

River Hills Early Childhood Center

Parent Handbook

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River Hills Early Childhood Center

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Burnsville, MN 55337

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The mission of River Hills Early Childhood Center is to offer a loving, nurturing Christian environment for children to learn and grow.

Our philosophy is to create a safe and nurturing environment for children to explore and develop by providing a Christian based curriculum implemented through a variety of learning centers.

Licensure

River Hills Early Childhood Center is open year round, Monday through Friday, from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM. There will be no more than 9 infants with one qualified teacher for every four children; no more than 14 toddlers with at least one qualified teacher for every 7 children; no more than 35 preschoolers with at least one qualified teacher for every 10 children; and no more than 15 children enrolled in the Kindergarten program with at least one qualified teacher for a total of 73 children throughout the center.

River Hills Early Childhood Center is licensed by the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division. The licensing division may be contacted at (651) 296-3971 should you have any questions and/or concerns.

All staff of River Hills Early Childhood Center are qualified as Directors, teachers, assistant teachers, or aides. These qualifications are defined by the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division.

Staff development is ongoing, with participation in classes, workshops, and seminars as required by the Licensing Division.

Child Care Program Plan

A copy of the child care program plan is available in the office for review at any time.

Admission

Infants must be 6 weeks old before starting in our infant program. They are considered an infant until they are 16 months old or developmentally ready to begin in the toddler program. Toddlers are 16 months old when starting the toddler program and are considered preschoolers at the age of 33 months. We have two preschool rooms; one for three year olds and one for four year olds, as well as an all day academic Kindergarten. We accept children of all races, creeds, color, national origin, or religion. Parents of children with special physical, emotional, intellectual, or social needs should contact the director to discuss the feasibility of incorporating the child into the program. A trial period may be in order.

Fee Policy

A registration fee of \$100 is required in order for you to reserve a place for your child at RHECC. This fee not only reserves a place for your child but also covers enrollment processing and insurance. Half of this fee is applicable to the first week's tuition. Kindergarten students have an additional one-time fee for curriculum and supplies.

There is no adjustment made in tuition on days when the center is closed. ***This includes holidays*** (please check with the director for exact dates). There is also no adjustment made in tuition because of a child's absence from school for any reason, including illness and vacation.

Tuition Payment

Tuition payments are due by Friday at 6:00 PM for the upcoming week. If tuition is not received by then, a \$5.00 late fee will be assessed to your account. An additional \$5.00 will continue to be assessed to your account for every day that it is late until the full payment has been made. There are no exceptions to this policy unless prior arrangements have been made between the parent and the director. All returned checks will be subject to a \$20.00 charge.

Please make all checks payable to River Hills Early Childhood Center (RHECC). A box will be available for payment drop-off. *PLEASE make sure to note your child's name on the check.* Children will not be allowed to begin without their registration and first week's tuition paid.

If at any time tuition is not paid, the center reserves the right to terminate the child's enrollment.

Arrival, Departure, and Attendance

Children **must** be accompanied by the parent or another adult to and from the classroom. For the safety of everyone in the center, everyone should **walk** down the halls. Other children are not permitted to bring or pick up children from RHECC.

Safety factors make it imperative that teachers release children only to parents or other adults approved by the parent. Anyone other than the parents who are authorized to pick up the child **MUST** be in the child's file along with a driver's license number and phone number for identification purposes. RHECC keeps a permanent record of authorized adults with whom a child may leave in the form of Pick-up sheets. It is preferred that parents leave a signed and dated note with the name of the person who will be picking up. This eliminates confusion and hassle for all involved. If this is not possible and a parent must call during the day to authorize a different pick up person, the family password would then be required.

Children must be picked up and out of the building no later than 6:00 PM or late fees of \$1 per minute will be assessed. If a child is left at the center and is not picked up by 7:00 PM, and attempts to reach parents or other contacts have been unsuccessful, the Burnsville Police Department will be called to pick up the child.

It is mandatory for your child's safety that you sign your child in and out every day. This is our record of who is and isn't here in an emergency situation. Also, if your child will be absent or later than usual we ask that you call and notify your child's teacher if possible.

Withdrawals

If you find that it is necessary to withdraw your child at any time, we require 2 weeks notice or 2 weeks tuition. This will enable us to enroll other children from the community. If it is decided that RHECC is unable to meet the needs of your child and/or family every attempt will be made to give you a 2-week notice to find and make other child care arrangements.

HEALTH

Health Care Consultant

RHECC has a contracted Health care consultant who does a monthly visit to the center.

Health Care Summary

In accordance with state regulations, all children attending RHECC must have a physical examination as indicated on the Health Care Summary. This form must be completed by your child's source of medical care and returned **WITHIN 15 DAYS AFTER ENROLLMENT AND AFTER EACH TIME YOUR CHILD MOVES UP TO THE NEXT AGE LEVEL (OR CLASS)**. If this is not returned during the 15 day period, your child will not be allowed to return to the center until the Health Care Summary has been filled in and returned.

Immunizations

RHECC must have current record of your child's immunization on file before your child may be in attendance at the center. Please be sure to let us know, with a note from the physician, when your child has received an immunization, so that we may update our records.

Special Needs

Parents are asked to please specify in writing any health problems, allergies, or special diet needs their child may have that requires special attention at school. A diet statement is required from your physician if your child requires food alternatives.

All parents must fill out an Information Form before their child may start the center. This gives the staff important information that is vital to your child's care while at RHECC.

Any children with special needs must provide the center with an IEP for the child's file.

Illness

Children should be well enough to be in close contact with other children and participate fully in the daily program (including outdoor play!). Parents are asked to keep their children out of school if the child currently has, or has had within the last 24 hours, a fever of 100 degrees or higher (Axillary)(before fever reducing medication), vomiting or diarrhea (defined as more than three abnormally loose stool per day), **any** sign of rash (other than diaper rash) unless diagnosed by a doctor to be harmless to others, or inflammation of their eyes, ears, or throat. Parents are also asked to keep their child at home if (s) he is not able to participate in normal daily activities.

If a child develops these symptoms or other indications of illness while at the center, (s) he will be separated within the classroom and kept as comfortable as possible until the parent can get to the center. Parents or those designated as persons to be contacted in case parents cannot be reached, should come to the center to get an ill child **within one hour or sooner** of being contacted by the child's teacher to minimize the spread of disease and maximize the child's comfort. Parents who are not able to stay home with ill children should make prior arrangements for alternative care of their children when ill. Parents will be notified if their child has been exposed to a communicable disease by a posting of the disease on the classroom door. A copy of the posting is available from the office if desired.

Parents **must** report to the director within 24 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays, when their child has been diagnosed by his physician as having a contagious **reportable** disease as specified by the state, such as E. Coli, encephalitis, giardiasis, hepatitis (all viral types), lyme disease, infectious meningitis, rabies, shigellosis, trichinosis, or tuberculosis. If a child contracts a communicable disease, parents must keep the child home for the appropriate exclusion period. All parents will be notified when a child in the group has contracted a communicable (contagious) disease.

The exclusion periods for common diseases are:

- **Bacterial Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)** – Until discharge from the infected eye ceases or until 24 hours after treatment has started.
- **Chickenpox** – Until **all** blisters have scabbed over.
- **Diarrhea** – Until child has been free of diarrhea for a full 24 hours
- **Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease** – Until fever is gone and all blisters have scabbed over.
- **Impetigo** – Until child has been treated with antibiotics for at least a full 24 hours
- **Lice** – Until first treatment is completed and all nits have been completely removed from the child's hair.
- **Oral Herpes (cold sores)** – Children who do not have control of oral secretions, must be excluded as long as active sores are present inside the mouth. No exclusion is necessary for mild oral herpes in children who are in control of their mouth secretions.
- **Pinworms** – Until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- **Ringworm** – Until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- **Streptococcal Sore Throat and/or Scarlet Fever** – 24 hours after treatment begins and child is without fever (without the aid fever reducers) for 24 hours.
- **Yeast Infection (Thrush)** – no exclusion necessary **UNLESS** an unusual number of children are infected.

Please remember that children who have been ill may not return to the center until they are no longer contagious and are ready to participate in the full program.

Medications

There are times when a child will require medication. Prescription medication must be in its original container and be current. Medication will not be administered without a signed consent form from the parent and an instruction sheet that matches the prescription label. These forms are available in the reception area. Please be sure to mention this to your child's teacher personally to insure that the medication is administered properly. Please give the medication to the teacher so that they may store it properly.

Over the counter medication may be given without a doctor's note, if it is given according to package instructions and dosage. Please note that most over the counter medications do not specify a dosage until the age of three. If the medication does not specify the dosage you must have a current dosage note from your physician. This note must be signed and dated, and must be updated at least every six months. You may keep teething gel and ointments in the center, and these types of topical medications can be administered with parents' permission and signature. Please ask your child's teacher or an administrator for a medication form if you need one.

You will be asked to sign a release on the emergency card, giving the center permission to administer Syrup of Ipecac. This will be done only after consultation with Poison Control.

Injuries, Emergencies and Insurance

All of our teachers have training in first aid and infant/child CPR and SIDS. In the event that your child receives a minor injury (bump, bruise, or abrasion) at the center, first aid will be administered by a qualified caregiver. An accident report will then be made out and a copy will be sent home with the child and the original will go in his/her permanent file. This form must be signed by the teacher, an administrator, and the parent.

In case of a serious injury, the parents and/or doctor will be contacted immediately. In the event that we cannot contact the child's parents or doctor, we shall use the services of Fairview Ridges Hospital.

The statement on the Emergency Card gives RHECC authorization to take whatever emergency medical measures deemed necessary for the care and protection of your child. This statement must be signed and returned before the child may enter the program.

Commercial multi-peril insurance is carried by River Hills United Methodist Church through Assured Protection Incorporated (GuideOne Insurance). This includes liability insurance with a limit of \$1,000,000 per occurrence. Children will not be transported at any time by River Hills United Methodist Church or any staff member of RHECC for emergency purposes.

SAFETY

Fire and Weather

River Hills Early Childhood Center has written plans and procedures for fire and weather emergencies. All staff and children are required to participate in monthly fire drills and, during warm weather, tornado and weather emergency drills. These procedures are posted in all rooms and in the reception area.

Center Closings

Should it become necessary to close the center due to poor weather conditions, a decision will be made before 6:00am by the center Director. We will use Burnsville School District #191 and Rosemount/Apple Valley/Eagan School District #196 as a source of information, **but we will not necessarily close on the days that they do**. Should the decision be made to close or have a late start due to poor weather and road conditions the announcement will be called into WCCO 830 AM and made as soon as possible. There will not be a refund in tuition unless the number of center closings exceeds 5 days in a row. Should this occur, one week's tuition will be credited to your account.

Transportation

All arrangements concerning the transportation of children to and from the center is the responsibility of the parents. You are responsible for the safety of your child before (s) he arrives and after your arrival in the evening. Please do not leave other children in the car unattended while you are bringing your child into or out of the building.

WELFARE

Clothing and Supplies

Parents are asked to provide ***two complete changes of clothing*** for their children, including shirts, pants, socks, and underwear. Bibs and paint shirts will be provided and used for messy activities and meals in the younger rooms. It is ***imperative*** that you label all of your child's clothing ***prominently*** with his/her name in the event that they should get accidentally mixed up.

Parents of children who wear diapers must supply an ample amount of both diapers and wipes for their child each day. You may bring in a large package of diapers, wipes, and your choice of diaper rash ointment, which must be marked with your child's first and last name and stored at the center. You will be informed when your supply is running low.

Children of all ages are required to go outside weather permitting. Therefore, clothing should be suited to the weather. Hats, gloves or mittens, coats, snowsuits, and boots should be available to the child during cold weather months. If you wish to have your child to use sunscreen, you will need to provide it and fill out a permission slip.

Please keep in mind that children's clothing may get soiled throughout the day.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Good communication between home and the center is very important. Parents will be kept informed of their child's activities during the day, in the form of a daily care report. This will include sleeping, eating, and playing patterns, as well as a diaper and potty log for those who are not potty trained yet. Please feel free to talk to your child's teacher when you pick up or drop off your child, should you have any questions or concerns.

Parent/teacher conferences will be offered twice a year. At this time the teacher will cover your child's development in the areas of intellectual, physical, social and emotional development. There will be a sign up sheet for these conferences posted for you to sign up at a convenient time.

Parents are welcome in the center any time during the hours of operation.

Food

RHECC participates in the Federal Child and Adult Food Program. If a child is not able to follow the food patterns set forth by the program then parents must have a diet statement filled out specifically and signed by a physician for the child's file.

"In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint, write USDA, Director, Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 707-5964 (Voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

RHECC does not permit peanut butter in the center due to allergies.

Infants

Parents of infants are asked to provide bottles that are already mixed and filled, along with any other cereal, baby food, table food, etc. that you wish for your child to have if you do not wish to use the formula and food provided by the center. RHECC will provide iron fortified formula, jarred baby food, and rice cereal. If parents choose to use these items they need only to provide the bottles. A snack will be served in the morning and afternoon. Please be sure to label all bottles and food with first and last name.

Once your child begins eating our hot lunch menus will be provided. Substitutions for some foods will be made if deemed inappropriate for young children (i.e. salad) and food will be cut into bite sized portions.

A crock-pot is used for heating water to warm breast milk bottles or formula bottles. Food and bottles are always checked by shaking, stirring, and testing to eliminate hot spots. Lunch, is served around 11:00am.

Toddlers and Preschoolers

The center will provide a breakfast, lunch and two snacks daily. A menu will be posted in the center and sent home to inform all parents of their child's meals. All meals and snacks follow the USDA guidelines and are subject to change. Breakfast is served only until 8:00am. Should your child need breakfast after 8:00, we ask that you feed him/her at home before arriving.

Rest time

Infants

There are no scheduled nap times for infants. Naps are taken whenever they are needed. We supply the sheets and blankets for their cribs. Parents may bring a special blanket or nap toy from home if they wish. All Infants are placed on their backs for sleeping to reduce the risk of SIDS.

Toddlers and Preschool and Kindergarten

Toddlers and preschoolers have one rest time per day. They will each have a cot or mat and a parent supplied blanket. (If your child has a special soft sleep toy or blanket, please bring it, but let your child know that it is a special nap toy/blanket only to be used at naptime.) The lights are dimmed and soft music is played to help with relaxation. Teachers help children to relax by rubbing backs and tucking children in. Sleep is encouraged but not required and the children who are awake after the thirty minute period must be allowed to get up and do quiet activities such as looking at books or playing with soft blocks or toys. Your child's teacher keeps a daily record of each child's resting and sleeping times.

Toilet Training

Children vary developmentally. No one but you and your child will know when (s) he will be ready for toilet training. The staff at RHECC will help to train children in cooperation with the parents.

The center will help your child to learn to use the toilet. Reminders will be given to children who may have lost track of time or may be too involved in play.

Pets

Classroom pets, such as gerbils, hamsters, and goldfish, may at times be present in the classroom. Parents will be notified in the event of any pets to be kept in the classroom. Administration must approve visits to school by a family pet, such as dogs, cats, etc., and proof of immunizations must be made available.

Photographs

Occasionally photos are taken of the children in the classrooms and while on field trips for classroom use as well as within River Hills United Methodist Church, flyers, and newsletters for the center. Please refer to the photo permission and release form in the enrollment package.

Research

Should a situation arise that would involve the use of children in River Hills Early Childhood Center for a research project or experimental procedure, no child would be included in the procedure without the written consent of his or her parent or guardian.

Center Cleanliness

The center is cleaned daily throughout each day using a commercial cleaning solution and sanitized using a Quat sanitizer. Sanitizing is also done using a commercial sanitizer machine on a regular basis.

All staff of River Hills Early Childhood Center follows the Department of Human Services as well as the State Health Department's procedures for hand washing and diapering.

Diaper Bags and School Bags

Children are allowed to bring a bag from home to keep their extra clothing and nap items if they choose. These bags may not contain diapering ointments, medications, food (including candy), money, etc.

Toys from Home

We ask that children do not bring in toys from home except for soft toys for rest time and when designated by the teacher for special events such as share day. If toys are brought in teachers will put them away until pick up to prevent loss or damage to the items.

Reporting Abuse

All staff of River Hills Early Childhood center are mandated to report suspected abuse and neglect.

Grievance Procedure

Should a grievance arise, parents are asked to first discuss the situation with their child's teacher who will attempt to resolve the situation. If the grievance remains unresolved, parents should then discuss the matter with an administrator and a plan for dealing with the problem will be discussed and agreed upon

Please always feel free to discuss any questions or concerns with your child's teacher at any time.

Overview of the Curriculum

RHECC offers a learning curriculum to all children in our program. Each classroom creates and implements their own developmentally appropriate lesson plan. Lesson plans are posted and available to parents. Our curriculum will consist of Art, Science and Social Studies, Math, Blocks, Small and Large Muscle, Outdoors, Language Arts, Dramatic Play, Writing, Cognitive, Music, and Bible Activities. In addition, some Spanish and Sign Language will also be incorporated. Infant curriculum will consist of developmentally appropriate activities that will encourage the individual development of each child as well as Sign Language on a daily basis.

Guidance

The teachers at RHECC use redirection a positive form of guidance and logical consequences to manage the classrooms. These techniques are used not only to help the child know and understand the limits, but also to help the child continue to develop positive self-esteem and a better sense of internal control. One example of redirection would be if a child is having difficulty in an area of play, the teachers would redirect the child to another activity or area.

All staff members at River Hills Early Childhood Center are prohibited from subjecting any child to corporal punishment, emotional abuse, separation without other options, punishment for toilet lapses, withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care, or physical restraints.

Chronic Disruptive Behavior

The staff at RHECC will make every effort to work with the parents of children having difficulties at our center. We are here to serve and protect all of our children. Children displaying chronic disruptive behavior that has been determined to be upsetting to the physical or emotional well being of another child or children may require special conferencing with the

parents and teachers. If the behaviors continue and do not improve, conferencing with parents and administration may be required. When and if the previous attempts have been made and no progress has been made towards solving the problem, outside consultation or evaluation may be requested. If the behavior should continue and be considered dangerous to others, the parents will be given a 2 week notice to seek other child care arrangements if possible.

Celebrations

The Classrooms generally celebrate and learn about the many holidays throughout the year. Your child's lesson plan and classroom communication will inform you of upcoming events and parent involvement opportunities

Parents who wish to celebrate their child's birthday at school are welcome but not required, to provide a special treat to be shared during snack or lunch. **State regulations require that treats be purchased bakery or commercially prepared foods in the original packaging.**

Please let your child's teachers know if you are planning on bringing a special treat so that (s) he can make sure to plan for the special event. All birthday invitations are to be mailed.

Children are not allowed to hand out invitations at school. Sometimes one or two students are not invited and this may cause great disappointment to the one(s) left out. If you need to get addresses for mailing invitations, please see your child's teacher.

Field Trips

RHECC teachers and administrators plan several field trips throughout the year. Parents will be notified when the class is planning on taking a field trip. Parents will also be required to sign a field trip permission slip before their child will be allowed to go on any field trip.

Emergency kits and information is taken along on each field trip. Parents may be invited to drive and/or to accompany the group. A background study and a current copy of driver licenses will be collected on all parents and/or volunteers who attend field trips. All children will follow Minnesota state law and DHS Licensing requirements regarding seat belt/car seat usage when being transported to and from field trips.

Infants and toddlers will not be taken on field trips. The only time that they are taken off of church grounds is for daily walks and for short trips to the Rivers across the street. Parents sign a permission slip for their child to be taken on such walks at the time of enrollment.

Parent Involvement

Parents can be involved with the center in a variety of ways. One way would be to visit or volunteer in their child's classroom. Another way is to become a part of a committee within the center. To be a part of either of these options, parents simply need to let their child's teacher or administration know that they are interested.

Volunteers

RHECC welcomes volunteers within our center. Anyone interested in volunteering must meet first with an administrator for an orientation and will be subject to a background check before beginning.