



Watch Them Grow



Children's Center

Bradford • Newbury • BMU

Watch Them Grow Childcare Center FAMILY HANDBOOK

Updated Fall 2020

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WELCOME

Dear Family,

Welcome to Watch Them Grow Childcare Center. Please use this handbook as a guide to answer any questions regarding philosophy, mission, policy and procedure at Watch Them Grow. Watch Them Grow is an independent non-profit 501 3(c) licensed childcare center governed by a Board of Directors with daily management overseen by full time directors. We strongly encourage caregivers to bring forth any comments, questions and concerns in relation to the information in this handbook.

WTG offers two 4 STAR, quality childcare programs in Bradford and Newbury Vermont. Bradford offers full day, full year care for children ages 6 weeks through the start of kindergarten. We have 4 classrooms at the Bradford center, for infant through preschool. The Newbury program offers care to children ages 3 through the start of kindergarten, Newbury operates September 1 through the middle of June.

Thank you for choosing Watch Them Grow Childcare Center. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

The WTG Staff, Directors & Board of Directors

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ABOUT US

Philosophy

We believe that each child is a unique individual who needs a secure, caring, and stimulating atmosphere in which to grow and mature emotionally, intellectually, physically, and socially. It is our desire as an educator to help students meet their fullest potential in these areas by providing an environment that is safe, supports risk-taking, and invites a sharing of ideas. There are three elements that we believe are conducive to establishing such an environment, the teacher acting as a guide, allowing the child's natural curiosity to direct his/her learning, and promoting respect for all things and all people.

When the teacher's role is to guide, providing access to information rather than acting as the primary source of information, the students' search for knowledge is met as they learn to find answers to their questions. For students to construct knowledge, they need the opportunity to discover for themselves and practice skills in authentic situations. Providing students access to hands-on activities and allowing adequate time and space to use materials that reinforce the lesson being studied creates an opportunity for individual discovery and construction of knowledge to occur.

Mission

The mission of the Watch Them Grow Child Care Center is to provide a safe, nurturing, child centered, and affordable quality educational environment that fosters a child's individual success and a love of learning in collaboration with caregivers and the community.

Certification

Both WTG centers are licensed by the Vermont Child Development Division (CDD). The CDD is a division under the umbrella of Vermont Department of Children & Families. In order to obtain licensure, we must meet all criteria and regulations set forth by the CDD. We are held to these standards and expected to follow them at all times. Please feel free to review these state [regulations](#) at any time.

Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS) is Vermont's system for recognizing and improving quality in programs registered or licensed with the Child Development Division. Both programs currently hold 4 out of 5 STARS.

Both Newbury and Bradford preschool programs are prequalified as defined by the legislation determined for Vermont's Universal Pre K, also known as Act 166. Act 166, passed by the Vermont Legislature in 2014, provides for publicly funded prekindergarten education for a minimum of ten hours per week for 35 weeks annually for all 3, 4- and 5-year-old children not enrolled in kindergarten.

Vermont Universal Prekindergarten Education is the implementation of high-quality, effective instruction by licensed educators who use evidence-based practices within intentionally designed early learning environments. Early educators align curriculum with the Vermont Early Learning Standards while adapting experiences to support the full participation of each and every child to realize their full potential and promote successful outcomes.

There are [requirements](#) for students to receive the 10 publicly funded hours, the director of your center can review these with you.

The Early Multi Teared Systems of Support is a program both Bradford and Newbury are participating in currently in collaboration with and support from Orange East Supervisory Union's Early Childhood Program. This tiered [framework](#) of universal promotion, prevention and intervention is the model for delivering a comprehensive range of evidence-based practices, strategies and resources to families and early childhood practitioners with the goal of improving early learning, social and emotional well-being and competence for Vermont's young children birth thru age 8. Early MTSS also aligns the extensive research, materials and practices developed by the Center for Early Literacy Learning to support early learning.

Watch Them Grow is qualified as a Specialized Child Care Provider. Specialized Child Care provides vulnerable children and high-risk families with quality child care and specific supports that help meet their needs, strengthen their families, and promote their children's development. Specialized Child Care (SCC) is part of the continuum of coordinated services offered through Children's Integrated Services (CIS) in Vermont communities. SCC offers an array of services and supports to families and children with identified specialized child care needs. Specialized Child Care also supports child care providers and CIS specialists working with families to assure that these children experience success in child care settings that meet their needs. Specialized Child Care providers have made a commitment to providing the best quality care to vulnerable children in their care. They agree to continuous professional development that targets the social emotional development of children to enhance and improve their skills in a safe and supportive environment

Hours of Operation

Bradford:

The Bradford Center is licensed to operate daily 7am-5pm, Monday-Friday.

The Bradford operates year-round with the exception of the first full week following the 4th of July and December 24th-January 1st.

Newbury:

The Newbury Center is licensed to operate daily 7am-5pm, Monday-Friday.

The Newbury Center runs September through June with closures for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the scheduled Orange East Supervisory Union school vacations for February and April. Newbury will also close for snow days.

Holidays

We are closed for the following holidays:

New Year's Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving & the day after

Christmas Eve, Christmas Day & the day after Christmas

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, and deposit and first tuition payment paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

A two-week, non-refundable tuition deposit is required for each child enrolled. This deposit will be held without interest and will represent tuition payment for the last two weeks of the child's enrollment.

It is always our hope to meet both student and caregivers prior to enrollment. However we understand that can't always happen, it is required that at least one caregiver come to the center take a tour and meet with the director prior to the student's first day.

Children are admitted without regard to race culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

Inclusion

Watch Them Grow Childcare Center believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

If your child has an identified special need, it is the responsibility of the caregiver to notify WTG of your child's need(s), we will do everything we can to accommodate this need(s). We are always willing to welcome outside specialists in our center to work with students individually.

We encourage collaboration between outside specialists and our staff in order to best support the student's growth.

Non-Discrimination

At Watch Them Grow Childcare Center equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or caregiver political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Family Activities

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. Throughout the year you will be invited to attend various events or activities sponsored by WTG, we encourage caregivers/families to attend as many as possible, in an effort to show your child your commitment to their education.

Confidentiality

Records for all children will remain confidential and limited to the director and/or staff designated by the director and child care licensing, Child Development Division employees or other entities with statutory authority for issues related to the health, safety and protection of children. There will be no exception to this policy without the express written permission of the legal caregiver of the child.

Staff Qualifications

Our staff are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. These qualifications can be found in the [Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations](#) manual.

Staff participate in orientation and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

Any arrangement (i.e. babysitting) between families and our staff outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by Watch Them Grow Childcare Center.

Child to Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios:

Age	Child to Staff
< 23 months	4:1
24-35 months	5:1
3-5 year-olds	10:1

Communication & Family Partnership

Communication is of utmost importance at WTG, we expect staff to be communicating with caregivers at pick up and drop off every day. We strongly encourage caregivers to communicate anything notable going on with your child that can impact your child while in our care.

Information for caregivers will be posted on a general bulletin board at the entrance to the center or within your child's classroom. You will also receive communication from your child's classroom teacher with relevant, classroom specific information. Infants will receive a day sheet each day with specific information around, feeding, sleeping and diapering along with any other notable events from the day. There will be regular communication from the director of your child's program via email regarding general center information.

We welcome and encourage any and all communication from families, we want to know if you are not feeling good about something in regard to your child's care. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions, concerns or feedback, we strive to do our best at all times, we can only work to correct situations that we have been made aware of.

Parent/Teacher Conferences will be offered twice a year to all preschool families. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

Fundraising

In an effort to support our mission to provide affordable quality care, fundraising is something WTG relies on. We use the money raised to buy new materials for the classrooms, field trips, and as a way to offset the cost of tuition. At a minimum WTG will provide two fundraising opportunities per year. We ask participating families to raise \$100 per family, per school year. If you choose not to participate you will be billed a \$100 fundraiser waiver fee on your next invoice. We welcome caregiver involvement in many areas of our program, specifically fundraising. If you have a fundraising idea or would like to facilitate a fundraiser, please reach out to your respective director. Thank you in advance for your support.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Caregivers are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. The infant room welcomes nursing moms throughout the day. Visitors are welcome, however at times can be disruptive to the classroom environment, if it is at all possible please give the classroom teacher notice of your planned visit.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times.

Our team will always do their best to speak with caregivers when onsite for a visit. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

Publicity

When the opportunity presents itself, WTG staff will take pictures of our students engaging in an activity, with legal caregiver permission we sometimes post these photos to our social media, website or local publications. We will NEVER share your child's photograph without permission.

CURRICULUM & LEARNING

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curriculum that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

Curriculum & Assessment

Each student is informally being assessed every day, however we do two formal assessments per year for preschool students, one in the fall and one in the spring. WTG uses Teaching Strategies Gold as the formal assessment tool. As part of this assessment, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom so as to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families at each parent teach conference.

Outdoor Play and Field Trips

We strongly believe outdoor play is an integral component to each child's development. We get outside as much possible, half day students should plan on a minimum of 30 minutes of outdoor time and full day students can be expect at least 60 minutes outside, weather permitting. These guidelines are used for students all ages but of course we take weather and each child's daily routine into consideration at infant and younger toddler age. It is critical that your child is prepared for the outdoors and its various elements with appropriate clothing. If your child is not prepared for outdoor play you will be called and will need to bring appropriate clothing or pick your child up within 60 minutes. All person clothing items should be labeled, WTG is not responsible for misplaced items.

Whenever possible we take the opportunity to explore our surroundings and take the children on what is called a walking field trip. This means we are taking the students outside of our licensed area. For example, in Bradford students might walk behind the school over to Elizabeth's Park and in Newbury the preschoolers regularly attend story hour at the Tenney Memorial Library. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the enrollment package.

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips for preschoolers, and we encourage you to join your child on the trip. Permission Slips for each trip must be signed by the child's family.

Electronic Media

WTG does not use electronic media (TV, Video, Tablet, etc.) as an educational tool.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Rest Time

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs. Infants under the age of 12 months are not permitted to have anything in their crib with them including a blanket, they are permitted to sleep in a sleep sack if that is something you would like to send in for your child, we do not provide them. Infants cannot be left at drop off in their car seats or asleep, the drop off person must hand over to staff awake. Caregivers/teachers directly observe infants by sight and sound at all times and check on sleeping infants a minimum of every 15 minutes.

After lunch, all children participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep but are required to rest quietly for 30 minutes. Each student is provided a rest mat, families need to send their student in with a crib sheet, you are welcome to send in a blanket, pillow and stuffy if desired.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

Children cannot enter preschool until they are toilet trained. The only exception to this policy is if a child is on an IEP and toilet training is an identified area of support and there is EEE staff assigned to the student to support them meet this goal.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

Watch Them Grow Childcare Center is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Discipline Policy

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of behavior management of children. When children receive positive, nonviolent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop

good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief, Watch Them Grow uses a positive approach to discipline and practices the following discipline and behavior management techniques.

WE DO

- Communicate to children using positive statements.
- Communicate with children on their level.
- Talk with children in a calm quiet manner.
- Explain unacceptable behavior to children.
- Give attention to children for positive behavior.
- Praise and encourage the children.
- Reason with and set limits for the children.
- Apply rules consistently.
- Model appropriate behavior.
- Set up the classroom environment to prevent problems.
- Provide alternatives and redirect children to acceptable activity.
- Give children opportunities to make choices and solve problems.
- Help children talk out problems and think of solutions.
- Listen to children and respect the children's needs, desires and feelings.
- Provide appropriate words to help solve conflicts.
- Use storybooks and discussion to work through common conflicts.

WE DO NOT

- Inflict corporal punishment in any manner upon a child. (Corporal punishment is defined as the use of physical force to the body as a discipline measure. Physical force to the body includes, but is not limited to, spanking, hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, pushing, pulling, or slapping.)
- Use any strategy that hurts, shames, or belittles a child.
- Use any strategy that threatens, intimidates, or forces a child.
- Use food as a form of reward or punishment.
- Use or withhold physical activity as a punishment.
- Shame or punish a child if a bathroom accident occurs.
- Embarrass any child in front of others.
- Compare children.
- Place children in a locked and/or dark room.
- Leave any child alone, unattended or without supervision.
- Allow discipline of a child by other children.
- Criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle a child's parents, families, or ethnic groups.

Conferences will be scheduled with parents if particular disciplinary problems occur. If a child's behavior consistently endangers the safety of the children around him/her, then the Director has the right, after meeting with the parents and documenting behavior problems and interventions, to terminate child care services for that particular child.

Note: If, at any point, there is an indication/suspicion that a child may have special needs, Watch Them Grow will inform the child's family and make a referral for assessment and assistance.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at **Watch Them Grow Childcare Center** has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child.

Should a child continue to display unsafe behavior and is unable to positively respond to the interventions listed above WTG reserves the right to remove the child from the group until the child is able to rejoin as a safe and productive member of the group. If the child is unable to do so, WTG will notify the caregivers (emergency contacts will be contacted if cannot reach the caregivers) to have the child picked up for the remainder of the day, the pick-up needs to happen within 60 minutes of notification.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.
- Watch Them Grow does not have the appropriate resources to support the needs of the child

TUITION AND FEES

Important Notice

Tuition is billed on/around the 15th, due no later than the 1st of the following month. Invoices are sent electronically via email, please notify WTG if your email address changes. **If tuition is not paid in full by the 7th calendar day of the invoiced month**, your child(ren) will not be permitted to attend and your enrollment will be forfeited. The two-week deposit will be applied to this period of nonpayment. Your family will not be considered for reenrollment if there is a past due balance on the account.

Tuition Rates

Families contract for a specific weekly schedule as indicated on the *Enrollment Agreement* Form. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every month year-round whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure or closure due to inclement weather.

Please see attached fee schedule for current tuition rates.

Tuition Deposit

A Tuition Deposit equal to two weeks of care is required at the time registration is confirmed. This deposit is applied to the last two weeks of care. A two-week written notice is required when withdrawing from care and/or making a reduction in services.

Upon confirmation of enrollment a two-week deposit is required, this is a non-refundable deposit, however if your child is enrolled this amount will be applied to your final invoice. A deposit is not required for students attending the 10 publicly funded hours only.

Adding Extra Days

Watch Them Grow is happy to accommodate drop in care when availability allows. In the case of utilized drop in services, payment is due prior to services rendered. Drop in rates will be based on your current daily rate. Please reach out to your director to inquire about drop in care if/when needed.

Payment

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences or holidays. Payment is due monthly by the 1st as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

A non-refundable registration fee of \$25 is due upon enrollment.

Methods of Payment

Several methods of payment are available for families' convenience. Families can pay by check, money order, or credit card. WTG uses the Square point of sale system; in this program you can save your debit/credit card information to make payments more easily. There is a locked

payment box in the each center, check or money order payments can be dropped here, please identify the invoice you are paying when using check or money order.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs and as a result, the business does not have the latitude to allow families to accrue a balance equal to more than two weeks of tuition.

Failure to pay child care payments will result in child care services being terminated.

Repeated late payments will result in your family being required to set up automatic payments or credit card payments.

If payment is more than 60 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$30. This charge may be collected electronically.

Late Pick-up Fees

Watch Them Grow operates under a license and insurance that are specific to hours of operation, we cannot legally care for children outside of these hours, therefore late pick-ups cannot occur. We understand emergencies happen, we ask in the event you are going to be a few minutes late you call the center and let a staff know. If a child is still at the center at closing and we have not heard from a caregiver we will call all identified emergency contacts, if we are unable to reach anyone we will be forced to notify the local police and/or Department of Children and Families. Late fees of \$1 per minute will be assessed beginning at 4:30 PM and will be due before your child can return.

After the first instance of unexcused late pick up, families will be billed at the employee's overtime hourly rate for each 5 minute period or part thereof. Repeated late pick up may result in childcare services being terminated.

Repeated late pick up may result in child care services being terminated.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9 AM for infants and toddlers or 8 AM for preschoolers, please call us at: Bradford 802-222-4912 | Newbury 802-866-5621. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

Withdrawal

A written notice, 2 weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. If you withdraw your child immediately you will still be responsible for the tuition for the following two weeks.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

If your child is coming from another program WTG will request your written permission to transfer records from the previous program.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced through emails to all caregiver emails provided, our Facebook page, and WCAX TV. Watch Them Grow generally follows the Bradford/Newbury public school decisions for delayed opening and early dismissals. However, at times the public school district does not make a determination for delayed opening until after our staff would normally arrive at work for a 7 AM opening. Our policy is as follows, if Bradford/Newbury make the decision to delay opening or close for the day **before 6:15am** WTG will delay our opening until 9 AM, if Bradford/Newbury makes that decision after **6:15am** WTG will open at 7 AM. Anytime there is questionable weather we strongly recommend you check your email/Facebook/WCAX in the morning.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange within 90 minutes.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

We open at 7 AM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. Caregivers are expected to accompany their children and sign them in as well as help them transition into their day, this includes putting belongings in cubby's, washing hands and helping them take off coats, changes shoes if necessary, etc. This is also a time for caregivers to share any pertinent information about the child with staff.

We close at 5 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

Parking

Bradford: Parking for the Bradford center is located outside our entrance. Our entrance is located in a parking lot on Riverbend Career and Technical Center campus, we share a parking lot with the Automotive program. It is important that we contain WTG parking to our 4 allocated spots outside our entrance. Please be mindful when pulling in and out for other vehicles and students/families of both WTG and RBCTC.

Newbury: WTG parking at the Newbury center is shared with Newbury Elementary School, there are not any specifically assigned spots for WTG use. You are welcome to park in all permitted parking areas.

Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

In order to safeguard your child, we will need copies of any court ordered custody agreements. Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If after hours we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency and/or police department.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring

- **Infants:** 2 bottles that can be left at the center, at least 6 diapers per day, and at least 2 changes of clothes per day. Enough formula, breast milk and/or food for the day. Licensing requires we offer food every two hours, if there is not enough available your child will have to be picked up by the next scheduled feeding. You are encouraged to send extra, we can keep breast milk in the freezer, and formula for up to 30 days after it's been opened. Please do not send in open formula because we cannot verify the date it was opened. All breast milk should be labeled with name and date it produced. Your infant will have an individual container that can hold extra clothing, outdoor wear, blanket or anything else you may want to send. They will also have their own space in the changing area to hold diapers, wipes and creams/ointments, you are welcome to send in these items in bulk, we will let you know when they need to be replenished. Your child should have a crib sheet that can be kept at the center (we launder these at least 1x per week). We cannot allow **ANYTHING** in the crib with any infant under age 12 months, the only acceptable item they can sleep in is a sleep sack if you would like to provide one. After their first birthday you can provide a blanket for rest time if you would like.
- **Toddlers:** At least 2 extra sets of clothing, shoes for indoor and outdoor play, as well as appropriate outdoor clothing for the season. Your child will have their own space in the changing area to hold diapers, wipes and creams/ointments, you are welcome to send in these items in bulk,

we will let you know when they need to be replenished. Your child should also have a crib sheet for rest time, you are welcome to send in a blanket/pillow/stuffy if you wish.

- **Preschoolers:** at least one change of clothes that can be left at the center, if/when this change of clothes is used, we will send home the dirty clothes and ask that you bring back another set. Please make sure you provide appropriate clothing for the outdoors every day. We spend at least 30-60 minutes a day outside and it's critical that your child is dressed appropriately for the elements. If your child does not have the necessary clothing we will contact you to have a set brought in immediately or your child will need to be picked up for the day.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Sheets and soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the center.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home. It will be at the discretion of your classroom teacher as to what items can and cannot be left over night in the cubbies.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located in each center. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless special arrangements have been made with your classroom teacher prior to bringing in the toy.

NUTRITION

Food Prepared for or at the Center

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service. You will receive enrollment and eligibility paperwork upon enrollment and then annually throughout your time at the center. This paperwork is critical to our CACFP program, it allows us to be reimbursed for food related expenses. Both centers provide breakfast and afternoon snack to all students at no extra cost. Infants and toddlers are offered lunch through Watch Them Grow's food program. The cost of this meal is based on eligibility defined by the CACFP paperwork, if your family is eligible for free or reduced lunch there is no out of pocket expense to you, if your family does not qualify for free or reduced there is a \$2 per meal fee. Preschoolers are offered lunch through the Newbury and Oxbow hot lunch programs respectively, please note these lunches are only offered during public school calendar days. You may have a second set of enrollment and eligibility paperwork to fill out for this lunch program. If your family does not qualify for free lunch any out of pocket cost will be due to the Abbey Group. You are required to send lunch for your child on any day Newbury or Oxbow does not have school.

Food Allergies

Watch Them Grow is nut free. Please do not send in any food that may contain nuts. If an item is sent in we will take it out of their lunch box, and offer a replacement and send the item home with an explanation.

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician and an epi pen should be on site whenever your child is.

Meal Time

At meal time the dining table is set with plates and flatware, and the food is placed in small bowls from which the children can help themselves. Children and staff sit at a table together. Children are encouraged to serve themselves from food passed around each table. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. Monthly menus are posted for viewing by parents/caregivers.

A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

Infant Feedings

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Infants will be held for bottle-feeding until able to hold his or her own bottle. Bottles will never be propped.
- Infants are fed “on cue” to the extent possible (at least every 2 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/teacher.
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for up to 90 days.
- Breast milk and formula brought from home must be dated and labeled with the child’s name.
- Labels on all milk/formula containers should be resistant to loss of the name and date/time when washing and handling.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child’s family.

Children 24 Months and Older

- No child shall go more than 3 hours without a meal or snack being provided.
- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter.
- Please note candy and soda are not permitted.

HEALTH

Immunizations

All children must be up to date with all immunizations at all times in order to attend WTG. Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every December, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule.

All caregivers, teachers, and staff are required to be current with all immunizations routinely recommended for adults by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Physicals

Well care exams are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A signed verification of your child's most recent well care exam is required upon enrollment, as well as any subsequent verification throughout their time at WTG. A copy of your child's verification should be received before but must be received no later than [30] days after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's well care exams are kept up-to-date.

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child within 90 minutes if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others.
- Fever greater than 101 with no other symptoms or a fever less than 101 accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or more than 2 times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed. WTG has a no nit policy. WTG staff will do a head check upon return (and sporadically) to verify there are no nits or lice present.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Pinworms, until treatment
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until cleared by a physician to return.
- Has a physician or other health professionals written order that child be separated from other children.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours with fever reducing medication.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medications

- All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific written instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed. Additional paperwork maybe required.
- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication. We can only administer based on the instructions on the label, parental requests for administration cannot override label instructions
- **Non-prescription medications** require written permission and instructions signed by the child's primary care physician. The written permission must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.
- **Non-prescription topical ointments** (e.g., diaper cream or teething gel), sunscreen and insect repellent require a general permission for use. This permission form is included in the enrollment paperwork. If at any time you wish to change this permission, you need to notify us in writing. Please note sunscreen is a requirement of outdoor play time, if you do not allow sunscreen for your child, your child will be not be permitted to participate in outdoor play, therefore will need to pick up your child before the scheduled outdoor time. Sunscreen is not permitted on children under 6 months, we keep all small infants in the shade, but encourage you to send a sun hat/UPF clothing for your child during this time.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

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- Bacterial Meningitis
 - Botulism
 - Chicken Pox
 - Diphtheria
 - Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
 - Measles (including suspect)
 - Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
 - Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
 - Rabies (human only)
 - Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
 - Tetanus (including suspect)
 - H1N1 Virus
 - Any cluster/outbreak of illness
 - Tuberculosis

SAFETY

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution. We strongly discourage children from wearing scarves to school, if a child wears one we will ask them to keep it in their cubby until pick up time.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

We follow the [Childcare Weather Watch](#) guidelines in regards to determining when we will have outdoor playtime.

Communal Water-Play

The only forms of water play WTG offers is sprinkler/hose and sensory water table. Children will never be offered pool/swim play.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises. It is illegal to smoke on any school grounds in the state of Vermont and since both our centers are housed on public school property it is against the law to smoke on site.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all suspected observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

CENTER POLICIES

Our center policies not included in this handbook are reviewed and updated as needed. They are available for review upon request to the center director.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, any changes in policy will be reflected in monthly board meeting minutes and changes to the handbook will be made annually.

Thank you for your acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **Watch Them Grow Childcare Center Family Handbook**. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the **Watch Them Grow Childcare Center Family Handbook** that I do not understand.

Recipient Signature

Date

Center Staff Signature

Date