



Northwest Children's Learning Center

...An outreach of Northwest United Methodist Church

Parent Handbook

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NORTHWEST CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTER WELCOMES YOU AND YOUR FAMILY!!

Everyone is welcome! Northwest Children's Learning Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Northwest Children's Learning Center is to provide educational opportunities to promote a child's physical, social, mental, spiritual, and cognitive development in a nurturing and safe environment.

HISTORY

The Center was started in 1978 by a local resident with eight children enrolled with only one teacher. In 1981, the center became state licensed. Today, Northwest Children's Learning Center is licensed for 50 children ages one through six years or through Kindergarten and includes three activity rooms. Northwest Children's Learning Center is an outreach of Northwest United Methodist Church and is governed by a Board of Directors. The board consists of three parent representatives, one community member, five church members, the pastor of the church, and the director of the center.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Children learn best through hands on experiences. Their experiences at Northwest will incorporate using all their senses. Exploring through play is how children learn. This is called Active Learning.

The children's learning is supported through developmentally appropriate hands-on activities. Teachers plan these activities to include literacy, art, drama, science, math, social studies, and physical fitness.

We realize that each child is an individual and develops at different rates. We will work to identify his/her strengths and give assistance where needed (e.g. self help skills, self expression). Our learning environment, activities, and daily schedule will provide many opportunities for each child to grow at his/her own rate emotionally, spiritually, physically, cognitively, and socially.

HOME VISITATION

Northwest Children's Learning Center is honored to be a partner with you the parent(s) in the nurturing and education of your child(ren). We strongly believe in community building. There are many ways for us to build community with you and your family. One way is visiting you all in your home setting upon registration. It is a great opportunity to ask and answer any questions about the learning center policies and curriculum. It helps us to learn more about your family traditions, culture, and expectations for your child(ren).

APPROACH TO CHILD GUIDANCE

It is our policy to give guidance and teach each child respect for his/her self, others, and the environment around them. We know that children watch others surrounding them and imitate what they see and hear. It is our goal to be a positive role model, accepting and encouraging to each child.

Redirection, positive wording, and choices are used quite frequently if a child demonstrates challenging behavior. Redirection: A child willfully tears pages in a book. The teacher might say, "Books are for reading." "If you would like to tear something, you may tear up this paper" (the teacher would give the child some paper he/she could tear). Positive Wording: A child is running inside the building. The teacher might say, "walking legs" (instead of "don't run"). Choices: A child is pushing another child while walking to the rest room. The teacher gives the child a choice. "You may walk nicely by yourself or you may hold my hand". Problem Solving: Two children want the same toy. Our HighScope Curriculum encourages the use of six steps to resolving conflict and is supported by the teacher.

Steps in Resolving Conflicts

Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.

Place yourself between the children, on their level.

Use a calm voice and gentle touch.

Remain neutral rather than take sides.

Acknowledge children's feelings.

"You look really upset."

Let children know you need to hold any object in question.

Gather information

"What's the problem?"

Restate the problem.

"So the problem is..."

Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together.

"What can we do to solve this problem?"

Encourage children to think of a solution.

Be prepared to give follow-up support.

"You solved the problem!"

Stay near the children

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Positive Discipline for Preschoolers. Jane Nelson, Cheryl Erwin, Roslyn Duffy
Positive Discipline The First Three Years. Jane Nelson, Cheryl Erwin, Roslyn Duffy
Positive Discipline A-Z. Jane Nelson, Lynn Lott, H. Stephen Glenn
The Difficult Child. Stanley Turecki, M.D.
You Can't Come to My Birthday Party. Betsy Evans

SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAM

Northwest offers both part-time and full-time schedules for all age groups. Part-time schedules are available with a Monday/Wednesday/Friday or a Tuesday/Thursday schedule. We will be glad to accommodate an extra day on occasion if the need arises and space is available. Please make those arrangements ahead of time with the director.

SUMMER DAY CAMP PROGRAM

Northwest offers a recreational program for June and July for children one through eight years of age. Some of the activities may include tennis, soccer, gymnastics, and outside water play. Full-time and part-time schedules are available.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

To enroll your child in Northwest Children's Learning Center, please fill out a current form and return it to the office along with registration fee. Current families are given priority for each new session. New families are enrolled on a first come, first serve basis. Parents are notified by the director of enrollment status.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

The child care center opens at 7:00 A.M. and closes promptly at 5:00 P.M. For the safety of your child and to follow state licensing requirements, children must be signed in and out each day and a teacher should be made aware that your child has arrived or is leaving for the day. The sign-in books are located in your child's activity room and are used for emergency purposes in the event of a fire, storm, etc. When the parent is in the building, the parent is in charge of their child(ren). Teachers are only secondary when the parent is onsite.

Children will only be released to authorized people listed on your emergency contact/authorization pick-up list. We will check identification when an unknown person comes to pick up your child. If you wish someone else to pick up your child, please fill out a Child Release Authorization Form. Forms are located in the inside pocket of the Parent Sign In/Out Book in your child's activity room. Please hand the completed form to the teacher in charge. Parents arriving after 5:30 P.M. will be billed a late fee of \$25.00 for 15 minutes this late fee will be added to your weekly tuition.

Example for late fees: 5:31- 5:45 = \$25.00 ---- 5:46- 6:00 pm = additional \$25.00

In the event no one comes to pick up your child(ren) after closing time and we can not reach the parents, we will contact your authorized person(s) to come pick up your child(ren). If still no one is available to pick up your child(ren), then the law enforcement agency will be notified at 6:00 P.M.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Northwest Children's Learning Center has an open door policy. Parents are welcome to stop by and visit their child. Please feel free to read your child a book upon your arrival. It's a great way to set the tone for your child's day as well as promote literacy. Parent volunteers are always welcome! If you wish to volunteer in your child's activity room, eat lunch or have snack with your child, please come. It is helpful to notify the director in advance of your coming as we want to make it the best experience for all and spread out the volunteers in order not to overwhelm the children.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Please inform the office if your child is to be absent or arriving later than his/her usual scheduled time. Tuition rates still apply to all absences including family vacation days due to ongoing expenses.

ILL CHILDREN/EXCLUSION

Parents are asked to keep child(ren) home if he/she is ill. Examples of illnesses include but not limited to: Diarrhea, vomiting, fever of 100 or higher, persistent cough, thick nasal discharge, conjunctivitis (pink eye) or an unexplained rash. Please keep your child home for the day if any of the above occurred during the night. If your child is too ill to participate in outside play activities while at the center, the child is too sick to attend that day.

If your child becomes ill while at the center, he/she will be isolated from other children and the parents are notified immediately. Parents will be asked to make arrangements for prompt pick up of their child. Your child may return to our center with doctor's written approval or after 24 hours from the time they were sent home providing there are no reoccurring or new symptoms.

MEDICATION

Northwest Children's Learning Center may administer prescription medication that is in the original container bearing the original label with the child's name, date, doctor's name, and directions of use on it. Nonprescription medication such as children's aspirin, cough medicine, diaper ointments, etc. may only be administered with written authorization from a physician

stating directions for use, date, child's name, and physician's name and signature. All medications must be signed in daily in the Director's Office. These are state regulations; no exceptions will be made.

CIVIL RIGHTS - USDA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT 12/09/2022

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/ad-3027.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:

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND SNACKS

Northwest Children's Learning Center offers breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Breakfast is served from 8:00 – 9:30 a.m. Lunch is served to the toddlers beginning at 11:15 am and the Preschool Children are served around at 12:15. Afternoon snacks are served when children awake from resting after using the restroom facilities.

Weekly menus are posted on the Parent Information Board and on our website. All menus are approved by the state as we participate in the Child Adult Care Food Program.

All food preparation is done in our kitchen. Teachers sit and eat with the children, which provides excellent role modeling and stimulates conversation. Children are encouraged to taste

the different foods being served. Often children discover they do indeed like something they had previously turned down.

Children are welcome to bring a commercially prepared, sealed, nutritious snack to share with their class. Examples of appropriate snacks include natural cheese, fresh fruit, granola bars, 100% fruit juice Popsicles, or yogurt. As some children have food allergies, we request that snacks be limited to the above. (Please do not bring candy, gum, pop, or nuts). Please check with your child's teacher to find out how many children are in your child's activity room.

MEAL PLANS

Children ages 1-2 will be served Whole Milk. Children ages 2-6+ will be served 1% White milk. Silk/ Soy milk is served as a milk substitute.

Allergy and Special Dietary needs are met on an individual basis.

FOOD FROM HOME (1/2023)

With an increasing number of children arriving with food, breakfast and an early morning snack it is necessary to provide the guidelines in which NCLC has established to accommodate this practice.

Currently we have children that have severe food allergies (eggs, peanuts, products containing wheat) and food intolerances that if exposed to or they consume food containing allergens, could jeopardize their wellbeing while at the center. The following guidelines and expectations will be practiced in order to ensure a safe and healthy environment for ALL children.

Food products: must be in original packaging

Beverages: must be in a cup that has a lid or original packaging.

NO - candy, gum, home baked goods,

All food and beverages can either be consumed in the car before entering the building OR all children bringing in food and beverages must be accompanied by their parent to the restroom to wash their hands.

Then All children must be accompanied by their parent to the KITCHEN where they can eat and drink the items brought from home.

Please note that no child can be left unattended in the kitchen. Before parents leave the kitchen, a staff member MUST be within the kitchen area.

BIRTHDAY TREATS

If you wish to bring in a birthday treat for your child's birthday, we will gladly accept it. Please see above snack guidelines. You may check with your child's teacher to find out how many children are in your child's activity room.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

Please dress your child(ren) in clothing that is easy for him/her to manage and will not be a hindrance in his/her play activities. We encourage a lot of sensory play with paints, clay, and other messy items. Vinyl smocks are available for the children, yet somehow clothing still gets dirty. Tennis shoes are recommended due to climbing and running throughout the day.

OUTSIDE PLAYTIME

Children play outside at least twice daily. Running, climbing, and jumping are great ways for their large muscles to develop. During the summer months, we ask that parents provide a swimsuit (or swimmers for toddlers), towel, and water shoes for outside water play. During cold weather, parents are asked to provide two pairs of mittens (age 1 & 2) or two pair of gloves (age 3, 4, 5, & 6), hat, coat and snow pants. Please label all outside clothing so it can be found easily if lost. We will keep the children inside when the temperature (including wind chill factor) is below 25 degrees. Children will have opportunities when it is extremely cold to still stretch and move their large muscles through exercising, jumping, throwing bean bags, etc. to mention a few things planned indoors.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

A Parent Information Board is located in the entrance hallway to the center. There are many resources for you on the board such as current personnel photos, weekly menus, postings of family-friendly events in the community, along with the required state postings for the center. Current issues of Young Children and Parent's Magazine are available for you to borrow, read, and return. Parent communication and tuition statements will be distributed on your child's sign-in sheet. A monthly newsletter is sent home from your child's teacher. The newsletter will inform you about what has been happening in your child's activity room and of the center's upcoming events.

Information will also be posted in your child's activity room by the sign-in area. Parent Teacher Conferences are schedule twice during the year with your child's teacher. Parent questions, concerns, or comments are always welcomed. Please remember the teachers are to be engaged with the children, and it may be necessary to schedule a time with the teacher outside the activity room.

IN-HOUSE PRESENTATIONS

All children will have the opportunity to experience a variety of in-house presentations. Presenters may include but are not limited to: a fire fighter and truck, dentist, special guest readers, musicians, and animals from the zoo.

CHAPEL

Children gather together weekly for a Bible Story and to sing praise songs followed by a short prayer led by a church member. The children say prayer before meals daily.

TUITION POLICY

Tuition rates are determined by your child's age, at the time of their enrollment and remains the same until the next enrollment period.

Tuition rates are billed monthly according to your child's schedule and statements are issued at the end of the month on your child's cubby. You may pay your tuition weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. Payment arrangements will be made at the time of your acceptance into our center. A late fee of \$10.00 will be added to your account for tuition payments not received as agreed upon with the director. A locked tuition box is located directly inside the entrance door for your convenience. A \$20.00 fee will be added to your account for all returned checks for non-sufficient funds.

Parents, from time to time, may experience difficulty making their weekly tuition. Please contact the office promptly so that an agreement for the payments may be arranged.

CHILD CARE VOUCHERS

Northwest Children's Learning Center is pleased to be enrolled in the Child Care Voucher Program. Child Care Vouchers are awarded from the State to low income families who qualify for tuition assistance. Please contact the Director for further information.

FUND RAISERS

Fund raisers help supplement tuition. Scholastic Book Orders are offered monthly along with a book fair in October. Fundraisers include but are not limited to: Trivia Night, Cheese Balls, Port-A-Pit Chicken, Book Fair etc. Scholastic Book Orders are offered monthly during the School Year Program. Information is sent home prior to all fundraisers. We appreciate your support.

SERVICES

Hearing and Speech Screenings are available during the school year. This service is provided by community professionals at a minimal charge to parents. Parents will be notified of these screenings in advance and parental permission is necessary prior to the screenings.

Individual and Class Photos will be offered in the fall. More information will be sent home prior to Picture Day.

Parent Workshops are held throughout the school year. Workshops are one night a week usually for 4-6 weeks in length and are led by local professionals. Information on topics and dates will be made available prior to their offerings.

ADJUSTING TO NORTHWEST CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTER

It is typical for children to have some hesitations about a new environment even if it isn't their first group experience. A good analogy is to think about what it is like to start a new job. There are some things that are helpful to ease the transition from home to school. Be positive and reassuring about the day, teachers, friends, and activities. It is good to have a set routine upon your arrival.

- Hang up your child's jacket
- Signing in and greeting the teacher and some of the other friends
- Trip to the rest room and wash hands
- A positive comment for a good day: I can't wait to hear about your day when I return
- A reminder to them of when you will be back, along with a hug and kiss from you

Predictable routines are very reassuring to a child, but sometimes will not stop the tears. The teacher can assist you at this point if you request it. One helpful hint is to kiss your child's palm and let them know if they need a kiss from mom or dad during the day, it is right there in his/her hand. Please be assured if your child does not calm down, we will call you. Also, please feel free to call and check on your child at any time.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Franklin Goes to School. Paulette Bourgeois
When Mommy and Daddy Go To Work. Joanna Cole
I'd Rather Stay With You. Charlotte Steiner
Will I Have a Friend. Miriam Cohen
The Kissing Hand. Audrey Penn

REQUIRED FORMS

All paperwork must be completely filled out and returned prior to your child's first day and yearly thereafter.

Physical exam-children are required to have a physical 30 days prior to enrollment (If your child is under two years of age, a second physical is required by their 2nd birthday).

Toddler Feeding Form (for children under 24 months)

Immunization Records-you will be asked to keep them updated on a regular basis.

Birth Certificate-we will make a copy & return immediately.

General Information Form

Emergency Contact Information Form

Licensed Child Care Consent Form

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CAFCP) Application and Consent Forms

Parent Handbook Form

Sunscreen Form

WHAT TO BRING ON YOUR CHILD'S FIRST DAY

A snap shot of your child for your child's cubby

An extra set of seasonal clothing, shirt, pants, socks, and underwear.

A box of Kleenex to share

A box of crayons (Please provide the large ones)

A bottle of washable glue

Resting items-a small blanket and small pillow (Please take home weekly to launder and return)

Preschoolers – A pair of child sized scissors

ONE & TWO YEAR OLDS

Parents provide diapers/pull-ups. According to state guidelines, diapers and pull-ups are to be brought in unopened packages. Please label the package with your child's name. The teachers will advise you when your diaper/pull-up supply is getting low. If your child has a pacifier, please label it. The teaching staff will sanitize it daily. We are not licensed to give/use baby bottles.

SCREEN TIME

NCLC Staff recognizes the importance of quality experiences that are developmentally appropriate. Based on research and expertise from the medical, educational and developmental fields NCLC has implemented a Zero Screen Time Policy. While children are at the center others means beyond: computers, tablets and television will be used as teaching tools.

DONATIONS

Northwest Children's Learning Center is glad to accept and appreciates any and all donations to our program (monetary or educational equipment/supplies). We are always in need of gently used underwear, socks, bathing suits, snow pants, jackets, hats, mittens, boots and shoes. This allows us to have a few extras on hand just in case someone does not have extra clothes or has forgotten his/her outside clothing.

During the Holiday season, children and parents often wish to give their teacher a gift. We would like to suggest an alternative. Instead of a gift for your child's teacher, we would like to suggest a gift for your child's activity room in the form of an educational item (example: books, puzzles, games, CD's, etc.) For your convenience, in November, an Activity Room Wish List will be available from your child's teacher. We do not want anyone to feel obligated, but would like to offer this as an alternative. All items are tax deductible.

ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTING

Accidents, both minor and major or incidents resulting in injury to a child shall be reported on the day of the incident, in writing, to the parent or person authorized to pick up the child. The written report shall be prepared by the staff member who observed the incident or accident, and will include a general description of the incident and of the action taken, if any, including first aid, by the NCLC personnel. The family receives a copy of the accident or incident report. A duplicate copy of the report will be kept in the child's file.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

A cornerstone of our philosophy is building relationships among families and teachers. There are times however when differing opinions or questions may arise. If this occurs families need to meet with the staff to discuss the issue and try to resolve difficulties together. If there is no resolution, parents and/or teachers should contact the Director for additional assistance. If the Director is unable to resolve the issue, then families may forward the grievance to the NCLC Board of Directors. The Parent Representatives who are elected to the NCLC Board of Directors serve as a liaison for families to the NCLC Board of Directors.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information regarding children or families of the Northwest Children's Learning Center is regarded as confidential and the property of NCLC and the family involved, including individual child assessment information. Requests for release of information to other agencies will be honored only if made in writing and with the permission from the parent/legal guardian.

WITHDRAWAL

If you wish to withdraw from our program, please put your request in writing. A two week written notice is required. For your convenience, a final statement will be issued. You are responsible for paying for the last two weeks tuition. Your final tuition is due on the next Monday after your withdrawal notice is received.

CLOSING PROCEDURES DUE TO POOR WEATHER CONDITIONS

Northwest Children's Learning Center closings due to snow or other poor weather conditions are announced on the 6:00 A.M. news on WNDU, Channel 16 and/or WSBT Radio, 960 AM, 101.5 FM. As long as we have heat, electricity, running water, and staff, the center will make every effort to remain open. On occasion a one hour delay due to poor weather conditions may be necessary. Please know that sometimes it will be necessary to close. Again, please follow the broadcasts for updated information.

OTHER CLOSINGS

Northwest Children's Learning Center is closed on the following days: Good Friday, Memorial Day, July 4th (or the Monday after), Labor Day, and Thanksgiving plus that Friday. The center is closed for 2 weeks in December/January for Winter Break. Our Winter Break is the same as South Bend Community School Corporation. Tuition rates still apply for all closings except the two week Winter Break. You are not billed for Winter Break.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Fire Drills and Storm Drills are conducted monthly for all age groups. If it is necessary to move the children to another location due to an emergency, parents will be notified.

Fire: In case of fire and if it becomes necessary to move the children to the church on the corner of Brick and Portage Roads, Abundant Life Fellowship Church. Parents will be notified.

Floods: Northwest Children's Learning Center is above the flood zone in the area.

Earthquake: If necessary, children will be moved to another location.

Nuclear Attack and/or Hazardous Material: Civil Defense will move the population in the designated "risk area" to Marshall and Fulton counties.

Physical threats made inside or outside the child care facility are taken seriously. We will call 9-1-1 and seek advice on how to handle the situation.

Personnel are trained to take flashlights, cell phones, weather radio, and attendance books with them in all cases of emergencies.

SMOKING, ALCOHOL, ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES, AND FIRE ARMS

Northwest Children's Learning Center prohibits smoking, the use of alcohol or illegal substances, or the possession of fire arms. Children will not be released from the center to anyone suspected of intoxication or impaired due to other illegal substances. In this event, we will call another person you have designated to pick up your child(ren). If deemed necessary, a law enforcement agency will be summoned.

SAFETY POLICY

Northwest Children's Learning Center provides a safe environment for our children and families.

Our entry is kept locked at all times. A buzzer is provided for entry.

No spanking is allowed from NCLC personnel or parents on the premises.

No smoking, drugs, or weapons allowed on the premises.

Inappropriate language will not be tolerated.

REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The entire staff of Northwest Children's Learning Center is trained and retrained annually regarding and recognizing the warning signs of child abuse and neglect. The director is required to report any case of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Call for help 2-1-1 Need help or information about food, shelter, housing, health care, counseling, clothing, education or visit www.in211.org

Basic Needs (Child Welfare, Early Intervention-Special-Education Screening & Assessment, Child Care Subsidy)

Child Protective Services 574-232-3042

Community Coordinated Child Care (Child care referrals) 574-289-7815

Housing Authority of the City of South Bend (Public housing) 574-235-9346

KV Voucher Office (Child care voucher) 574-233-7985

First Steps of North East Indiana 574-293-2813

(Serving Children with special needs ages 0-3) 1-866-725-2398

S.N.A.P.-South Bend Community Schools 574-283-8130

(Serving children with special needs ages 3 & older)

Health (Oral Health, Nutrition, Health)

Indiana Poison Control Center – 1-800-222-1222

Pediatrician- Dr. George Horvath, MD (NCLC consulting physician) 574-233-7337
Dentist-Dr. David Fishbaugh, DDS, MS (NCLC consulting dentist) 574-273-8393
Angel Food Ministries – 574-291-4141
Logan Center (Resource for people with disabilities) 574-289-4831
IN Source (Indiana resource center for families with special needs) 574-234-7101
Children’s Dispensary (Resource Center for children ages 5-20 with special needs)
574-234-1169
Hearing and Speech Center at United Health Services 574-234-3136

Mental Health (Parenting Programs)

Samaritan Counseling Center (family and individual counseling) 574-277-0274
Oaklawn (Residential and out-patient mental health services) 574-533-1234
SOPHIA Group (Parent workshops, counseling services) 574-280-8199

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact the director, Vicki Dennis with any questions or concerns, in the office or by phone at (574)272-4971 or email nclc1978@gmail.com.

Thank you for considering Northwest Children’s Learning Center for your child.

...Northwest Children’s Learning Center is an outreach of Northwest United Methodist Church.