



Parent Handbook

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Welcome & Center Information

Welcome to Wee Pals Child Care Center. We are honored to partner with your family in providing a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environment for your child. We value open communication and are committed to supporting your child's growth and well-being.

Mission & Philosophy

Wee Pals is a non-profit program dedicated to high-quality child care that supports the development of the whole child.

We believe children learn best through active exploration in a structured, nurturing environment. Each child is unique, and we support individual development at every stage.

We do not discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, disability, or family status.

History and Role in the Community

Wee Pals Childcare and Preschool center was the first center-based child care in Steele County. Founded in 1970, Wee Pals was originally licensed for 20 children ages 3-5 and operated out of the basement of a church. By 1975, the center's license grew to 50 children ages 3-5 and moved into Grandall Hall in the former State School Building on the West Hills campus. In 1985, the center moved to Merrill Hall, our current site and expanded its services to toddlers and school age children. The center added infant care in 1989. Wee Pals is licensed for 96 children, however the target capacity is 84 children to ensure every child receives the care they need.

Wee Pals is known for its rich history of providing quality childcare and preschool programs for families in Steele County. Our preschool is incorporated into our daily schedules, making it convenient for working families. The preschool curriculum focuses on developmental skills for each age group, starting at birth and progressing to kindergarten readiness. Public school teachers comment that children leaving Wee Pals for kindergarten are well prepared.

Wee Pals is committed to strengthening children and families. We partner with other organizations in the community to create strong early childhood initiatives.

Program Overview

- Ages Served: 6 weeks – 12 years
- Hours: Monday–Friday, 6:30 AM – 5:30 PM
- Programs: Infant, Toddler, Preschool, School Age
- Current licensed number per age:
 - Infants: 16
 - Toddlers: 22
 - Preschoolers: 40
 - School Age: 18
 - Total: 96 children
- Parents are welcome to review the Wee Pals Child Care Program Plan located in the office upon request

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<u>Infant Program</u> Infant 1 and Infant 2 Infant Program Ages: 6 weeks - 16 months Staff/Child Ratio: 1 to 4	The early years are all about relationships. Infants crave and develop attachments to special people in their lives. We provide security, and safety to explore. Building trust and loving your child is our primary goal. Our staff provides a nurturing and stimulating environment for babies in our care. We excel at communicating with parents on each baby's individual needs. Our staff helps each infant to learn by interacting with the world around them. Unique offering in our infant rooms: -Sign Language
<u>Toddler Program</u> Toddler 1 and Toddler 2 Ages: 16 months - 33 months Staff/Child Ratio: 1 to 7	This is a transition period for young toddlers. The children are becoming more independent and more social, but they still need a lot of staff attention and individual time. This is also an exciting time where children begin to learn shapes, letters, counting, and more. Unique offerings in our toddler rooms: -Sign Language for those still learning how to speak -Beginning to go on more outside walks and outdoor experiences -Assist with toilet training -Begin SMART activities
<u>Preschool Program</u> Early Preschool, 3 Year Old Preschool, and PreK Ages: 33 months - 1st day of Kindergarten Staff/Child Ratio: 1 to 10	In the Preschool Rooms we focus on preparing children for the next chapter in their educational careers—Kindergarten! Children will work with more advanced materials as they get older and meet developmental milestones, learn to understand books, and participate in other activities that leave them well prepared for elementary school. Unique preschool offerings: -Field Trips and outings - Learning more about appropriate social interactions -Kindergarten transition activities held throughout the year
<u>School-Age Program</u> Big Pals Kindergarten – 5th Grade or 12 years Staff/Child Ratio: 1 to 15	The School-Age program operates before and after school, and full days when school is not in session. Our goal is to develop social skills as well as encourage independent play after school. We have fun-filled days during the summer months for the children to develop friendships and encourage growth and independence in their own interest areas that they want to pursue. Team building and support is also an ongoing focus for school agers.

Nonprofit Status

Wee Pals is a private, non-profit, childcare program licensed under Rule #3 by the Division of Licensing, Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families, State of Minnesota (612-296-3971). The business of Wee Pals is the responsibility of a volunteer Board of Directors who employ directors to administer the program. If you are interested in becoming a member of the board please visit with one of the directors.

Tax Information

Taxpayers wishing to claim the child tax credit or dependent care exclusion through Flexible Savings Account (FSA) should ask the director to prepare for them a statement of fees paid in the tax year. We are a tax-exempt, non-profit entity. Our Federal ID number is 41-0966862.

Utilization of Space

Wee Pals is located in the historic Merrill Building of the West Hills campus. Wee Pals occupies space on all floors:

- Lower Level: Kitchen and Cafeteria
- Main Floor: Infant classrooms, Toddler classrooms, Gross Motor Room, and the Office space
- Second Floor: Preschool classrooms and School age classroom
- Outdoors: Playground areas on the west side of the building

Licensing, Regulations & Parent Rights

Licensing and Parent Rights

Wee Pals is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families under Minnesota Rules Chapter 9503.

Parents have the right to:

- Visit the center at any time
- Review licensing records and correction orders
- Be informed of licensing violations
- Receive information about their child's care
- File complaints without retaliation

Licensing Contact: Martha Walker (651) 296-3971

Know Your Rights Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Privacy Rights Statement

Information requested of you is to enable us to meet your child's needs in an informed and personal manner. Information obtained will be kept confidential and shared only with staff working directly with your child or when it is necessary for your child's well-being, or safety, such as when it is requested by the Community Service Department, or the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families-State of Minnesota. No release of information to any other outside agency or persons will be made without special permission from you, the parent. Child healthcare summary/immunization records and parent emergency contacts are required for enrollment. All other information is recommended, but is not required for enrollment unless the Director determines that the information is pertinent in order to care for your child. If you need to contact the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families, the number is (651)431-6500.

Confidentiality

Please maintain confidentiality of identity when talking with your child's activities and place of care. We expect families to keep the identity of other children confidential unless they have consent from other families to share information with others. When a request is made of Wee Pals for information concerning a child's family (names and phone numbers for birthday, etc.) this request will be directed to the office and permission will always be sought before giving out any information.

Parent Aware

Wee Pals Child Care Center partners with Parent Aware. Parent Aware is a higher standard of training, education and funding for child care programs. Please visit their website (parentaware.org) for additional information.

Insurance & Liability

Wee Pals carries liability insurance coverage. Proof of insurance is available to parents upon request.

Wee Pals assumes responsibility for the welfare of a child between drop off (check in) and pick up (sign out). Our liability begins when a child is signed in and staff are notified of the child's arrival. Our liability ends when a child is signed out and removed from our staff's care. We will not assume liability during the time they are scheduled into and participating in another activity (including but not limited to Fernbrook activities off campus, preschool, etc.).

Enrollment & Financial Policies

Enrollment

Before care begins, the following are required:

- Completed enrollment forms
- Emergency contacts
- Immunization record
- Health care summary within 30 days of enrollment
- Signature verifying policies listed in the parent handbook have been read and understood

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Enrollment is not guaranteed until the registration fee and first week of care payments are received. Enrollment paperwork will be reviewed by the parent annually to ensure accurate information is on file for their child.

Ratios

Children are supervised at all times by qualified staff in accordance with Minnesota licensing requirements. We make the attempt to keep a lower ratio in all classes if possible. Our teacher to child ratio is as follows:

	State Requirements
Infant	1:4
Toddler	1:7
Preschooler	1:10
School Age	1:15

Rates and Payment Policies

Rates for each age are detailed on the Rate Sheet, which can be picked up in the office and is included in the enrollment packet. Rate changes may occur at any time upon a 30-day written notice. Updates will also be sent to parents via Brightwheel message. Please see the enrollment packet for more details on rates and rate policies.

Payments are due on Monday for the week of care. Wee Pals reserves the right to require that a direct deposit account be set up if we do not receive tuition each week. Wee Pals reserves the right to suspend or terminate care depending on the discretion of the directors and each individual case. Each family is responsible to keep their account up to date. If we notice an account falling behind, we will provide you with a notice. Accounts and billing may be seen any time through Brightwheel. If there are questions regarding billing, please contact the directors.

Returned Checks

For every check that is returned with insufficient funds, Wee Pals will charge you a \$30.00 processing fee. This fee is non-negotiable.

Late Payment Fees

A \$10.00 late fee will be charged to your account per day if payment is not received by Monday of the week of care. Subsequent payments made will always apply to the current invoice to avoid repeatedly assessing \$10.00 late fees.

Late Pickup Fees

Wee Pals is closed at 5:30pm each business day. We ask that our families have collected their child(ren), their items and exited the building by 5:30pm. The charges stated below will be applied if your family has not exited the building and/or your child(ren) have not been picked up by 5:30pm. Late fees can be charged at any time and are due with tuition the following Monday from the date they are charged to your account.

- 1st tardy: \$30 for the first 15 minutes, \$20 for every 5 minutes after per child
- 2nd tardy: \$35 for the first 15 minutes, \$25 for every 5 minutes after per child
- 3rd tardy: \$45 for the first 15 minutes, \$35 for every 5 minutes after per child
- 4th tardy: \$55 for the first 15 minutes, \$40 for every minute after per child

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If a parent is not able to be contacted for any reason or is late picking up and all other contacts have been tried, Wee Pals reserves the right to contact the police.

Vacation Days

Each family who is enrolled full-time and for at least one year are eligible for 5 days of vacation per calendar year, of which you will not be charged. These 5 days can be used for any reason. These 5 vacation days cannot be “banked”, nor can they carry over into the next year. These 5 days of vacation must be used consecutively. Use of vacation days will be up to the discretion of the directors if accounts are not currently up to date.

Holidays

Wee Pals is closed for the following holidays: January 1st, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the Friday following, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Tuition is not discounted due to holidays.

Child Termination/Withdrawal

If you decide to terminate your childcare with Wee Pals, we do require the minimum of a two-week written notice of which you are required to pay all applicable tuition costs. Costs are still incurred regardless of the reason for termination and whether the children attend or not. Vacation time cannot be used for the last two weeks of care. Wee Pals reserves the right to terminate care when:

- Policies are not followed
- Payment obligations are not met
- A child’s needs cannot be safely met within our program
- The safety of children or staff is at risk

Whenever possible, reasonable notice will be provided.

Attendance, Arrival & Daily Operations

GENERAL POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Transportation

Transportation to and from Wee Pals must be provided or arranged by the parents. Wee Pals will make sure the children get safely on and off the bus at our site. Wee Pals is not responsible for communicating with the school district or busing companies.

Daily Arrival

Our doors open at 6:30 a.m. Parents are required to undress their child (coat, snow pants, hat, etc), and accompany the child inside and see that they get safely into their appropriate classroom. Parents are expected to sign their children in through Brightwheel.

Daily Departure

When you pick up your child(ren), we ask that you make contact with a teacher to let someone know that you are leaving. In general, leaving adequate time to talk to teachers and ask about your child(ren)’s day is encouraged. With exceptions to immediate family members, anyone picking up a child(ren) needs to be at least 18 years or older. A pick up list must be kept up to date. This information is accessible at all times to parents through Brightwheel. If someone other

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than the guardian or parents who filled out the enrollment form are picking up, we require a notice which can be sent through Brightwheel. Upon pick-up, these individuals are required to stop in the office, with their government issued I.D., and identify themselves with office personnel before release of the child(ren) is made. Parents are expected to sign their children out on our Brightwheel application.

Daily and Weekly Attendance

Be sure to communicate clearly and regularly if your child's schedule will be different than normal. This can be done via Brightwheel messaging. This information is the basis for staffing, meals and supplies. Any permanent schedule change must be made aware to the directors. You will be charged for the schedule you have selected upon enrollment unless the directors are informed and agree to otherwise. Please see enrollment packet for overage rates on hours.

What to Bring

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING/FOOTWEAR

Children will go outside nearly every day. Please make sure your child has the appropriate attire for outdoor play. Shoes are mandatory at Wee Pals in all rooms. Wee Pals follows the Child Care Weather Watch Chart in regards to if it's safe to go outside. Please label all clothing.

DIAPERS

If your child is in diapers, you will need to provide them. Staff will send a Brightwheel note when you are running low. Wee Pals supplies a generic brand of wipes for diaper changes.

BOTTLES

If your child is using a bottle, please bring a few to keep here at Wee Pals or bring them home and back to the center daily. Bottles are washed after every use using licensing regulated cleaning methods.

EXTRA CLOTHING

Please provide more than one complete set of clothes (top, bottom, underwear, socks). Underwear and pants should have multiple pairs if your child is of potty training age. If Wee Pals clothing is used, please launder and return within the week.

TOYS FROM HOME

We ask that items such as books, toys, puzzles, etc. be kept at home. Some classes have a show and tell day. Teachers will reach out directly if your child's room participates. Items such as barrettes, hair ties, clips, brushes, and other accessories may be asked to be kept in cubbies based on the teacher's discretion.

FOOD FROM HOME

We request that parents **do not bring food to the center** unless it is discussed with the directors and your child's teacher. On special occasions, such as birthdays, treats are allowed but must be store bought to avoid any allergic reactions or dietary needs.

Certain age specific items will be discussed with your child's teacher prior to your child's start date. Such items may include breastmilk/formula, diaper cream, pacifiers, sunscreen, and water bottles.

Lost or Stolen Items

Wee Pals is not responsible for personal items. All found items will be placed in the designated lost and found area for one month. After one month, Wee Pals directors will use their discretion as to where to allocate the items.

Naptime

Infants are able to use a sleep sack or swaddle for rest time. If a swaddle is being used, licensing does require us to have a Swaddle Consent Form completed prior to use at the center. Please ask your child's teacher or a director for more information if needed.

Older infants who sleep on a cot and children in the toddler rooms and older may bring one child size blanket and one small, noise free, soft stuffed animal for rest time. All items should be clearly labeled. Items are sent home on Friday to be washed and returned to Wee Pals the following week.

Screen Time

The use of movies and screen time will only be permitted for children ages 16 months and up and only on special occasions. Screen time will be used at the director's discretion. This policy does not include the use of Smart Boards for learning purposes.

Health, Safety & Medical Policies

Emergency Contact Information

Emergency: 911

Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222

Licensing Agency: (651) 296-3971

Accidents and Injuries

If a child sustains a minor injury during the day, staff will complete a paper Incident Report and share it with the child's parents via Brightwheel. Parents will be asked to sign the paper report and offered a copy for their records. We will treat all injuries with first aid certified methods. If the injury appears to need medical attention, the parents will be contacted to have their child attended to by a medical professional and/or removed from care for the necessary allotted time. The expense will be the family's responsibility. A written report will be filed with the state whenever emergency medical treatment is required.

In case of an emergency, 911 will be called, parents will be notified and a staff person will accompany the child to the emergency room at the Owatonna hospital. Any expense in getting emergency care will be the family's responsibility.

Ill Children

We strive to prevent the spread of illness, and parent cooperation with our policies is critical. If a child has a fever, diarrhea or other symptoms of a contagious disease, children are to remain home and a notice must be sent via Brightwheel.

If a child should become ill during the day they will be allowed to rest quietly until their parents are able to come and pick them up. The parents will be notified of their child's condition and asked to come and pick their child up. If the parents cannot be reached then we will notify the emergency contacts. If no one is able to be reached then the child will

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remain in our care and accommodations will be made to keep the child as comfortable as possible while our staff monitors the child's condition. If conditions worsen, the child's health care source or 911 will be notified.

Exclusion of Sick Children

We ask parents to notify us within 24 hours if their child contracts a communicable illness. Other center parents will be notified of the illness via Brightwheel message from a director, informing them if their child was directly exposed to the illness while maintaining confidentiality. If a child becomes sick at the center, the child will be brought to the office and parents will be called.

Wee Pals follows the Specific Disease Exclusion Guidelines for Childcare determined by Hennepin County. Children must be excluded from Wee Pals until 24 hours after the child has been administered appropriate antibiotics for contagious illnesses, or been 24 hour fever-free without fever reducing medication, and been vomit/loose stools free for a 24 hour period.

Wee Pals will notify the Public Health Department within 24 hours should an occurrence of a "reportable disease" take place (Steele County Public Health (507)444-7650).

Absence Due to Illness

Full tuition will be charged for the first week a child is ill and unable to attend care. Consideration will be given for a reduction in tuition for additional weeks for a prolonged illness.

Handwashing

Wee Pals is committed to minimizing the spread of communicable diseases. Good hand washing techniques are taught and practiced with children and staff. Every child and staff member will wash hands after using the bathroom, after coughing or sneezing, and before eating. Staff in infant rooms are required to wash before and after changing a child's diaper.

Non-Prescription Medications

If a non-prescription medication is frequently needed, Wee Pals asks that parents/guardians supply the medication. Wee Pals does not provide non-prescription medication. Parents are required to fill out a form that gives permission to administer any medication, including non-prescription. Wee Pals requires the form to have specific start and end date, along with times and specific dose for medication to be administered. Wee Pals will strictly adhere to all label instructions. On occasion that a non-prescription medication is given to a child at Wee Pals, the staff member that gave the medication will log the type of medication and dosage given in Brightwheel and on the required licensing medication tracking form.

Prescription Medications

Wee Pals can administer prescription medications. A signed Medication Authorization / Administration Form from the parent must accompany the medication. The medication information sheet must be brought in, for information regarding possible side-effects and further drug information for staff to resource. Medications must be properly labeled for the child intended and in the original container with the current prescription information clearly printed. Medications that have expired will not be given and any unused portions of medication will be returned to the child's parents or be destroyed as soon as possible. All medications will be kept out of reach of the children. Medications requiring refrigeration will be stored in our refrigerator. Staff will record the date, time and dosage on Brightwheel and on the required licensing medication tracking form.

Program Drug, Alcohol and Firearms Policy

Wee Pals is a tobacco-free facility. The use of cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vaping devices, and all other tobacco or nicotine products is prohibited anywhere on Wee Pals property, including the building and playground areas.

To ensure the safety and well-being of all children, Wee Pals reserves the right to refuse the release of a child to any parent, guardian, or authorized pick-up person if staff reasonably believe that individual is impaired by alcohol, drugs, or any other substance that may affect their ability to safely care for the child.

Firearms, weapons, and other dangerous or lethal devices are prohibited on Wee Pals property. Parents, guardians, or other visitors whose employment requires them to carry a firearm must securely store the firearm in their locked vehicle before entering the Wee Pals facility.

Emergency Preparedness & Security

Missing Child

If a child goes missing while in Wee Pals' care, a thorough search of the building and surrounding area will be conducted. If after this search the child is still not located, the police and parents of the child will then be immediately called. Continued search by Wee Pals staff will continue to happen until the situation is resolved. Missing child incidents will be reported to licensing.

Winter Weather and Closing Policy

Wee Pals will make every effort to remain open during weather-related school closures in the surrounding public and private school districts. While it is rare for the center to close due to weather conditions, severe storms or dangerous travel conditions may require adjustments to operating hours or temporary closure for the safety of children, families, and staff.

If hazardous weather develops during child care hours, families may be contacted and asked to pick up their children early. During these situations, children will remain safely indoors under staff supervision until they are picked up.

Wee Pals will continue accepting children as long as staff members are able to travel safely and required child-to-staff ratios can be maintained. Because several employees commute from rural areas and neighboring communities, weather and road conditions may impact staffing availability. The safety of our children, families, and employees will always be our top priority.

When determining delays, early closures, or full closures, Wee Pals will monitor recommendations and reports from local emergency management, the Steele County Sheriff's Office, and the Minnesota State Patrol regarding road and weather conditions.

For updates regarding weather-related schedule changes, families are encouraged to contact the center directly or send a message over Brightwheel.

Relocation Plan

If the Wee Pals building has to evacuate the facility for any reason we will go to the Park and Recreation Building or the City of Owatonna Tech Office across the street from Wee Pals. We will stay in these locations until the center is safe to re-enter or parents pick up their children. An alert via Brightwheel will be sent in the event of relocation.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are practiced once a month and logged in the office. For fire related emergencies all staff are aware of the primary and secondary exits for their respective positions within the building. In the case of an actual fire emergency, 911 will be called. The fire alarm in the building is maintained by the city and is always in working order. Wee Pals allows teachers to take their cell phones with them outside and during emergencies in order to maintain safety. Once the children have been evacuated the staff will assemble the children and begin to take a roll count and await further instructions. Any missing children will be reported to the Fire Chief. No one is allowed to re-enter the building until the all clear is given. Fire extinguishers are checked on a regular basis by the city. A full report will be made to DCYF (651-296-3971) within 48 hours of a fire that requires the fire department.

Tornado Drills

Tornado drills are practiced and documented every month, April - September. In the event of a tornado, all staff are trained as to the location of the building they are to take their children, and the procedure to follow. Our tornado shelter is located in the basement of our building in the hallway.

Code Red Drills

Code Red drills are practiced for events such as a gunman, hostage situation, dangerous stranger situation, etc. Exterior building doors will remain locked. Each classroom will turn off the lights, and go to the furthest point away from the windows and door. Each class remains silently in their positions until an all-clear notice is given.

Nutrition & Food Program

Meals and Snacks

Wee Pals provides breakfast, lunch, and an AM and PM snack in accordance with the Child Adult Food Program. Times for these meals are listed below:

Breakfast: 7:15 - 8:00 am (varies by classroom) Teachers will share their classroom's meal times upon enrollment

AM Snack: 9:00 - 9:30 am

Lunch: 10:45 am - 12:30 pm (varies by classroom)

PM Snack: 2:00 - 2:30 pm

Menus are posted weekly on Brightwheel. Please reach out to your child's teacher or a director if you have any questions regarding meal times.

For infants, please discuss your feeding preferences with the lead teachers and consult the directors as needed. Wee Pals supports mothers in however they choose to feed their child - fed is best! Wee Pals can store breast milk or make accommodations for nursing moms to come to Wee Pals and nurse on site. Wee Pals supplies generic infant formula per CACFP guidelines. When babies are ready for solids, we can assist in the transition.

Dietary Restrictions/Allergies

In the event that a child has a food allergy, an ICCPP form will need to be filled out and signed by a physician or parents depending on the restriction. Parent preferences for dietary restrictions will be followed. A written note is needed for your child's file for a preferred dietary restriction. All allergies and diet restrictions are printed up on a chart that is

posted in each classroom and kitchen. All staff members receive yearly training on the center's allergies and how to respond in case of a reaction.

Food Program (CACFP)

Wee Pals is operated in accordance with the US department of agriculture policy, which does not permit discrimination because of race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin. Wee Pals is reimbursed for a percentage of its food costs based on the family size and income data sheets completed by families. This information is kept confidential and in the office. In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), (AD-3027) [found online](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Curriculum & Child Development

Curriculum at Wee Pals

Wee Pals takes the development of children very seriously. Best practices are constantly being researched by our management staff to provide the highest level of care for children enrolled. Wee Pals uses curriculums like *Funny Daffer* which covers all developmental areas (physical, cognitive, language & literacy, emotional, and social).

Through research in early childhood we know that children are capable and competent and that development occurs in predictable patterns. We are aware that children are unique and that many factors influence a child's development as they grow and progress at their own individual pace. We strive to provide a program strong in the following areas to foster school readiness: Approaches to Learning, Language and Literacy, The Arts, Mathematics, Physical and Movement development, Scientific Thinking, Social and Emotional Development and Social Systems.

Program Goals

- To provide safe, healthy, and nurturing care in an environment conducive to the development of each child.

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- To provide a program for the development, implementation and evaluation of each child's cognitive, social, spiritual, language, and motor skills activities.
- To provide an environment for staff and parents to continue to learn about the needs and behavior of individual children.
- To provide a supportive environment for parents.
- Conscious Discipline- Embracing conflict as an opportunity to teach. Creating a school family that cares for one another by keeping everyone safe.
- We incorporate SMART principles in our preschool classrooms.

Care Giving Objectives

In order to meet the program's philosophy and goals, the following care giving objectives have been established:

- Care for each child's social, emotional, spiritual, and cognitive needs.
- Caregiving routines will be consistent so the child can develop trust in the caregiver and the program environment.
- Warmth, affection, and caring will be offered so children will know they are a special individual.
- Every experience a child has will be considered a learning experience.
- Parents will be informed daily of their child's activities via Brightwheel

Developmental Objectives

We desire to prepare children to enter the formal school environment when they head off to kindergarten. Our goal by the time a child is ready for school is to expose them to the following skills:

Physical

- To increase strength, balance and muscular coordination
- Dress and undress self in appropriate clothing
- Know when they need to use the bathroom
- To provide nutritious food, cleanliness and adequate sleep/relaxation time
- Understand how to play safely with others
- String beads, hold scissors with correct grasp, stand and walk on a line

Cognitive

- Discuss shapes, recognition of shapes in their environment
- Number recognition to 20
- Counting 10 objects or more
- Observing patterns, sequencing, measuring and sorting
- Applying information to problem solving
- Name 8 basic colors

Language and Literacy

- Letter and sound recognition
- Interest in books
- Understand positional words
- Answers questions about key details in a story or group session
- Recognize and match rhyming
- Match pictures/words with same beginning sounds
- Knows first and last name

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- Answers why questions
- Can identify and make letters in their name
- Can draw simple pictures with prompts and support

Emotional

- Showing respect and concern for people and things
- Demonstrate appropriate self-control over feelings
- Expressing and showing a positive self image
- Shows control during structured and unstructured play
- Manage routine and non routine transitions with prompt
- Follow classroom rules and routines

Social

- To join group activities
- Playing and sharing cooperatively
- Accepting and responding to teachers instructions or questions
- To respect the rights and property of others
- To look at people when we speak to them
- Carry on a conversation and play with other children without intervention
- Speaking clearly
- Responding to stories through actions or words

Approaches to Learning

- Can independently complete tasks and assist others
- Shows detail or pride in work

Conscious Discipline

- Embracing conflict as a teaching opportunity and creating a school family that cares for one another by keeping everyone safe

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences will be held twice a year (fall and spring) to keep parents informed of their child's intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development. Parents will be provided the written assessment document and a conference form. Parents will be asked to sign a copy of the conference form for us to keep in their child's center file.

Guidance & Behavior Policies

Minnesota DCYF Center Behavior Guidance Requirements 9503.0055 BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE.

Subpart 1. **General requirements.** The applicant must develop written behavior guidance policies and procedures, and the license holder must see that the policies and procedures are carried out. The policies and procedures must:

- A. ensure that each child is provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior;
- B. be tailored to the developmental level of the children the center is licensed to serve;
- C. redirect children and groups away from problems toward constructive activity in order to reduce conflict;
- D. teach children how to use acceptable alternatives to problem behavior in order to reduce conflict;
- E. protect the safety of children and staff persons; and
- F. provide immediate and directly related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior.

Subp. 2. **Persistent unacceptable behavior.** The license holder must have written procedures for dealing with persistent unacceptable behavior that requires an increased amount of staff guidance and time. The procedures must specify that staff:

- A. observe and record the behavior of the child and staff response to the behavior; and
- B. develop a plan to address the behavior documented in item A in consultation with the child's parent and with other staff persons and professionals when appropriate.

Subp. 3. **Prohibited actions.** The license holder must have and enforce a policy that prohibits the following actions by or at the direction of a staff person:

- A. Subjection of a child to corporal punishment. Corporal punishment includes, but is not limited to, rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting, and spanking.
- B. Subjection of a child to emotional abuse. Emotional abuse includes, but is not limited to, name calling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family, and using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child.
- C. Separation of a child from the group except as provided in subpart 4.
- D. Punishment for lapses in toilet habits.
- E. Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care as a punishment for unacceptable behavior.
- F. The use of physical restraint other than to physically hold a child when containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm.
- G. The use of mechanical restraints, such as tying.

For children with developmental disabilities or children under the age of five, as specified in parts [9525.0004](#) to [9525.0036](#), physical and mechanical restraints may be permitted if they are implemented in accordance with the aversive and deprivation procedures governed by parts [9525.2700](#) to [9525.2810](#).

Subp. 4. **Separation from the group.** No child may be separated from the group unless the license holder has tried less intrusive

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methods of guiding the child's behavior which have been ineffective and the child's behavior threatens the well being of the child or other children in the center. A child who requires separation from the group must remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by a program staff person. When separation from the group is used as a behavior guidance technique, the child's return to the group must be contingent on the child's stopping or bringing under control the behavior that precipitated the separation, and the child must be returned to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated the separation abates or stops. A child between the ages of six weeks and 16 months must not be separated from the group as a means of behavior guidance.

§Subp. 5. Separation report. All separations from the group must be noted on a daily log. The license holder must ensure that notation in the log includes the child's name, staff person's name, time, date, and information indicating what less intrusive methods were used to guide the child's behavior and how the child's behavior continued to threaten the well being of the child or other children in care. If a child is separated from the group three times or more in one day, the child's parent shall be notified and notation of the parent notification shall be indicated on the daily log. If a child is separated five times or more in one week or eight times or more in two weeks, the procedure in subpart 2 must be followed.

Subp. 6. Children with developmental disabilities. For children with developmental disabilities or children under the age of five, as specified in parts [9525.0004](#) to [9525.0036](#), the standards governing the use of aversive and deprivation procedures in parts [9525.2700](#) to [9525.2810](#) apply.

Statutory Authority: *MS s [245A.02](#); [245A.09](#); [252.28](#); [256B.092](#)*

History: *13 SR 173; 18 SR 2244; L 2005 c 56 s 2*

Published Electronically: *October 8, 2007*

Wee Pals Behavior Guidance Policy

1. Purpose & Philosophy

The purpose of this policy is to promote the social-emotional development, self-regulation, and respectful behavior of all children enrolled. We believe that children learn best through positive guidance, modeling, encouragement, and consistent expectations. Discipline will be used as a teaching tool rather than as punishment.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff members, substitutes, volunteers, and contracted personnel, and to all children enrolled at Wee Pals Child Care Center, during all center activities including field trips, transitions, and routines.

3. Definitions

- **Behavior guidance:** Strategies and techniques used to help children learn acceptable behaviors, self-control, and social skills.
- **Unacceptable behavior:** Behaviors that threaten the safety of the child or others, damage property, disrupt learning or harm relationships.
- **Persistent unacceptable behavior:** Behavior that occurs repeatedly or over time, despite regular guidance interventions.

4. Legal & Regulatory Requirements

This policy is based on Minnesota Rules, Chapter 9503, Part 9503.0055, which requires:

- Written behavior guidance policies and procedures that are carried out.

- Policies must ensure each child is provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior; be tailored to developmental level; redirect away from problems toward constructive activity; teach acceptable alternatives; protect safety; and provide immediate and directly related consequences for unacceptable behavior.
- Procedures for dealing with **persistent unacceptable behavior** including observation, recording, developing a plan in consultation with parents and, when appropriate, professionals.
- Prohibition of certain actions: corporal punishment; emotional abuse; withholding food, warmth, clothing, medical care; etc.
- Guidelines for *separation from the group* with conditions (only after less intrusive methods have been tried; must be visible and receive audible staff supervision; return to the group when behavior is under control).

5. General Behavior Guidance Principles & Practices

- Staff will model positive behaviors (kindness, respect, patience).
- Expectations for behavior will be clear, consistent, and age-appropriate.
- Use of positive reinforcement (praise, encouragement) to reinforce desired behavior.
- Redirection away from problem behavior toward constructive activity.
- Offer choices when appropriate to help children feel empowered and learn decision-making.
- Teaching children alternatives to unacceptable behaviors (how to express frustration, share, use words).

6. Unacceptable Behaviors & Immediate Consequences

- Immediate and directly related consequences for unacceptable behavior: e.g. brief removal of a privilege, reminding child of expectations, helping make amends, logical consequence related to the behavior.
- Consequences will be fair, consistent, and appropriate to age, severity, and frequency of behavior.

7. Persistent Unacceptable Behavior

When a child's behavior continues to occur despite regular guidance:

1. Observation & Documentation

- Staff will observe and document specific incidences: what happened, what preceded it, response(s) by staff, what worked / didn't.

2. Parent/Guardian Consultation

- Bring behavior to parent's attention, share observations.
- Invite parent input and collaborate to develop an action plan.

3. Staff and Professional Input

- Teachers/staff who work with the child will meet to review strategies.

- Where applicable, consult with professionals (behavior specialists, mental health, special education) for support.

4. Behavior Support Plan

- Written plan detailing strategies, responsibilities (which staff, which parent roles), timeline, measurable goals.
- Review plans regularly. Adjust as needed. If adjustments made are not helping the child be successful at Wee Pals, enrollment will be subject to review by the Board of Directors.

8. Separation from the Group

- Separation may only be used **after less intrusive methods have failed**, and only when the child's behavior poses a risk to self or others.
- The place of separation must be an **unenclosed part of the classroom** or program space where the child can be seen and heard by a staff person continuously.
- Children under 16 months may **not** be separated from the group for disciplinary reasons.
- Return to the group as soon as behavior that precipitated separation abates or stops.
- Log each separation: child's name, staff person, date/time, what less intrusive method(s) were used first, what behavior continued to threaten safety, and time ended.
- If a child is separated **3 times in a single day**, the parent must be notified, record of notification logged. If a child's behavior does not improve, the child's parent will be called to pick up their child for the remainder of the day. If **5 times in one week** or **8 times in two weeks**, follow the "persistent behavior" procedures.

9. Prohibited Practices

- No **corporal punishment**: no hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, etc.
- No **emotional abuse**: name calling, shaming, threats, ostracism, humiliation.
- No withholding of necessities (food, warmth, clothing, medical care) as punishment.
- No punishment for lapses in toilet habits.
- Physical or mechanical restraints only in situations allowed by law and only to prevent harm, not for punishment.

10. Communication & Family Involvement

- Parents/guardians will receive a copy of this policy at enrollment.
- Staff will inform parents of behavioral concerns or incidents in a timely manner.
- Parents are expected to collaborate with center staff in behavior plans.
- If toilet training applies, develop a plan with parents and ensure children are not punished for accidents.

11. Staff Training & Oversight

- All staff, including substitutes and volunteers, must be trained on behavior guidance, this policy, prohibited actions, de-escalation, positive reinforcement, etc.
- New staff shall receive behavior guidance training during orientation. Ongoing professional development to include behavior guidance.
- Supervisors/directors will monitor that staff follow policy via observation, feedback, and review of incident/separation logs.

12. Monitoring, Review & Record-Keeping

- Keep a log of unacceptable behaviors, separations, parent notifications, behavior support plans.
- Review behavior data (frequencies, trends) at regular intervals (e.g. monthly or quarterly) among staff.
- Review and update behavior guidance policy at least annually.

13. Accountability & Enforcing the Policy

- Staff who violate the policy (e.g. use prohibited disciplinary methods) will be subject to corrective action.
- The directors hold responsibility for ensuring policy is implemented.

14. Supporting Children with Special Needs

- For children with developmental disabilities or behavioral diagnoses, behavior support must be coordinated with any Individualized Education Program (IEP), IFSP or evaluation.
- Ensure any use of restraints or aversive procedures (if applicable by law) follow state law and only under appropriate supervision and documentation.

15. Parent Handbook & Enrollment

- This behavior guidance policy will be included in the **Parent Handbook**.
- At enrollment, parents will sign acknowledgment that they have received and read the policy.

Staff & Personnel

As a licensed facility, our staff are required to have a certain amount of education and qualifications. Our lead and assistant teachers meet the requirement of post secondary credits, Parent Aware approved training courses, and yearly ongoing training. Our aides are required to have their high school diploma (or be in the process of receiving one), and are required to complete yearly ongoing training. All Wee Pals staff are certified in First Aid and CPR, along with blood borne illnesses and the spread of infectious diseases.

Background Studies

All employees, substitutes, and individuals with unsupervised access to children have completed background studies as required by Minnesota Statutes Chapter 245C and are cleared prior to working with children.

Parent Communication & Involvement

Acknowledging that the most important adults in a child's life are the parents, we will make every effort to keep parents informed about their child's daily experiences, verbally and/or on written reports. We will post information on the bulletin boards, on outside doors, and/or outside rooms. Check your child's cubby for any notes and art being sent home. If another language other than English is spoken, Wee Pals will do its best to translate the message into the spoken language or utilize a staff member that speaks the language if possible. Different ways that parent communication happens at Wee Pals is listed below:

- Resources posted/provided around the building
- Daily Reports maintained in Brightwheel
- Conferences twice a year (Fall and Spring)
- Family pictures posted in classrooms
- Offer parents the opportunity to review, critique, assess the program through a yearly parent review
- Opportunities to join your child(ren) for special events, field trips, lunches, birthdays, etc.
- Chance to join the Board of Directors and attend monthly meetings relating to systems of the center

Parent/Guardian Visitation

Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit any time. Please take into consideration that if you visit in the midst of the day your child may not understand why it's not time to go depending on the age of the child. If separation is hard for your child, you may want to plan according to the needs of the child.

Parent Grievance Procedure

Please contact the directors immediately if you have a concern regarding Wee Pals Child Care Center or its staff. Parents are also welcome to contact the Board of Directors at boardofdirectors@weepalschildcare.com.

Licensing can also be contacted if a parent feels a grievance hasn't been resolved after utilizing the previous contacts.

(651) 431-6030 #4056

Martha Walker

Wee Pals License # 802654

Events & Special Activities

Preschool Graduation

One afternoon every spring Wee Pals holds a preschool graduation for families and friends to attend and hold a small graduation ceremony for preschool graduates going into kindergarten. This is held in the theater across from the main office.

Birthday Celebrations

We plan to make children's birthdays a special time for them. If parents would like to send treats to share, they will be welcome, but not necessary—your child will still have a special day. As noted in our food policy, **any treat brought from home must be bakery prepared or store purchased**. We appreciate as much advance notice as possible when your child will be bringing treats to share.

Summer Water Days

Wee Pals has water days starting in June. Children will have access to sprinklers, water tables, and different water play activities. Classes will have assigned water days where they will bring a swimsuit and a towel for their water fun outside. Please label your child's towel and suit.

Field Trips and Other Events

Field trips and events occur year round at Wee Pals. There is an associated activity fee with these trips. Parental permission will be obtained from each child's parents before the event is to take place, if the field trip is off site. The permission slip will include date of the event, a description of the event, associated costs and suggested items which may be brought. Staff will take attendance sheets, parent contact sheets, any allergy information and related medications, first aid kit and first aid manual on all field trips. At least one person will be trained in First Aid and CPR during these events. Transportation will be provided by the Owatonna Bus Company. All children may go for walks within the West Hills primary area without advance notice. Attendance is taken before departure, during the trip, and upon return to ensure all children are accounted for at all times.

Written parental permission will be required prior to any occasion of research, experimental procedure, or public reactions activity involving children.

Fundraisers

Wee Pals holds multiple fundraisers throughout the year. Families will be notified of fundraisers via Brightwheel.

Pets

There may be a special occasion where a pet will be at Wee Pals. Parents to children who would be in contact with the pet will be notified prior to contact and asked permission to interact if applicable.

Mandatory Reporting of Maltreatment

All Wee Pals employees are mandatory reporters.

Who Should Report

Any person may voluntarily report suspected child abuse or neglect.

Under Minnesota law, individuals who work with children in a licensed facility are mandated reporters and are legally required to report suspected maltreatment. A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe that a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused, or has been neglected or abused within the preceding three years, must immediately make a report to the appropriate authority. Reports must be made as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after the information is obtained. A mandated reporter may not delegate the responsibility to report to a supervisor or another staff person.

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Where to Report

If a child is in immediate danger, call 911 immediately.

Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring in a licensed child care facility should be made to:

Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families
Licensing Maltreatment Intake Line
(651) 296-4123

Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county social services agency or local law enforcement.

If the concern does not involve suspected abuse or neglect, but may involve violations of Minnesota Statutes or licensing rules governing the facility, contact:

Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families
Licensing Division
(651) 296-3971

What to Report

Definitions of maltreatment are found in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act, Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 260E.

A report should include, if known:

- the name and address of the child;
- the name and address of the child's parent, guardian, or caregiver;
- the nature and extent of the suspected abuse or neglect;
- any evidence of previous abuse or neglect;
- the identity of the person believed to be responsible for the maltreatment, if known; and
- any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

An oral report made by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, excluding weekends and holidays, unless otherwise directed by the receiving agency.