MONTROSE

Child Care Center

Parent Handbook

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Welcome

Welcome to Montrose Child Care Center. This handbook will familiarize families with the Center's philosophy, policies, and procedures. It will answer questions which may arise during enrollment at MCCC.

The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook will clarify MCCC's method of operation and will help maintain a basis of understanding for everyone. Many procedures are based on the NYS Office of Children and Family Services Regulations.

This is the 6th edition of the Parent Handbook. Any suggestions for clarification of policies, the format of the handbook, or inclusion of topics are always appreciated.

Nondiscrimination
Montrose Child Care Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, sex, national origin, disability and marital status in the administration of its admission, education, benefits, aid or personnel policies.

Accreditation
By the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Notification to Parents
This handbook provides written notification of "Parent Rights" at the time of admission and each year thereafter.

I. Introducing Montrose Child Care

Montrose Child Care Center is an independent non-profit corporation, governed by a Board Of Directors, licensed by the State of New York and accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. The center is located on the beautiful grounds of the FDR VA Hospital. Although the Department of Veterans Affairs does not provide financial support to the center, we do receive ancillary benefits by being a part of the campus. The Center is available to the children of the VA Employees and to the surrounding community. The Center provides early care and education for children, ranging in age from 6 weeks to 5 years.

Philosophy
MCCC combines comfort and security with the stimulation and enrichment of group interactions for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Responding to each child's unique stage of development and style of playing and learning, the program promotes success and mastery of social, emotional, physical, linguistic, and cognitive skills. More learning and growth take place during the first three years of a child's life than at any other period. Every action and interaction are preparing a child's brain for lifelong learning.

Programs
MCCC offers full-time and part-time programs for children 6 weeks to five years. The children are enrolled in programs for infants, toddlers, nursery, and pre-k. The center is open from 7:00 to 6:00, Monday through Friday, year-round, with the exceptions noted on the yearly calendar. Our "School Day" hours are from 8:00-5:00. Morning care is available from 7:00-8:00 and after care is available from 5:00-6:00, both for an additional charge.

Ages and Placements
The age span in each group varies somewhat each year depending on the current population enrolled, the individual development of the children, and the physical space available. Placement

considerations include chronological age, developmental stage, group size, group configuration, specific parental concerns, and any special building and staff factors. Final decision on a child's placement is made by the teachers and administrators with parental input and is based on the readiness of the child. The group age range can be as much as a full year, and ages may overlap between groups. As a general rule, at the time of entrance, the age spans below are approximated:

Petite Pioneers:
6 weeks to 18 months
Little Explorers & Explorers
19 months to 36 mo.
Trailblazers (Navigators):
3-4 years
Trailblazers (Innovators):
4-5 years

Ratios
The ratio of children to teacher are as follows, per NYS Regulations:

6 weeks to 18 months	1:4
19 months to 36 months	1:5
3 years	1:7
4 years	1:8
5 years	1:9

Special Needs
Occasionally, teachers and/or parents may feel a child needs an evaluation for assistance in speech, physical or emotional development. In such cases we offer parents assistance in having an evaluation done by the Department of Health (Early Intervention) or the child's local school district, depending on the child's age. Early intervention can be essential in helping a child meet developmental milestones. We will work with the school districts and parents to develop an Individual Education Plan, so that the child can best receive the help he/she needs. When an evaluation is suggested, it is done with the best interest of the child in mind.

Administration
The Executive Director is hired by the Board of Directors. The Executive Director has center wide administrative responsibilities and hires all other administrative and teaching staff. The Assistant assists the Director with implementing all center policies and programs. Our Program Coordinator works with our staff on implementing curriculum, lessons, themes, and classroom/center wide activities.

Teaching Staff
MCCC has a highly qualified and dedicated staff. Many teachers have been with the center since its earliest years. New teachers add depth and freshness to the program each year. Over 20 teachers work in well-coordinated cooperative teams. Teachers are chosen carefully based on NYS Office for Children and Family regulation requirements, credentials, training, and professional experience. Prior to being hired, all applicants are fingerprinted and undergo a complete background check, as well as a personal interview, 3 references and a physical.

Enrichment Programs
During the school year we offer several enrichment programs depending on your child's age group.

Trailblazers and Explorer classrooms will attend yoga and karate classes twice a month. Little Explorers will attend yoga twice a month. Permission slips will be sent home in order to participate.

II. Enrollment

New Families
The Montrose Child Care center requires interested families to visit the center with their child. They tour the facilities, see the program in session, receive printed information and meet the Director or Executive Assistant before enrolling.

A family interested in enrolling must be registered on our wait list. If space is available for the requested schedule in the appropriate group, the family will be notified of the placement of their child in the program. Their place is reserved when the one-time security deposit is paid. This deposit is non-refundable if the family withdraws before attendance begins. The deposit is refunded at the end of active enrollment once all fees are paid, and a 4-week written notice of termination is provided. When placement is confirmed, details of orientation, starting date, daily schedule, and contract for the year are sent.

Registration
Enrollment is on a yearly basis, September to September. New registrations for September begin in March. Priority is given to: (1) VA Employees (2) current enrollees: (3) siblings of current and former enrollees (4) children of employees (5) waiting list. Even though the vast majority of placements begin in September, applications are accepted continuously throughout the year and rolling admissions are made as space is available.

Required Forms
For admission to the Center, the parent or guardian must complete, sign, and return the Application Packet that includes the following forms:

Enrollment Form
Emergency Information
Authorization Form
Medical Form
Permission Slips
Child's Information Form
Handbook Form
Photo Permission
Parent Contact
Topical Ointment Form

To be filled out by a physician:
Medical/Elijah's Law Form
DSS 792-Day Care Registration
All forms must be completed prior to the child's first day of care.

Terms of Enrollment
If a family wishes to withdraw their child from the center, a four-week written notice is required. MCCC provides a termination form to be completed with the date and your signature. The four-week notice must be during the time when the center is open for operation. Failure to provide four weeks written notice results in forfeiture of the security deposit. Please take this into account when planning your child's departure. If you would like to withdraw for the summer months, half of the tuition is due to maintain your spot.

If the center determines it cannot continue care for whatever reason, parents will be notified in a conference and in writing. Fees will be charged through the last day of care. Circumstances for termination by the center include but are not limited to: Failure to meet tuition payments, the inability

by the center to safely meet the needs of the child, if the child cannot maintain age appropriate classroom expectations including classroom safety, or failure by the family to follow center procedures and policies.

III. Operating Schedule

Hours
The Center is open from 7:00am-6:00pm. Our school day is "8:00-5:00". We offer early care from 7:00-8:00 and after care from 5:00-6:00, for an additional fee.

Calendar
A yearly calendar is published and distributed each September, listing the exact dates of the national holidays, as well as Center Holidays and events. A monthly calendar is also provided.

The Center is closed for the following federal days:
Labor Day
Columbus Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving Day
Day after Thanksgiving
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day
New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Day
President's Day
Memorial Day
Juneteenth
Independence Day

When a holiday falls on a Saturday, we will close on a Friday. When a holiday falls on a Sunday, we will close on Monday.

* The center will be closed for one week following Pre-K graduation and our center wide picnic. This closure is for center cleaning and staff development. Tuition has already been prorated and is based on a 52 week year to accommodate that closure.

Emergency Weather Closing
If we need to close due to inclement weather or extenuating circumstances, an announcement will be made on the center app (Brightwheel) as well as our Facebook, Instagram, and website. Occasionally conditions require the Center to close mid-day. In that event, parents will be notified by phone/e-mail or app. Whether the Center closes for all or part of the day, no refund, exchanges, or credits are given for emergency closings.

Emergency Evacuation
If Building 29 should be evacuated, the children will be taken to the gym or building 15. Parents will be notified of location and pick up procedures via the Brightwheel app,

The Montrose Child Care Center recognizes the need to have an evacuation plan prepared in the event of any unusual occurrence at Indian Point. The Westchester County Radiological Emergency Plan for schools within a ten-mile radius of Indian Point Energy Center can be found in the blue book, "Emergency Planning for Indian Point: A Guide for You and Your Family." The Office of Emergency Planning is responsible for advising school districts as to the nature of the emergency. Under the County plan, should there be a need for initiating protective actions, the Hendrick Hudson School

District Office would notify the Center.

The Office of Emergency Planning may recommend an early dismissal or keeping children inside the building to await further instructions. Since we are located on a Federal Facility, we have been advised to evacuate to Building 15 room 16 on campus. The Campus is equipped to provide meals, sleeping and medical attention if needed. Originally the plan was to relocate to Manhattanville College however with the plant intending to close in 2021 and the logistics of Transporting the children, the emergency management team felt this was the best plan for the childcare center.

MCCC has prepared an emergency evacuation kit, which includes parent contact & emergency forms, medication authorization forms and necessary medication, diapers & wipes, formula & bottled water, and KI. Each parent/guardian was given a consent form to fill out regarding whether they want their child to receive KI (potassium iodide). The children will be administered the medication unless the parent/guardian has declined consent. The medication will be stored in the office and will be taken with us in the event of an evacuation.

IV. Getting Started

Schedules and Attendance
There are three programs for reserved schedules.

3-day program
· any 3 set days during the week
4-day program
· any 4 set days during the week
Full time
· Monday–Friday

Children are expected to attend the center as scheduled except when they are ill or on a family vacation. Irregular attendance can adversely affect a child's adjustment and sense of trust and belonging.

Parents are required to mark their child absent on the Brightwheel app when children will not attend. A message is also appreciated when children will arrive late at the center.

All schedules are assumed to be yearlong, September to September. However, occasionally families need to change their schedules mid-year. Requests must be made in writing on the change of schedule form available in the office. This is submitted to the director for consideration and a response is provided as soon as possible.

* Additional days can be added to your child's schedule as space is available.
* Days may be dropped from a child's schedule at the beginning of the month only with a minimum of 4 weeks' notice.

Occasionally families may need extra days at the center. Requests for extra days may be made in writing in the office. Extra days are billed accordingly.

Orientation
We offer a phasing period to help you and your child feel comfortable. It affords parents an opportunity to visit the classroom, meet the staff, ask questions, and drop off supplies.

We recommend 1-2 visits depending on the age of your child and their reactions to visiting the classroom. It is best to schedule the visit between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. By the end of visitation, both parents and child have begun the process of separation. They have had the opportunity to

begin to build a sense of trust and mutual understanding with the teachers. Of course, the process of separation continues over time. Occasionally, difficulty with separation can linger for a child and parents or may recur throughout the years ahead. Children are helped most when parents convey their confidence and trust in the teachers. Saying good-bye is best **done quickly.** Parents are encouraged to message in the app or call the Center if they are concerned about their child.

Program Curriculum
Montrose Child Care uses the ***Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos in classrooms*** for ages six weeks to three years and the ***Creative Curriculum for Preschool in classrooms*** for ages three to five years. Although weekly themes and activities are in place, the children's interests and needs are considered and lesson plans are adapted as needed. Each room is designed with learning centers (art, blocks, dramatic play, etc.) and a variety of developmentally appropriate activities, some of which are teacher-directed while others are child-directed.

Child Assessments
Assessment of each child's development in an early care and education environment is essential to planning an environment and experiences which are developmentally, culturally, socially, and individually appropriate. The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum is used to assess children's developing abilities.

IV. Daily Happenings

Curriculum
MCCC provides nurturing early care and education with successful first experiences in separation and socialization. This is accomplished through a responsive, caring environment for children who are meeting the developmental milestones of the first five years of life.

The MCCC curriculum helps children master age-appropriate tasks at each stage of individual development. Emotional, social, physical, and cognitive activities are integrated into all aspects of the curriculum. These activities reflect the broad range of growth and development among the children.

Children's development is encouraged through play and exploration of process-oriented rather than product-oriented activities.

Play and spontaneous exploration are fundamental to childhood and essential to learning. NAEYC publication states "through play children explore their world, find out how they get along with others, test their skills and muscles, try out new ideas, and feel confident enough to try different activities." At MCCC, children are given the time and opportunity for many different ways to play. Much of what happens in the daily life at an early care and education center provides the context for first learning experiences: hellos and good-byes, eating, resting, keeping clean and comfortable, enjoying nature, being with friends, coping with emotional experiences, taking turns, and respecting others.

During the years, the curriculum introduces children to logical thinking, problem solving, information gathering and acquisition of a body of common knowledge. School readiness skills are acquired through exposure to numbers, letters, categories, size, shape, sequence, identification of objects, cause and effect, how things work, season, and way to use materials to express ideas. Teachers follow the lead of the children's expressed interests. Exposure to a variety of experiences prepares children for their next school experience.
Parents can contribute significantly to the preschool curriculum by sharing their time and talents with the children in the classroom. Ultimately, the goal is for each child to develop self-esteem in preparation for a happy and productive life among peers, colleagues and loved ones.

Beginning the Day
Parents are expected to bring their child to the Big Room where they will be met by a staff member. The parent will then scan their child in, and the staff will bring the child to their classroom. Children may not be left outside the classroom, nor can teachers be asked to meet children in the parking lot.

Parents and teachers need to talk each day to exchange important information concerning the children's health, energy level, mood, and special events at home or at the Center. Parents are urged to send a message to staff if important information needs to be exchanged. Children seem to respond best to a decisive and clear good-bye, with the reassurance that parents will return at the end of the day. If parting seems to be difficult for a child, the teachers and parents will discuss ways to work together to make the transition successful. Parents may not "sneak out" without saying good-bye to their child. This temporarily eases the pain of separation, but it is alarming to a child who discovers his parents have disappeared. Failure to say good-bye undermines basic trust.

Telephone Contact
MCCC must be able to reach parents at all times. If there is a change in contact for a given day, please notify teacher or office personnel.

Daily Schedule
The schedule for the day differs from group to group. The infants are on individualized schedules, with caregivers responding to their needs and interests as they arise. As the children grow older, the schedule becomes more uniform. Each group has a general schedule posted in their room. A typical day includes time for play and socializing, both inside and outside, clean up, hygiene, eating and resting. Routines are very important and reassuring. Occasional surprises and unplanned events add depth and excitement to special days.

Outside Play
Children go outside in winter and summer, weather permitting. Fresh air promotes good health and the outdoors present unlimited opportunities for play and exploration. Parents must provide appropriate clothing throughout the year.

Naps and Rest
Napping procedures vary with the age groups. Infants sleep in cribs, on their back, according to their own schedules. The older children have a rest period after lunch. Children who do not fall asleep rest quietly for at least 45 minutes and, after resting, may play quietly at the table. Parents must bring in linens for their child to rest on. A Napping consent form must be signed and agreed upon enrollment. The Center provides soft music, air conditioning, dimmed lighting and back rubs!

Technology Policy
The use of technology time in our program is an extension of the teaching and learning taking place in our Trailblazer classroom only.

The Trailblazer class is occasionally given 20 minutes of education programs via video to enhance and engage them in the learning process. Parents will be notified via the app if such activity is taking place.

Toileting
"Toilet training" is a major milestone in a child's (and family's) development. But it is usually a slow process with a wide variation as to when and how a child is successful. Discussion between parents and teachers about timing, attitudes, and methods of learning is important so that a consistent effort is made for a child's success. Parents will be given a "Potty Training Policy" when the child is ready to start training.

Children are not required to be using the toilet in order to enter any group. However, 4- & 5-year-old children with lingering toileting issues may need some professional evaluation.

Toys from home
Guidelines for bringing toys, books, and games from home differ from group to group. Teachers use their discretion in deciding how items from home are affecting the child, the other children, and the program. The teachers cannot be responsible for the safety of items brought from home. Parents should discourage their child from bringing very precious items. Everything brought from home must have the child's name on it.

Guns and other "weapons" are never allowed. MCCC makes every effort to minimize the use of promotional toys, props and gadgets associated with TV, film, and video. The use of and the dependence on these commercially promoted items has had an increasingly negative effect on social interactions of children. Parents are asked to help eliminate the use of toys associated with aggressive and violent behavior.

Discipline
Effective guidance is based on the ideology that guides every interaction. Discipline is a matter of planning, setting clear limits and expectations, redirection, and logical consequences, not punishment. Discipline is also a matter of prevention-anticipating situations and "heading them off at the pass."

Infants need comfort, acceptance, and reassurance. Their first experience with "discipline" is acquiring basic trust of adults and the environment. This basic trust allows the infant to learn from adults and to begin to modify behaviors.

As infants become toddlers, limit-setting is an integral part of helping the child learn appropriate social behavior. Teachers serve as role models for children learning to control their impulses.

As children mature, they are encouraged to express their feelings and solve problems verbally. The term "I'm sorry" is a difficult concept for the very young child to understand. As a substitute, the child is helped to verbalize his/her own feeling and the feeling of the other person. Usually by 4 years old, children begin to feel genuine remorse for causing hurt and can be encouraged to apologize if the feeling is sincere.

The word "no" is rarely used except in situations where a child's safety is in question. Instead, teachers orchestrate the environment by redirecting, peer to peer guided conversations, removing temptations, providing distracting activities, and encouraging what children can do. Corporal punishment is never used, children are not "punished" for "bad" behavior, and names are not used to label children.

Occasionally young children may bite and be physically aggressive. Their verbal skills, self-control, altruistic feelings, and feelings of remorse are just developing. Children will bite and get bitten, hit, and be hit, scratch and be scratched, push and be pushed. Repeated occurrences will be discussed with parents, but names will never be given. Teachers monitor both the environment and the activities so these behaviors will occur less often.

Aggressive Behavior
When incidents of aggression do occur, parents of the children involved are informed of the incident and of any specific information pertinent to an understanding of the situation. The information shared typically includes the details of the incident itself (i.e., time, place, preceding and subsequent events, the specific steps taken to comfort the child who was hurt and more generally, to handle the situation.) Plans are developed to teach more appropriate interactions and to prevent recurrences.

Information of the behavior is never disclosed with other parties. Plans will be created on a case by case basis. If additional support is needed beyond what staff can accommodate, an evaluation may be requested. Classroom safety of all children is a priority.

End of the Day
The end of the day is a relaxed time when children may choose from a variety of free play activities. In early fall, late spring, and the summer and the day usually end outdoors. In the winter, small groups play inside.

Parents must scan their child out using the QR code in the Big Room and the app.

It is important to pick up children on time. Late pick-ups confuse the child and put constraints on compliance with licensing regulations. Parents should call if they will be unavoidably late.

Parents must fill out a form of listing the people who have been designated to pick up their child. For a child's safety, he or she will not be released to anyone unknown to the center.

In an emergency, a child will be released to someone not designated only if:
1. The parent has called the center with the name of the person
2. The request has been verified with a return phone call, e-mail, or fax.
3. The person presents photo identification

MCCC staff are prohibited from transporting children in their personal vehicles. Teachers cannot ever be responsible for taking children home.

Often (an) older or younger sibling (s) accompany parents to the center. Please remember it is the parents' responsibility to supervise the siblings to guarantee everyone's safety.

Celebrations
Festivities centered around holidays, traditions, and birthdays are always enjoyable. At MCCC the meaning of various cultural traditions and holidays are experienced through simple exposure to foods, music, dress, and crafts. MCCC does not espouse any particular religious or political beliefs. Messages of a religious nature are avoided, but questions are answered honestly. Families are invited to share traditions and celebrations by making plans with the teachers ahead of time.

Field Trips
Field trips are the ideal way for children to have first-had experiences relevant to the curriculum. A field trip can make any subject of "study" come alive and provide an opportunity for children to observe and question. Experiences following a trip enable children to relive and process.

Parents receive written notice of special trips and are welcome to accompany the group. It will be specified whether or not siblings may participate. A general field trip permission form for walking and regularly scheduled trips on campus are signed by parents every year.

We have our annual center wide field trips to Stewart's Farm for apple picking in October and to Muscoot Farm in May. These are center wide trips and the center is not open for its regularly scheduled hours.

VI. Money Matters

Tuition Payments
Tuition is annual, based on 51 weeks of service (this accounts for our one week summer closure). The annual tuition is divided into installments due on the 1st and 16th of every month. Tuition is based on

enrollment and not attendance. To retain a slot, tuition is due and payable, even if a child is absent from the center, regardless of the reason. (Including vacation, weather, illness, leave of absence or shift rotation of parents). The center will charge for holidays, even when the center is closed.

Payment
Checks should be made payable to Montrose Child Care Center. Parents may also pay through the Brightwheel app if they find that easier. Receipts are available upon request.

Late Payments
If checks are received or posted after the 15th of each month, a $25 late fee is applied to your account. For each additional day that payment is late, there will be a surcharge of $ 5.00 per day. Fees unpaid after ten (10) working days serve as notice of intent to withdraw the child from the center, enrollment will be terminated, and security deposit will be forfeited.

Tax Exempt Number
MCCC is a tax-exempt, nonprofit educational corporation. MCCC's tax exempt number is 13-3554801.

Sibling Discount:
Siblings enrolled at MCCC will receive a 5% discount from the older child. This discount does not apply to registration fee or enrollment security deposit. The discount starts on the date the sibling starts attendance and discontinues on the date the family has one child remaining at the center.

VA Employee Discount:
Parents employed at the VA will receive a 30% discount on tuition. If the parent has multiple children enrolled, the discount will only apply to the child with the lowest tuition.

Other fees
· **Extra day payments:**
Extra days of care beyond the regular schedule are charged at a daily rate. The fee for extra days is added to the tuition statement.
· **Late pickup:**
Pickup after 6:00 results in a penalty payment of $ 1 per minute starting at 6:01pm. The amount due is billed to your account. The center retains the right to terminate care after excessive or repeated lateness. A late pick up or early drop off, outside of "school day hours" will result in a $5 additional charge for your child to attend Morning or After Care.
· **Returned Check:**
A check returned from the bank incurs a $25.00 fee to cover the charges for processing a second payment. MCCC requires a bank check or money order after 2 returned checks.

Termination of Enrollment
MCCC reserves the right to terminate services for non-payment of fees, for non-compliance with state regulation requirements, for lack of attendance, or for extraordinary circumstances in the child's adjustment, behavior or developmental needs which cannot be safely met at the center.

The enrollment security deposit is refunded at the end of enrollment if MCCC has been notified in writing of termination at least (4) weeks in advance and all financial obligations have been met. The deposit is also refunded if MCCC initiates the termination, and all the tuition has been paid.

VII. Parent Responsibilities and Involvement

Transportation
Parents are responsible for the transportation of their children to and from the Center. All children must be picked up from the Center by the child's parents or a designated driver listed on the transportation release form. Special Needs children may be transported to and/or from the Center in a school van if the parent provides written instruction. The same instructions are required for children to be delivered or picked up by taxi.

Clothing
Children should be dressed in washable, comfortable clothing which is suitable for active play. Teachers do not deny children participation in activities because of anxiety about dirtying special clothing. Each child needs seasonably appropriate outer clothing for summer, fall, winter and spring. Children spend time outdoors routinely and appropriate protective clothing is essential.

Parents are asked to keep complete changes of correctly sized clothing including socks, shoes, pants or shorts, shirt, sweater, underwear, and outer clothing in the child's cubby. If a child is sent home in Center clothing, it should be washed and returned clean as soon as possible.

Parents should check periodically to see that their child's extra set of clothing is complete, suitable for the season, and still the correct size. Everything must be labeled with the child's name on it. MCCC cannot be responsible for unmarked clothing.

Shoes
Children should wear closed toe shoes. Sneakers are the safest for all our active play. Please do not send your child to school in flip-flops or open toe sandals. These types of footwear cause children to trip, slip and fall.

Supplies
During orientation your child's teacher will give you a packet containing items needed. Each child is given a cubby so that items can be stored at the center. Parents are responsible for providing disposable diapers and wipes. For health & infectious reasons we do not accept cloth diapers unless the child has a medical reason that does not permit their use.

Meals
MCCC provides a breakfast (cereal/muffins/bagels/waffles, etc.) milk, and juice/fruit, Children must arrive by 8:30 to be included in breakfast, children arriving later should already have eaten at home.

Lunch - A lunch is provided by an outside vendor 3x per week and 2x heat and served in-house.
Snack - A nutritious snack is provided daily in the afternoon.

All meals are reviewed by a nutritionist and follow Federal USDA regulation guidelines to assure the children receive a well-balanced diet. Parents receive a menu at the beginning of each month with a newsletter.

Parents of infants provide formula and/or breast milk, cereal and "baby food" (commercially or home prepared) labeled with their child's name. As infants are introduced to new foods, parents must keep teachers informed so that any reactions can be noticed quickly.

If you are substituting meals or snacks, please send in something healthy. We will work with parents of children with special dietary needs on an individual basis.

Food from home
Children are welcome to bring in a lunch from home to substitute a meal. Due to various food

allergies, *shared snacks must be store bought and in the original packaging, labeled as "nut free"*. If it's a meal for your child, we ask that it's ***"nut free"*** and requires no use of a stove/oven or microwave.

Birthday celebrations will consist of making cupcakes in the classroom. A permission slip will be sent home every year for your child to participate. If you would like to send in fruit for your child's birthday to go along with their celebration, please contact your child's teacher.

Allergies
Due to the increase in the number of children with food allergies, particularly nuts, Montrose Child Care has a **No Nuts Policy**. All nut products must be excluded from the Center. This includes any food you bring in for your child or to share with the class. Please read the labels before bringing any packaged food into the center. (Products that do not seem to contain nuts sometimes share equipment with nut products and must also be excluded). Nut allergies can be life threatening so your compliance with this policy is crucial.

Please notify your child's teacher and administration of any possible allergies. An allergy action plan form must be completed and kept on file.

Parent Involvement
Childcare is a shared process, and MCCC encourages parents to get involved. Any parent who has a particular talent or skill that is appropriate to share with the children is most welcome to do so by prior arrangement with the teacher.

Organizational functions
A Parent Orientation will be each August or September. The purpose is to familiarize parents with the overall program, its personnel, and its goal. Parent's will also receive a parent involvement form. This form asks parents to indicate if and how they would like to be involved as a volunteer for MCCC.

MCCC annual family picnic is held in June.

Parent evening discussion groups:
MCCC periodically sponsors educational programs to discuss issues concerning parenting, child development, and other related topics.

Parent/Teacher conferences:
Teachers meet with parents informally for brief conversations whenever required. Twice a year, formal conferences are scheduled. The fall conference is to discuss the goals and plans for the child. The spring conference is to review the child's growth and development, transitions to the next step and a wrap-up of the child's overall progress (see communication).

Social Gatherings:
Periodically MCCC plans social events based on the interests of the parents. Suggestions are always welcomed.

Contributed time, goods, money, and services:
Each year dozens of parents assist with field trips, special projects, and daily classroom activities. Parents also act as mentors to new families and offer special expertise to projects. A significant portion of parents, alumni, and friends respond to the annual fund-raising events with donations toward capital improvements and development.

Visits:
Enrolled parents are welcome to visit the center and their child's group at any time the center is open. We do ask for classroom visits to be scheduled or give notice when coming. Scheduled parent

participation activities will take place periodically throughout the school year.

VIII. Communication

Parent Teacher Conferences
Conferences are scheduled in Fall and Spring. It is hoped that both parents can meet with their child's teacher. When parents are separated or divorced, two conferences may be arranged, if that is preferred. It is essential that conferences take place without the child or a sibling in attendance.

Childcare during conferences is provided if the child is already scheduled for care or there is space available. There is no fee for "extra hours" during the conference.

Confidentiality
MCCC will protect the child's and the family's right to confidentiality. Disclosure of the child's records and family information beyond family members and program personnel will require written consent by family. In the case of abuse or neglect it is permissible for the center to reveal confidential information to agencies and individuals who may be able to act in the child's interest. MCCC will respect the family's right to privacy and will not enter relationships with family members that might impair our effectiveness in working with children. MCCC will not use its relationships with families for private advantage or personal gain. Children's records are kept in locked file cabinets.

Amending Children's Records
- Parents may add information, data or any other relevant materials to their child's record.
- Parents may also request the information in their child's file be amended or deleted.
- If after changes to their child's records have been made, parents are still not satisfied with the clarity or correctness of the records, they may schedule a conference with the Director.
- Within one week after such a conference, the Director will provide the parents a written decision regarding their child's record which includes the reason for the decision. The decision will be acted on immediately.

Other Communication
The center provides may regular communication vehicles:
- *The Brightwheel App* is a very convenient way for the staff and parents to communicate.
- *Parent handbook* outlines expectations for both the center and families.
- *Newsletters* are published monthly.
- *Calendars* are published monthly.
- *Special notices* are distributed periodically.
- *Parent Board* announces on-going and special events and displays important information about child development and the Center.
- *Community Board* is available to parents to post any upcoming events or items you wish to sell.
- *Children's work* is displayed throughout the center.

Of course, nothing can replace direct communication. Daily chats provide excellent parent-teacher communication. The telephone and/or e-mail/Brightwheel is a convenient way to keep in touch with the Center from work or home.

Transfer of records
When a child leaves MCCC, parents may request, in writing, that the child's records be given to them or another person of the parents' choosing.

Suggestions and Complaints
From time to time a concern or problem may arise which requires discussion. Please feel free to approach a Head Teacher, the Assistant Director or Director. Complaints, problems, and suggestions

should be broached at an appropriate time. Please ask for a conference or appointment with an administrator. Every effort is made to arrive at a satisfactory solution. You can also present your concerns to the NYS office of children and family services, which our center is licensed by contact number is 845–708-2400.

Please refer to this handbook to help clarify policies and procedures.
Many parents are pleased with what the program offers, and the quality of care provided at the center. Knowing what works well is useful to the teachers and administrators. Positive feedback is equally as important as constructive criticism.
Each year, a questionnaire is distributed to parents to evaluate the program. This survey is printed by NAEYC. Participation in this survey is voluntary, but most helpful.

IX. Health and Safety

Consultant
MCCC has a health care consultant available through the childcare council. Her advice has helped determine medical policies and respond to medical situations.

Code Team
One of the benefits of being located on VA grounds is that the VA Hospital will respond to any Medical Emergencies or "Codes" called in by our staff. In the event of a Medical Emergency, a "Codes" can be dialed into the VA operator who immediately dispatches a "Code Team" which consists of a Physician, Registered Nurse, Respiratory Therapist, Fire Dept., and Police. (See Emergency Care pg.38)

Health Guidelines
According to the New York State Day Care Rules and Regulations, MCCC must exclude from care any child diagnosed with a communicable disease (covid-19, measles, mumps, chicken pox, etc.) or obvious acute illness. Parents may not send their child to the center if he/she is sick or has signs of infection, diarrhea, abnormal temperature, skin rash, or pink eye. The basis for all the center policies concerning illness is the protection of the ill child as well as the other children entrusted to MCCC's care. ***Please note that it is the parents' responsibility to keep the emergency contact number up to date on the blue card.*** Please notify the teachers if corrections are necessary during the year.

Immunization
A copy of your child's most **current** immunization record and physical must be on file at MCC and must be updated each time your child receives a new vaccine. Failure to comply with this regulation may result in suspension of care, with full tuition obligation. Care resumes when the form is complete and on file. The child's physician must complete form DSS-4433, available in the office.

Specific Illnesses and Conditions
MCCC staff does not diagnose disease but is well trained to identify indicators of illness. They help implement and interpret policy on health and safety. The teacher will also determine when children must be excluded from care at the Center. All teachers receive a first aid certification every two years in Early Childhood Health and Safety as well as CPR training.

Exclusion Policy:
The health and safety of your child and the children attending MCC are always our priority.

If your child is not feeling well, please do NOT bring them to the Center. If they are exhibiting symptoms beyond what appears normal for your child, please do NOT bring them to the Center. When your child's teacher conducts the daily health check, if (s)he determines that your child is exhibiting symptoms and is not well enough to attend the Center that day, you will be asked to

take your child home.

Children are to remain home until they are fever free for 48 hours, without fever reducing medicine (ex: Tylenol, Motrin, etc.). If your child is out longer for three or more days, they will need a doctor's note to return to the Center.

If your child has a contagious illness or virus and has a sibling at the Center that child must also be taken home. The sibling may return if they are symptom free for 24 hours. A contagious illness includes viruses and bacterial infections.

If there is anyone in your home (mom, dad, sibling, grandparent) who also has a contagious illness, please keep your child home for 24 hours. If your child remains symptom free for 24 hours they may return to the Center.

Parents/Guardians are to sign an exclusion policy, agreeing to the terms of this policy.

Illness Report:
In the event your child gets sick during care, an illness report will be filled out and given to you upon pick-up indicating the reason for exclusion.

Abuse and Neglect suspected:
The Teachers conduct daily health checks. This includes checking children for signs of child abuse. Whenever there is suspected child abuse or neglect, teachers are required by law to report if they have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment of any child enrolled at the center.

Universal Precautions
All staff are trained annually in these procedures to control the spread of disease. Staff consistently wash their hands throughout the day, use gloves when changing diapers and have bleach solution made fresh daily to use as a disinfectant.

When to keep your child home:
We are unable to accept at the center any child with the following symptoms:

- The illness or child's reactions to it, require more staff care than staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
- Signs and symptoms of possible illness such as usual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, persistent abdominal pain, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing or other unusual signs until a medical evaluation allows inclusion.

Colds: Children will undoubtedly have colds. Children should be kept home if the cold is new and is accompanied by a fever, productive cough, chills, lethargy, or irritability. Many children have chronic runny noses with no other symptoms; this alone does not justify being excluded from childcare.

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye): A child is not allowed to come to the center with untreated conjunctivitis, regardless of the type. Since pink eye is very contagious, children must stay home until 24 hours after the first administration of medication.

Chicken Pox: incubation period 7 to 21 days. May not return until all scabs are dried and crusted.

Diarrhea: Persistent diarrhea, defined as three or more stools in a 24-hour period, when that pattern represents one or more of the following:

- An increased number of stools compared to the child's normal pattern.
- Increased stool water

- Diarrhea accompanied with symptoms of dehydration, such as sunken eyes, dry skin, concentrated urine or small amounts of urine, fewer than six wet diapers in a 24-hour period, or no urine in four hours; or diarrhea accompanied with blood in the stool.

Soiled clothing from an episode of diarrhea or loose bowels while at the center is placed un-rinsed into a plastic bag. Health experts advise handling feces and soiled clothing as little as possible in order to prevent the spread of disease. The child may return to the center after 24 hours if bowel movements have returned to normal and fluid intake is good.

Fever: Significant fever as defined below, until evaluated and approved for inclusion by a health care professional.

- Infants six months and younger will be excluded and referred to a health professional when they have an axillary temperature above 100 degrees F.
- Children over six months of age will be excluded and referred to a health professional whenever a fever of axillary temperature above 100 degrees F is accompanied by a behavior change, stiff neck, a rash, unusual irritability, poor feeding, vomiting or excessive crying.

The child may return to the center when they have been fever-free (without the use of "Tylenol" or any fever reducing medication) for 48 hours.

Fifths Disease: is a virus which behaves like a mild flu in children. MCCC must be very careful about the spread of this disease and will exclude children who are believed to be communicable. Fifth Disease is also called "slapped cheek" disease because of the early symptoms (low fever, aches, sore throat.) the cheeks get a rash looking like the cheeks have been "slapped." This is the conclusive evidence for the disease. Unfortunately, at this time the child's communicable stage has passed and contact with others will already have occurred. A diagnosis by a physician is still required so that other parents of children can be notified.

Head Lice or Scabies: A child may return to the center 24hrs after he/she has been treated with shampoo or other prescription product. For head lice a child must be nit free.

Undiagnosed Rash: If a child develops a rash at the center, he/she will need to be seen by a health care professional to be diagnosed. The child may return once it is considered non-contagious and/or treated.

Vomiting: Children must stay at home if unusual and persistent vomiting occurs. Three or more times in a 24-hour period, or any vomiting accompanied by symptoms or dehydration or other sign of illness. A child may return to the center 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting and the child is able to tolerate a regular diet.

For the following illness a child must have written approval from a health care professional to return to the Center:

- *Active tuberculosis* until after treatment has been initiated and the local health unit has approved readmission.
- *Diarrhea* due to Shigella, Salmonella, Campylobacter, Giardia, E. Coli type 0157:H7, Versinia, Cryptosporidium, until there is one negative stool test obtained at least 48 hours after treatment is completed.
- *Diphtheria* until readmission has been approved by the local health unit.
- *Hepatitis* A viral infection until 1 week after onset of illness and until immunoglobulin has been administered to appropriate children and staff or directed by the local health unit.
- *Hepatitis B* until readmission has been approved by the local health unit.
- *Impetigo* until 24 hours after medical treatment has been initiated.
- *Meningitis* until readmission has been approved by a local health unit.
- *Mouth Sores* with drooling, or Herpetic Gingivostomatitis until cleared.

- *Mumps* until nine day after onset of gland swelling.
- *Otis Media (ear Infection*) until 24 hrs. after initial antibiotic treatment.
- *Pertussis (Whooping cough)* until 5 days of a total course of 14 days of antibiotic treatment has been completed.
- *Rubella and measles* until 5 days after onset of rash.
- *Shingles until sores become crusted*
- *Strep throat*, or other streptococcal infections elsewhere in the body until 24 hrs after initial antibiotic treatment.

Children must feel well enough to participate in the usual activities of the program.
Based on the needs of the child, the safety of others, limitations of the Center and types of illnesses, parents may be required to pick up their sick child and be asked to bring in a doctor's note before your child may return to Center. When you are called to pick up your child, it must be within a reasonable amount of time. If you are unable to come, you need to contact a person on the authorized list.

Please inform the Center if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease, so we can notify the other parents that their child has been exposed to communicable disease. A notice will be sent via email. These precautions are taken for the protection of your child as well as other children entrusted in our care.

Medication
In accordance with NYS Office of Children and Family Services MCCC policy on administration of medication is as follows:
- Medication may not be disguised in the child's food or beverage, since this is a hazard to the children, and also comprises the exact dosage.
- When a medication must be given at both the center and at home for several days, parents may ask the pharmacist to put the prescription in two containers, one for home and one for the center.
- Medication must be handed directly to the office. Medication may not be left in school bags or cubbies.

For topical over-the –counter ointments/lotions/creams/sprays:
The parent must complete a permission form for over-the-counter topical medication, sunscreen, and insect repellent. Lotions, creams etc. must be in their original container and labeled with the child's name.

For all other medications (prescriptions, oral, etc.):
The child's physician must complete the DSS Written Medication Consent Form. The form can be picked up in the office. Once we receive a completed form the medication can be brought in. The medication is stored in the office unless refrigeration is required. Over the counter medication must be in its original container and labeled with the child's name. Prescription medication must be in its original container or packaging with the prescription label. Only staff that has completed training to administer medication will administer the medication to the child. All medication forms must be updated every 6 months.

Security
To gain entrance into the building you will need to ring the doorbell and you will then be greeted by a staff member.

Security Cameras
The video security cameras will be positioned to record only those areas specified and will complement other measures to maintain a safe and secure learning environment.

VA Police are the *only* authorized personnel to operate/monitor the video security system. Director of Montrose Child Care will have the ability to view *live feed only*. Access to video records shall be limited to authorized personnel only.

Images from the Montrose video security system are stored digitally on hardware at the VA Police Service. It is the intent of the VA Police to retain all recorded images for approximately 90 days.

Minor Injuries
In the event a child gets hurt while in our care, basic first aid will be performed. An incident report will be completed by a staff member with the details of the incident and any first aid that was given. Both the parent and the Director sign the report. The parent receives a copy of the completed form.

Emergency Care
If a child requires emergency care beyond our capacity the "Code Team" (VAPD / VAFD / VA Medical) will be called. The team provides medical assistance and determines whether or not the child needs to be transported to a local hospital for additional medical attention.

Serious Incident
In the case of a serious incident, the parent will be notified via phone call, an incident report will be filled out, and the Office of Children and Family Services will be notified.

At the time of registration, parents must sign an agreement (blue card) giving the Center permission for emergency care. Parents are contacted immediately, if the parents cannot be reached the Center will notify the person designated to call in case of emergency. If someone is not present, a staff member or Director will remain with your child until a parent arrives.

Hopefully this handbook will make each family's experience at MCCC a positive one. Cooperation and communication between parents and Center teachers are crucial to maintaining high quality early education and care provided by Montrose Child Care.

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