights, covering the windows, and (if possible) engage in quiet story time activities with the children until “all clear” is announced.
8. The director will notify The Child Development Division

There may be an opportunity to evacuate some of the children. The director or designee will notify the classroom(s) to evacuate and specify the route to take out of the building and the designated area. The importance of staff and children remaining calm cannot be over emphasized. Quick, silent evacuation is the goal.

### **Missing Child Procedures**

Otter Creek’s supervision and evacuation policies are designed to prevent children from becoming lost, however this procedure is in place in the unlikely event this should happen.

1. If a child is not accounted for at any time, the staff member responsible for the child should search the premises for them. Each area that a child could potentially hide should be searched, as well as the outdoor areas of the facility.
2. If the child is not located after all potential hiding spots and immediate outdoor areas have been searched, the director should be notified that the child is missing.
3. The staff member should also double-check to confirm the location of the child such as the pickup of the child by their parent or guardian.
4. Begin Lock-Down procedure. All exits monitored by staff members letting no one in or out of the building.
5. The staff member responsible for the child will call 911, since he/she will have the best knowledge of what the child was wearing that day, along with other distinctive features. The following information should be written down:
6. Child’s name, age, height, weight, date of birth, and hair color
7. Child’s clothing that he/she is wearing that day, along with any other identifying features
8. The time at which the child was noticed missing
9. If child abduction is suspected, were there any suspicious vehicles or persons located around the building? If so, what was the appearance of the person or vehicle?
10. The director will notify the parents or guardians of the child that the child is missing from the building
11. While the police are en-route to the building, the staff members will continue to search the facility for the missing child. The staff should look in every cabinet, closet, cubby, and every other location where a child may hide.
12. The director will stay on the premises at all times to be the contact person for the police department, as well as the missing child’s family.
13. The police should be asked to activate Amber Alert by the director.
14. The director will notify The Child Development Division

### **Medical Emergency**

The following information is a general response to injuries or illness that may present itself in the childcare facility. In every situation, staff members should evaluate the situation, and only address the situation when their safety is not compromised.

First Aid kits are located in every classroom and are taken with classrooms whenever they leave the building.

Listed below are some examples of conditions that are considered serious medical emergencies requiring immediate medical care by a health care professional. Call 911 and notify the child’s parent/guardian immediately for any of the following:

- Semi consciousness or unusual confusion
- Breathing difficulties including:

- Rapid, noisy breathing (barking, gurgling or crowing sounds, severe wheezing)
- Labored breathing (takes so much effort that child cannot talk, cry, drink, or play)
- Severe bleeding
- Unequal pupils
- First-time seizure or seizure lasting more than 15 minutes in a child with a known seizure disorder
- Injury that causes loss of consciousness
- Neck or back injury
- Continuous clear drainage from the nose or ears after a blow to the head
- Non-injury-related severe headache, stiff neck, or neck pain when the head is moved
- Hives that appear quickly, especially if hives involve face, lips, tongue, and/or neck
- Very sick-looking or sick-acting child who seems to be getting worse quickly
- Repeated forceful vomiting after eating in an infant under four months of age
- Severe abdominal pain without vomiting or diarrhea after a recent blow to the abdomen or hard fall
- Possible broken bones

An adult should apply appropriate first aid measures for all medical emergencies and minor illnesses or injuries as outlined in the publication received with approved First Aid Training. The parent/guardian of a sick or injured child should be contacted as soon as possible. The child should be taken to the hospital whenever a medical emergency exists, with prior approval from the parent/guardian on file.

1. The staff responsible for the child will employ first aid techniques as trained. This should only be done if the staff can do so safely
2. The other staff members will safely remove the other children from the area.
3. Call 911
4. The director should be notified of any major illnesses or injuries
5. The staff responsible for the child and/or the director will accompany the child
6. The child's parent/guardian will be notified
7. The staff member responsible for the child will document illness or injuries and treatments
8. The director will notify The Child Development Division

### **Shelter in Place**

Certain types of emergencies require staying inside the building. These emergencies would be accidental release of toxic chemicals, severe weather, or other emergencies where air quality is threatened. Local authorities would issue orders for shelter in place during chemical emergencies. Once this order has been issued, we would not leave our location until official notification is received that the danger has passed.

The following steps would be taken in the event of a shelter in place:

1. Staff members would in a calm orderly fashion move children to the shelter-in-place: The basement, door located in the front hall of the main building.
2. Staff members will take with them emergency backpacks and attendance sheets
3. Roll Call will be taken once everyone is in the safe space
4. If shelter-in-place is due to air quality the following steps will take place:
  - a. Heating and air conditioning units would be turned off and switch intakes moved to the "closed" position.
  - b. Gaps around windows and doors would be sealed.
  - c. Exhaust fans turned off.
  - d. Tape, plastic food wrapping, wax paper or aluminum foil would be used to seal exhausts, vents, and other openings to the outside.
  - e. Drapes, curtains and shades would be closed.

### **Recovering from an emergency**

- Recovery involves efforts to return the program, staff and children to a normal routing as soon as possible.

- The building would be inspected prior to re-entry to ensure the safety of staff and children.
- Program Staff will provide children with correct information regarding the emergency.
- Opportunities will be available for children and staff to talk about and share feelings regarding the emergency.
- In some cases, professional consultation would be warranted.
- The Child Development Division would be notified as soon as possible

## **OTTER CREEK CHILD CENTER HEALTH POLICIES**

Otter Creek's illness policies are the result of collaboration with local pediatricians and the guidance of the State of Vermont Early Childhood Licensing Regulations.

Children need to be able to participate in all center activities while they are here. If your child is too sick to play outside, then your child is too sick to be at the center and we require that you keep him or her home. If your child is sick and will be staying home, we ask that you call us by 9:00 a.m. so that we can plan for the day.

### **TAKING SICK CHILDREN HOME**

Should your child become ill or injured during the day, we will call you to come for him or her. If you plan to be out of town or away from your typical contact number, please leave the teachers an alternate way to reach you that day. If we cannot reach you, we will call the emergency persons you have given us. Therefore, it is essential that your emergency person know that this will be an expectation and be someone who is close by and able to take care of your child on short notice. You or your emergency person is expected to come ***within an hour*** to get your child.

### **HEALTH GUIDELINES**

The health and well-being of everyone at the center is of great concern to us. We follow recommendations of the Vermont State Licensing Regulations, which are available in the office or in each classroom.

A family must notify the center whenever the child has a communicable disease. **The center reserves the right to send a child home or to refuse to allow a child to remain at the center due to the condition of his or her health.**

**Fever:** A child having a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher must stay home until he or she has been fever-free for 24 hours; without being medicated. The teachers will take auxiliary temperatures using a digital underarm thermometer. If your child develops a fever while at the center, the teacher will contact you to pick him or her up. If a fever is somewhat above normal but lower than 100.4, the teacher will call to let you know, re-check the child in about an hour and then call again if the child still has a fever. If your child has a fever at home or is sent home with a fever, she or he may not return until they have been fever-free for 24 hours, without medication. If your child has been medicated and does not have a fever and the fever returns when medication wears off, your child is not fever free. A child who has been ill may look well and act well in the morning, but can become tired and develop symptoms by the afternoon. This policy protects your child from developing further infections when his or her system is already under stress.

An exception to the above statement will be considered by the center if the child has a fever of **100 degrees or less** from teething. It is very common for children to run a low-grade fever due to teething, and this will be taken into account if the child appears healthy. If the fever reaches 100.4 degrees, your child will be sent home.

There may be other times when a child does not have a fever but seems too sick to be at the center. In situations like this, the center reserves the right to send the child home and will contact you. Childcare is stressful and hard work for children, even more so when they are not feeling well. A child who may seem well at home may just not have the energy it takes to get through a day at Otter Creek.



**Antibiotics:** A child with a contagious condition for which antibiotics have been prescribed may not attend the center until he or she has been treated for 24 hours with this medication. Although ear infections are not contagious, if the child is uncomfortable or has a fever, the child should be kept at home until fever-free for 24 hours and feeling well enough to fully participate.

**Vomiting:** A vomiting child must stay home. The child will be sent home if he or she becomes ill while at the center. The child may not return until the vomiting has stopped for a 24-hour period.

**Diarrhea:** A child having three loose stools beyond what is normal for that child within a 24-hour period or a child having loose stools, persisting for more than 48 hours must stay home until he or she is symptom-free.

**Severe coughing:** A child whose cough is constant, causes difficulty in breathing (for example, causes the child to turn red or blue in the face), or is associated with breathing problems related to croup, whooping cough, asthma, or pneumonia, must stay home until the condition is taken care of.

**Conjunctivitis:** Conjunctivitis (“pink eye”) is an infection of the eye in which the white of the eye becomes pink or red and the eye produces a discharge. Conjunctivitis can be either bacterial or viral. Bacterial infections must be treated with an antibiotic. Viral infections will go away by themselves. Please see a doctor to distinguish which type your child has, otherwise the center will not allow the child to attend until he or she is symptom free. This is a highly contagious disease. A child with conjunctivitis may attend the center after being seen by a doctor and treated with antibiotics for 24 hours.

**Strep Throat:** A child with a strep infection may exhibit some of the following symptoms: sore throat, cold, runny nose, cough, fever, headache, stomachache, earache, and swollen lymph nodes in the throat and neck. The child must visit a doctor to be given antibiotics and follow the 24-hour period (see Antibiotics).

**Impetigo:** Impetigo is a common skin rash in children. The rash looks oozy, red, and round and may have a flat, honey-colored crust. The child must visit a doctor to be given antibiotics and follow the 24-hour period (see Antibiotics).

**Chickenpox, Roseola, etc.:** A child who has chicken pox may return to the center when all the sores are scabbed over. A child with roseola is no longer contagious once the rash appears and the fever is gone.

**Head Lice:** As in all schools, occasionally there may be outbreaks of head lice at the center. This is not an indication of poor hygiene, either at the home or at the center. In the event of such an outbreak, detailed instructions about how to deal with the problem will be distributed. Children who have had head lice can return to the center when they have been treated with a product specifically designed to get rid of head lice. Nits should be removed from the hair after treatment, as thoroughly as possible.

**Pinworms:** Pinworms are one of the most common intestinal parasites in children. Luckily, they are more of a nuisance than a problem. Symptoms can include itching around the anus, especially at night, restlessness, and irritability. If your child exhibits any of these symptoms, please see your doctor. A child who has had pinworms may return after 24 hours of treatment.

**Allergies:** Allergies are a frequent problem with young children. If your child has any known allergies, please fill out the appropriate questions on the Child Admission Form and discuss the allergy and reaction with your child’s teachers. In this way, we can do everything possible to ensure that your child does not come into contact with these substances while in our care. We will also know the course of action to take if he or she does.

**Injuries:** In the event of a minor mishap, teachers will administer basic first aid (cleaning, ice, tender loving care, and Band-Aids). Accident reports must be filled out for every injury requiring treatment and will be kept on file in your child’s folder in the office. In the event of a major accident, the rescue squad will be called. A teacher or the

Director will accompany your child to the hospital and wait until you arrive.

### **Special Medical Management**

Otter Creek needs to be made aware of all special health conditions that require special medical management. A Medical Plan of Action will be filled out and reviewed by all teachers before care can begin/continue. An adult trained in the procedure must be on-site whenever the child is present.

### **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICY**

Otter Creek Child Center is committed to providing safe access to necessary prescription and non-prescription medications in cooperation with a child's medical care provider and the child's family.

Children who experience short or more chronic (long-term) illness or conditions may need to receive prescription or non-prescription medication during the OCCC day. In order to provide a reliable structure for receiving, storing, and administering medications to young children, it is necessary for OCCC staff to demonstrate understanding of the standards of safe medication administration.

Whenever possible, families are encouraged to manage a child's medication doses at home (outside center attendance hours).

Families may choose to transport and administer doses of a child's medication during the childcare day. Families are encouraged to share with OCCC staff the reason a child is receiving medication.

Parent/Guardian Authorization: A Medication Administration Form (MAF) must be filled out and signed by the parent/guardian before OCCC will administer medication to a child. The information in the MAF must match the information provided on the medication bottle, either the prescription label or the non-prescription instructions.

The first dose of any medication a child receives should be administered by the family.

Prescription medications, administered at OCCC shall only be received in the original, pharmacy labeled container and shall include written documentation of the full prescription, including

- Child's name;
- Child's date of birth;
- Any medication allergies;
- Name of medication;
- Dose to be given;
- Time when medication is to be given;
- Route of administration (mouth, topically, inhaled, etc....);
- Reason for the medication;
- Start and end dates (if applicable) of the medication; and
- And special instructions.

The documentation may take the form of a completed pharmacy label. Optimally, written instructions from the physician office, signed by the physician, RNP, or PA will be included. Parent/family shall provide information regarding the reason the child is receiving the medication.

Non-prescription medications, when accompanied by written, signed instructions from the physician office, will be administered according to those instructions.

Non-prescription medications must be in their original manufacturer's container. The container should clearly display the expiration date and recommended dosing based on child age and/or weight.

Non-prescription medications- dose: OCCC staff will **NOT** administer doses that exceed label recommendations. If a physician prescribes a larger dose than label, the medication will be treated according to the policy for prescription medications after confirming the instructions with the physician office.

Documentation: OCCC staff will document a medication immediately after it has been given. Documentation will be kept in the child's OCCC record. Records will be kept on file at OCCC for 20 years.

Storage: Medications will be stored in a childproof cabinet or container. The storage space ideally will be locked.

Medications that have the potential to be misused will include a running total that is updated each time a dose is given and will be kept in a locked storage.

Prescription rescue medication, such as rescue inhalers, EpiPens, and seizure medication must be kept immediately accessible for use in cases of emergency.

Refusal: A child may refuse a medication dose. Staff will encourage the child to reconsider. No child will be forced to take medication. If refusal continues to more than one half hour past the scheduled dose time, the family will be notified and the refusal documented.

Medication Errors: There shall be a procedure to document a medication error. Errors may include:

- Wrong time
- Wrong dose
- Wrong child
- Wrong drug
- Refusal

Adverse Effect: There shall be a process for documenting and responding to a suspected adverse effect from a medication. Such effects may include:

- Rash
- Vomiting
- Lethargy, change in level of consciousness
- Problems breathing
- Confusion
- Uncoordinated movements

## **HEALTH RECORDS**

According to State of Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations, all children must have on file documentation of the child's age appropriate well care exam. Documentation shall include information regarding any health conditions and medications that may affect the care of the child.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

According to State of Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations, Otter Creek shall maintain documentation of all children's current immunization status. If a child is not immunized or under immunized the family must provide Otter Creek with documentation of Exemption or a Provisional Admittance Request from the child's doctor. Within 60 days, of the start of the school year, if Otter Creek does not have required immunization records, your child will be excluded until required documentation is provided.

If a vaccine-preventable disease occurs at the center, the parents of any under immunized children will be notified immediately and asked to remove their child. (An under immunized child is defined as a child who has not received the recommended number or types of vaccines for his or her age according to the current national and local immunization schedules.)

## **GREEN CLEAN POLICY**

Otter Creek is committed to maintaining a healthy environment for all children, teachers, and staff. Green cleaning products are used throughout the building for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting. Green Cleaning products clean as effectively as traditional products, while lessening harmful impacts on people's health and the environment. All cleaning products will also be scent free, to not impact air-quality for people with allergies or asthma. No aerosol sprays will be used; this includes sunscreen and bug spray provided by the families.

"Ten Reasons to have a green cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting program in your ECE facility" handout is hanging in all classrooms and is handout yearly with the enrollment paperwork.

## **Pesticide Policy**

We are dedicated to using the least amount of chemical pest control in our program in order to provide the healthiest environment possible for our children. As part of our curriculum, we teach children about nature and taking care of the environment, and so are dedicated to modeling healthy alternatives to chemicals. We attempt to PREVENT infestation by such methods as:

- Taking out trash daily or more as needed and cleaning cans regularly.
- Keeping trashcans or dumpsters covered and away from the building.
- Keeping grounds clean of food and rubbish.
- Storing food in sealed plastic or glass containers.
- Cleaning and sanitizing all dishes, utensils, and surfaces used for eating or food preparation after meals and at the end of the day.

We do not regularly apply any pesticides. Should there be a need to use a chemical pesticide as a last resort, (for wasp, yellow jacket, mouse or ant control for example); notification signs for applications shall be placed at the location of the application and at each entry point to the area being treated. Pesticides will be applied at the end of the day after children have left and will not be stored above or near food or cooking or eating utensils. Parents will be notified when pesticides are applied. Children will not touch or transport any pesticide or pesticide container. Pesticides with the signal words of "Danger", "Warning", or "Caution" will be kept in secured storage out of reach of children in a locked area and in accordance with any warnings that accompany the product.



**Otter Creek Child Center, Inc.**  
**CHILD AUTHORIZATION PICK UP FORM**

I hereby authorize \_\_\_\_\_, to pick up my child,  
\_\_\_\_\_, from Otter Creek Child Center  
on \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**Otter Creek Child Center, Inc.**  
**CHILD AUTHORIZATION PICK UP FORM**

I hereby authorize \_\_\_\_\_, to pick up my child,  
\_\_\_\_\_, from Otter Creek Child Center  
on \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





**Otter Creek Child Center Civil Rights Complaint Procedure**  
**“This institution is an equal opportunity provider.”**

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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)  
**NOTICE TO BENEFICIARIES AND PROSPECTIVE BENEFICIARIES**

Name of Organization: Otter Creek Child Center, Inc.

Name of Program: Otter Creek Child Center

Contact Information for Program Staff: Linda January, [linda@ottercreekcc.org](mailto:linda@ottercreekcc.org), 802-388-9688

Because this program is supported in whole or in part by financial assistance from the Federal Government, we are required to let you know that:

- (1) We may not discriminate against you on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice;
- (2) We may not require you to attend or participate in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) that are offered by our organization, and any participation by you in such activities must be purely voluntary;
- (3) We must separate in time or location any privately funded explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) from activities supported with direct Federal financial assistance; and
- (4) You may report violations of these protections, including any denials of services or benefits by an organization, by contacting or filing a written complaint with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Center for Civil Rights Enforcement, Program Complaint Division by mail, fax, or e-mail at:

**Mail:**

United States Department of Agriculture Director, Center for Civil Rights Enforcement 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20250-9410

**Fax:** (202) 690-7442

**Email:** [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

- (5) If you would like to seek information about whether there are any other federally funded organizations that provide these kinds of services in your area, please contact [INSERT State Administrative Agency contact information].

This written notice must be provided to you before you enroll in the program or receive services from the program, unless the nature of the service provided, or exigent circumstances make it impracticable to provide such notice before we provide the actual service. In such an instance, this notice must be provided to you at the earliest available opportunity.

<b>Community Resources</b>		
Early Education Services	Free screening and special education to children 3-5 with significant developmental delay(s)	ACSD- 802-388-2971 MAUSD- 802-453-3674 ANWSD- 802-877-2867 Rutland NE- 802-247-5757 Addison/Rutland- 802-537-2491 Windsor NW- 802-254-3742
Children's Integrated Services	Free developmental screening and special education for children birth to 3	(802) 388-3171
Governor's Highway Safety Program	Car seat Checks	1-888-TOT-SEAT
John Graham Shelter	Shelter/Food	802-877-2677
Hannaford Career Center (Automotive)	Car repair for low income drivers	802-382-1023
Head Start	A full service preschool program that offers center based or home based education for kids 3-5 years	802-388-9881
Health Department (WIC)	Nutritional food/milk for pregnant women and kids birth to 5 years/ Breast Pumps, Dr. Dynasaur	802-388-4644
Home Health		802-388-7259
HOPE Retro Works	Addison County Housing Solutions, loan funds, food shelf, clothes, furniture	802-388-3608
Legal Aid		1-800-889-2047
Lyon's Club	For vision and hearing needs	1-888-885-4667
Middlebury Teen Center		802-349-1790
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill		1-800-950-6264
Neat Repeats	Emergency assistance. Submit application Friday before 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month	802-388-4488
Neighbor Works	Home buying/credit/budgeting	802-438-2303
Office of Child Support		802-388-3146
Open Door Clinic		802-388-0137
Parent/Child Center	Home visits and/or on site programs	802-388-3171
Addison County Community Trust	Housing	802-877-2626
AA		802-388-9284
Tri-Valley Transit	Transportation to doctor apt. For people with Medicaid or Dr. Dynasaur.	802-388-2287
UVMHN Porter Women's Health	Female Health Care	802-388-6326
Addison County Court Clerk		802-388-7741
Addison County Family Court		802-388-4605
Addison County Victim's Advocate		802-388-7931
Addison County Court Diversion		802-388-3888
Boys and Girls Club of Vergennes		802-870-7199

Pregnancy Resource Center		802-388-7272
Community College of Vermont		802-388-3032
Child Care Subsidy	Helps with funding and cost of registered or licensed child care for income eligible parents who work, are looking for work, or in school/training	802-388-4304
Counseling Service of Addison County	Mental Health	802-388-6751 Crisis Line: 802-388-7641
Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity	Emergency back rent, fuel/utility assistance, and emergency food	802-388-2285 802-388-4802
Department of Children and Family Services (DCF)		802-388-4660 Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-649-5285
Dr. Dynasaur/Medicaid		1-800-250-8427
Economic Services	Health insurance, general assistance, fuel assistance, 3 Squares	1-800-479-6151
Planned Parenthood		1-800-230-PLAN
Porter Hospital		802-388-4701
Supervised Visitation Program		802-388-6783
VT State Housing Authority	Section 8	802-828-3295 802-388-1005
Vergennes Congregational Church	Emergency Food	802-877-2435
Vermont Adult Learning	Diploma/GED	802-388-4392
VSAC	Financial Aid	1-800-642-3177
Atria Collective (Women Safe)	Court Advocate/Support	802-388-4205
St. Ambrose Rectory Food Shelf	Emergency Food	802-343-8135 802-233-3561
Guardianship Services		802-388-5761
Laleche League	Information for mothers and pregnant women/breast feeding info	802-349-9084 802-453-3087
PIRC or Parent to Parent	Parent information and resources	1-800-639-7170
Minibury	Addison County Child focused events	minibury.com
Middlebury Rec Dept.		802-458-8015
Bristol Rec Dept.		802-453-5885
Vergennes Rec Dept.		802-877-1011
Pride Center of VT	The region's most comprehensive community center dedicated to advancing community and the health and safety of LGBTQ Vermonters.	802-860-7812
Dad Guild	Father Group	802-318-4231
Vermont Language Justice Project	Interpretation Services	802-734-4828

Office of Racial Equity & Community Inclusion	Community Ambassadors team, comprised of bi-/multi-lingual and trusted New American community members, have experience in outreach, organizing, educating, and advocating on behalf of New American community members,	802-860-1417
Migrant Justice	Organizing for economic justice and human rights!	802-540-8370