
NORTH EAST COMMUNITY CENTER EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM

A place where children play, discover, and thrive!

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Family Handbook

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Welcome letter

Dear parents, caregivers, and families,

Welcome! We know that choosing childcare for your children is one of the most important decisions you will make in their young lives. It's important to find a program that offers you the right philosophies, policies, and schedules that fit your family's needs. You and your child need to feel comfortable in the environment you have chosen for them to learn and grow!

We understand the great responsibility of raising children for all parents and caregivers. We want to help you in this responsibility and provide you with the best experiences for your child that are safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate.

The information in this manual is to help you understand and evaluate our program. This manual is an important reference for you to use while your child is in our program. Read this manual carefully and if you have any questions, talk to the Early Learning Program Manager about them.

Parents and caregivers are always welcome to visit the Center, participate in our program, and communicate with staff any issues they may feel are affecting their child.

Our staff works very hard every day to provide services to all children and families and we look forward to meeting their needs as their family becomes part of ours.

Sincerely,

NECC Early Learning Program Staff

The Northeast Community Center (NECC) provides educational, cultural, recreational, and community-building social services, programs, and services for young children through seniors to help meet individual and community needs, support opportunity, and promote understanding and engagement among all community members.

NECC is an employer and provider of equal opportunity programs.

About our Program

Program Mission:

NECC Early Learning Program strives to provide all families in and around our community, with the highest quality care and education of young children that is child-centered, holistic and values children as individuals on their journey through development. Our play-based learning environment allows children to learn through play, discovery, and experimentation. Our highly trained staff oversee and participate in children's play to continuously encourage enquiry and secure children's safety.

Program Outcomes:

NECC Early Learning Program is a licensed, day care center committed to providing 32 children, ages 18 – 48 months and their families a safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate learning environment. Our program operates Monday through Saturday, 8:00am – 6:00pm. In our program, your child will learn and develop social, emotional, physical, and intellectual competencies through structured and unstructured learning experiences. Our program fosters curiosity, creativity, and self-esteem by considering children's abilities and interests. Child initiated and teacher supported play is an essential component of our early learning program.

Our Families:

NECC Early Learning Program strives to provide ALL families with a sense of comfort, knowing your child is safe, nurtured, and acquiring skills to foster a love of learning for a lifetime. We pride ourselves on communicating effectively. We want to ensure that all questions and concerns are discussed and answered effectively. We welcome questions and feedback or discussions of any kind that are oriented towards a positive outcome for children.

NECC Early Learning Program offers care for families Monday through Saturday, in an effort to meet the needs of all families enrolled. We provide full time and part time care during our weekday hours and drop-in care on Saturday's with at least 24-hour notice. We will do our best to meet the needs of your family.

Our staff:

NECC Early Learning Program staff consists of Early learning program manager, lead assistants, assistants, chef, and volunteers, who are all qualified under New York State licensing

regulations. All staff and volunteers are screened through the State Central Registry of Child Abuse and Maltreatment and criminal background checks are performed.

Each classroom is staffed with at least one trained and experienced Lead Assistant throughout the day depending on adult-to-child ratio per NYS OCFS Daycare Center Regulation. All program staff must complete required trainings in all areas of New York State Regulations, (1) Principles of Childhood Development, (2) Nutrition and health needs of infants and children, (3) Child Day Care Program development, (4) Safety and security procedures, (5) Business record maintenance and management, (6) Child abuse and maltreatment identification and prevention, and (7) Statutes and regulations pertaining to child day care, (8) Statutes and regulations pertaining to child abuse and maltreatment, (9) Education and information on the identification, diagnosis and prevention of shaken baby syndrome, and (10) Adverse childhood experiences, focused on understanding trauma and nurturing resiliency. These training topics keep all teachers current on what is required by the state regulations and the changes in early childhood development.

Registration

Enrollment Policy:

All forms must be complete and, in our possession, before we can assume the responsibility of caring for your child. All forms must be updated as necessary. For example: if your address or phone number changes it is your responsibility to provide us with those changes. We also look to you to keep us updated on any emergency contact information or medical changes of your child. If you have any questions regarding the completion of these forms, please let us know, we'd be glad to offer any assistance.

Enrollment package includes:

1. Family Handbook
2. Registration form
3. Emergency Blue Card
4. Family Agreement Form
5. Child and Family Interest Survey
6. OCFS 6040
7. OCFS-6010 Non-Medication Consent Form
8. OCFS-6029 Individual Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan
9. OCFS-LDSS-7006 Individual Health Care Plan (if applicable)

Commitment:

Our commitment is to offer care to as many families as possible Monday through Saturday 8AM – 6PM. NECC’s Early Learning Program offers full time and part time slots, Monday through Friday as available, and Saturday care options include “drop-in” care. Drop-in care requires 24-hour notice, so the program can be sure we’re always in compliance with NYS OCFS Day Care Center Regulations. Availability is limited, please be sure you are giving as much notice as possible when scheduling drop-in care. Please remember an enrollment form must be on file to participate in care. Your commitment is to adhere to the specific hours and days your child attends each week. This is a mutual agreement based on your childcare needs and the available openings in the program. Once a schedule is agreed upon and a contract is signed, we reserve that space for your child. So that we are always in compliance with New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Daycare center regulations. Parents are required to provide written notice prior to any change in schedule. Such changes are subject to available openings.

Payment/Fee Arrangements

NECC Early Learning Program is committed to providing quality childcare for the families in and around our community. Our payment and fee arrangements are flexible to meet your specific needs. We offer daily, weekly, and monthly payment options, as well as a sliding scale option which requires your family estimated annual income. If you need further assistance with payment arrangements, please speak with the program manager and she will provide you with more information regarding payment assistance.

Daily rates (also applies to Saturday drop-in hours):

18 - 36 months: \$55

36 – 48 months: \$52

Weekly rates (Monday to Friday only):

18 – 36 months: \$275

36 – 48 months: \$260

Monthly rates

18 - 36 months: \$1,100

36 - 48 months: \$1,040

Sliding scale information:

NECC Early Learning Program offers rates based on a sliding scale according to family income. If you are interested in receiving sliding scale rates, please indicate your estimated annual income on the registration form. We want to ensure that ALL children can attend our programming and are happy to work with you to develop payment plans or to discuss a reduction in these fees.

Billing and payment:

Payments can be made by check, cash, or credit card. Please make checks out to NECC Early Learning Program.

Payments may be made with the program manager at the center and are due by Friday of each week. If you need an alternative payment schedule, please speak to the program manager to develop a plan that meets the needs of the program and your family. Our goal is to provide all families with as much flexibility as we can.

Delinquent accounts:

If your account becomes delinquent by four weeks, your child's enrollment in program may be jeopardized and you will be charged a late fee. If your account becomes delinquent, you will be sent another invoice of the balance that is due, and payment will be due immediately. If your child is dis-enrolled, you may request to re-enroll your child if you pay off the balance on your account and there is space available in program.

A late fee of \$10 will be added to your bill for every week your account is delinquent.

Cancellation/ disenrollment of registration:

NECC Early Learning Program reserves the right to disenroll a child. Parents will be given written warning and notification prior to disenrollment. Grounds for disenrollment may include (but are not limited to):

- Unpaid tuition for more than a month.
- Three or more bounced checks within a six-month period.
- Chronic lateness in picking up a child after 6:00pm closing time.
- The teachers or program manager have requested assessment or support services for the child and the parent refuses this request.
- The child requires care beyond the scope of what the program can provide.
- Persistent child behavior that is abusive, or detrimental to the program or well-being of other children or staff. After all attempts have been made to improve the situation.
- Issues or concerns posed by a family and/ or parent behavior that is abusive (verbally and/ or physically abusive) or detrimental to the program or well-being of children or staff. After all attempts have been made to improve.

Appeal Policy:

It is important that there be a way that families can share their concerns and feel that they will be heard. NECC Early Learning Program makes every attempt to ensure effective communication

with families and strongly encourage parents/ guardians to let us know whenever they have a concern, question, suggestion, or grievance. These should be brought to the attention of (as appropriate) the staff, followed by the program manager. If these individuals are unable to solve the problem, written communication can be directed to the Youth Program Director and Executive Director, who will assess the situation and will determine how to proceed. This type of cooperative communication can foster the sharing of new ideas and opportunities for NECC Early Learning Program to grow and continually improve.

Withdraw:

If you plan to withdraw your child from Program, you must submit a letter via email to elp@neccmillerton.org regarding your child's last day of attendance 30 days in advance. You will be held responsible to pay through the last day your child attends program. If your child stops attending program and you have not given the program manager written notice regarding your child's absence from the program, you will be responsible for the remaining balance on your account.

**Arrival/Dismissal Procedure, Inclement Weather, and Program
Holiday Observance**

Arrival:

Upon arrival, please wash or sanitize your hands and children should be escorted to their classrooms by their parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will then *SIGN IN* their child noting the date and time of arrival. Children should be greeted by the teacher at the child's eye level. This is an opportunity for the teacher to visually scan the child and conduct an initial health check. This is also an opportunity for the teacher to briefly speak to, you, the parent/guardian to find out how the child is doing each day. Please notify your child's teacher or Program Manager if your child will be picked up early or later than usual on a certain day. You are important to your child. Please make every effort to say "good-bye" when you leave, rather than sneaking out of the classroom.

Some children do get upset in the beginning but can become more anxious if they don't know where you are.

NECC Early Learning Program has an "open door" policy. Please feel free to visit anytime. The Program manager will also be happy to meet with you at any time.

Dismissal:

Children are to be dismissed to their parent/guardian or approved pick-up (with notice) ONLY. Unless staff have been notified by the parent/guardian that someone else will be picking the child up. On the registration form, and emergency blue card, parents should list the names of individuals, other than themselves, who might pick up their children. Staff will not release a

child to another individual without notification from the parent in writing. If staff are not familiar with the person picking up a child, they will ask for a photo ID to verify the person's identity. Children are never to be dismissed to any individual under the age of 18 years. This includes the child's siblings.

When parents/guardians arrive to pick up their child(ren), they will sign their child out by indicating the time of pick-up. Please be sure that your child(ren) does not run through the halls or go out the door unattended. It is the parent's responsibility to see that their child is escorted safely to their car.

Early arrival/late procedure pickup:

NECC Early Learning Program operates from 8AM – 6PM Monday –Saturday and we expect parents to follow their scheduled arrival/dismissal time determined during registration and noted in the agreement. Arrival is no earlier than 8AM and pick up is no later than 6PM. We understand that circumstances occur, so if you know you will arrive later than 6PM, please call to let the staff know you are running late.

When staff routinely must stay past 6PM, it negatively impacts both our program budget and the staff member's personal schedule. We ask that you respect our schedule and pick up your children in a timely manner. A late fee of \$1 per minute after 6:00PM will be required upon arrival.

Holiday's:

NECC's Early Learning Program will observe and be closed on subsequent holidays.

New Year's Day	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Presidents' Day	Memorial Day
Independence Day	Labor Day
Columbus Day	Veterans Day
Thanksgiving	Day After Thanksgiving
Christmas Day	

**There will be 2 scheduled closures per year, for professional development/staff training. We will give families at least 30 days' notice of these closures. **

Inclement weather:

In the event of inclement weather, where the center will be closed or delayed. NECC Early Learning Program manager will notify families via the ProCare app/ text message and a recorded message on our program line before 7AM the same day or as soon as possible. If inclement weather results in the program needing to close early, NECC Early Learning Program manager will notify families via telephone, ProCare app/ text message and a recorded message on our program line. Families will have up to 1 hour to pick their child up if we must close early.

We pride ourselves on providing consistent care for our families, however, the safety of the children, families, and staff take precedence.

Welcome and Orientation

All new families will have an orientation for the program and classrooms before their child starts. This will include a tour of the center, time to talk about the goals of our program and all our policies, go over the enrollment paperwork, and answer any questions the family may have as well.

If the family wants their child to come to the center for an individual or small group visit, which can be arranged once their paperwork has been submitted. The purpose of the visit is to allow the child time to explore the classroom and meet the teachers. A parent will stay with the child during the visit so he or she can observe what the daily classroom routine is like and have any questions answered by the teachers or program manager.

We understand parents' concerns about separation and leaving their children in childcare. We want to make this a positive experience for you and your child by working with you individually to come up with the best plan for any separation anxiety that may arise.

We encourage families to be honest with our teachers about their child and to share specific information with us, formally and informally at the intake and throughout the enrollment time that will help us get to know each child individually.

Newsletters and calendars:

Our program issues weekly newsletters and monthly calendars to inform families of what is happening in the program and classrooms. Important dates and reminders are posted on the newsletters as well. Newsletters and calendars can also be found on ProCare app and our website www.neccmillerton.org.

Each day you will receive your child's "My Day" form via the ProCare app. This form tells you all about your child's day at program. From what they ate, how long they napped and what they enjoyed exploring, to reminders of classroom and program happenings noted each day.

Curriculum:

Our program utilizes Creative Curriculum for toddlers, and preschoolers. The curriculum focuses on the development of the whole child. It strives to be innovative, responsive, supportive, comprehensive, and developmentally appropriate. We also follow Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF), and NYS Early learning guidelines. We combine ideas from these programs with themes to create lesson plans that focus on the children's needs and interests.

The classroom schedules include time for large group, small group, free play, quiet times, large and small motor times, and outdoor play times. Young children learn through movement, play, interactions, and hands-on experiences.

Teachers support children by balancing their role along a continuum of interaction, from directing and leading to facilitating and observing. The goal of the teacher is to maintain a trusting and nurturing relationship with the children, while also giving them the opportunity to progress independently.

Learning environment:

Classroom environments encourage cognitive development, problem solving skills, literacy and math skills, language development, creativity, physical development, and social and emotional growth.

We place a strong emphasis on the fact that children learn through play. As they interact with their environment and the people in it, they make new discoveries. To enable each child to develop and meet the goals we have set, the curriculum provides for various areas of exploration and discovery.

Play fosters symbolic, abstract thinking and sets the stage for success in communication, reading and writing.

Social pretend play is critical to developing cooperation, empathy, impulse control, and social-emotional health.

Teachers model behaviors that encourage children to develop observing, listening and problem-solving skills. Opportunities to make choices, assume responsibility, and express oneself through a variety of mediums are presented often throughout the day.

Encouraging children to realize their capabilities and recognize their accomplishments fosters the development of competence and independence. Children are reinforced positively as they help themselves, but they are also encouraged to ask for assistance when they need it.

Classroom environment:

Each classroom environment is set up into different learning centers which foster different areas of learning and exploration. The centers or interest areas are blocks, dramatic play, toys & games, art, reading, writing, discovery, science, sand & water, music & movement, cooking, computers, and outdoors. Toddler classrooms vary with these centers depending on the children's abilities. The preschool classroom contains all these centers for all early learning skills.

Each center gives children the opportunity to learn, play and discover new concepts through different learning modalities. Throughout the school year each center is modified to fit the theme or unit the teachers are implementing in their classroom. This gives children new and exciting opportunities to foster their imagination and creativity.

Child Assessment:

Assessment is an important part of the Early Learning Program. Child assessments enhance child development outcomes, develop individual instructional practices, and help teachers make appropriate instructional decisions, to identify any behavioral and/ or developmental issues and to plan programming and guide the curriculum.

Assessments are used to:

- Learn about what children are interested in
- Learn about children's strengths and areas of difficulty
- Make informed decisions about interventions
- Discover how children develop and grow over time
- Make sure instruction is responsive and appropriate
- Serve as a basis to report to parents
- Plan beneficial opportunities for each child

Methods of assessment:

NECC's Early Learning Program uses a variety of methods when completing a child assessment. These methods include observation, anecdotal notes, and checklists. Evaluations will take place throughout the year and opportunities for families to meet with their child's teacher and program manager will occur at least twice a year. A letter will be sent to all parents notifying them when conferences will begin and offering schedules to schedule appointments. This meeting will provide parents and the teacher with the opportunity to collaborate on a plan for their children's experiences in the program.

Early intervention:

Children grow, learn, and develop immensely during their early years, but some children need extra help. This extra help is called early childhood intervention and can make a big difference in a child's development. Early intervention in its broadest sense is any planned and systematic program of services needed to prevent and/or minimize the effects of developmental delays and/or disabilities on young children with special needs and their families. The goal is to help children reach their potential through education and therapy services.

Every school district in New York State has a Preschool Special Education Committee (CPSE) with a chair. If you suspect your child may have a problem, you can refer him or her to the CPSE. If your child is under the age of 3, then you can refer your child to the Dutchess County Early Intervention Program. We can help you through this process if you wish, providing you with resource information about special services and communicating with specialists about how to best meet your child's needs while in our program.

Children under the age of three will receive services through the New York State Department of Health. You will have many options as to where and how special services can be provided. Our goal is to provide a happy, healthy, and safe learning environment for all children. We appreciate all your support in making the program a wonderful environment for children to learn and grow.

Classes:

- Classroom 1: 18 - 36 months
- Classroom 2: 36 – 48 months

Adult: child ratios:	Minimum adult: child ratio	Maximum group size
Age of children		
18 – 36 months	1:5	3: 12
36 – 48 months	1:7	3: 17

Supervision:

NECC Early Learning Program staff are committed to ensuring that children are always supervised by sight and sound. "By sight" means that the child is being actively observed. "By sound" means that the child can be heard from where the caregiver is positioned. While supervising children in these age groups, staff will position themselves so that they can see and hear all the children and reposition themselves as the children move around the room. Staff use a reliable system of regular "head counts" and "name to face supervision," which indicates each child's arrival and departure to ensure that all staff are fully aware of where each child is, always.

Daily Routines:

Toddler Schedule

8:00 – 8:45	Arrival/Free Play
8:45 – 9:00	Circle Time/ Morning Meeting
9:00 – 9:30	Handwashing/ Breakfast
9:30 – 10:00	Clean-up/Diapering, Potty/Transition Activity
10:00 – 10:45	Free Play/Centers
10:45 – 11:15	Outdoor Play/Gross Motor
11:15 -11:30	Diapering, Potty/Handwashing
11:30 – 12:00	Arts & Crafts
12:00 – 12:45	Lunch
12:45 – 1:00	Clean-up/Story Time
1:00 – 3:00	Nap/Rest Time
3:00 – 3:15	Clean-up/Diapering, Potty
3:15 – 3:30	Music & Movement
3:30 – 4:00	PM Snack /Clean-up

4:00 – 5:00	Outdoor Play/ Gross motor
5:00 – 5:15	Diapering/Potty/Handwashing
5:00 – 6:00	Free Play/ Departure

Preschool Schedule

8:00 – 8:45	Arrival/Free Play
8:45 – 9:00	Handwashing
9:00 – 9:30	Breakfast/ Clean-up
9:30 – 9:45	Circle Time/Morning Meeting
9:45 – 10:00	Transition Activity
10:00 – 10:45	Free Play /centers & Clean-up
10:50 -11:10	Small Group
11:10 – 11:20	Outdoor Prep/ Toileting
11:20 – 12:10	Outdoor Play/ Gross motor
12:10 – 12:45	Handwashing/ Lunch
12:45 – 1:00	Clean-up/ Toileting/rest prep
1:00 – 1:10	Story Time
1:10 – 3:00	Rest/Nap time
3:00 – 3:20	Clean-up/Toileting
3:20 – 3:50	PM Snack/ Clean-up
3:50 – 4:15	Large Group/ Music & Movement
4:15 – 5:00	Outdoor Play/ Gross motor
5:00 – 6:00	Free Play/ Dismissal

Clothing:

Children are engaged in various activities during the day. Some of these activities can be messy, and/or physical in nature. Additionally, children are engaged in outdoor activities daily, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children should be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable clothing. The most appropriate type of shoes for participation in program activities are rubber-soled sneakers or tennis shoes. *Flip-Flops pose risk of harm to little toes and are inappropriate for program.*

We go outside every day except for extremely cold, rainy days, in deep snow, and icy conditions, so send sufficient clothing for the day's weather (boots, hat, mittens/gloves, snow pants). If you need assistance obtaining these items, please let the program manager or teacher know.

Please send 2 complete changes of clothing to stay at program just in case an accident (or two) happens. Clothing items include shirt, pants, underwear (if applicable), socks, and shoes. **ALL** clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. This includes coats, hats, gloves/mittens, and boots. NECC Early Learning Program is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.

Cubbies:

Each child has a labeled cubby for all their belongings. This is where all outdoor clothing and all other belongings may be stored. It is also where projects, notes, letters home and other information will be placed. Please remember to check your child's cubby daily.

What to bring – provided by families:

EVERYTHING MUST BE LABELED WITH FIRST AND LAST NAME

- Diapers/ pull-ups, wipes, ointments, sunblock, and insect repellent (with completed permission form)
- At least one complete set of weather appropriate clothes, including underwear and socks (two sets for those toilet training)
- Seasonal outerwear
- Smock (or old-oversized T-shirt)
- Refillable water cup (labeled with first and last name)
- Blanket and 1 stuffy/attachment toy (these will be sent home Fridays to be washed)

Children in diapers:

Families of children in diapers/ pull-ups are responsible for having a one-week supply of diapers/ pull-ups and wipes at program always. [Staff will notify you when your child is running low.] Each child is to be freshly diapered upon arrival. Children are changed in a designated diaper changing area. Diapering surfaces are cleaned and disinfected after each diaper change. Staff members use disposable plastic gloves and wash hands with each diaper change. Diapers are checked frequently and changed as needed.

Children toilet training:

The staff will work closely with each family to determine readiness for toilet training. Patience, encouragement, and action in accordance with the child's needs will help each of them through this time. Each classroom follows their daily routine and encourages children that are toilet training to use the toilet at different times throughout the day. Parents can choose to have their child in pull-ups or underwear but must provide extra clothing and shoes in case of

accidents. Parents are encouraged to stick to a routine at home to help with the toilet training and maintain consistency.

Children using the toilet:

Staff will assist children in learning and carrying out habits of personal hygiene (e.g., toileting and hand washing). Independence and the development of self-help skills are encouraged.

Toys from home:

Toys from home are only welcome in program when a child has “show and tell” or it is a stuffed animal, they are going to use for nap time. The reason behind this is to prevent any toys from being lost or broken while in program. We appreciate your understanding of this policy.

Nap/ rest time:

Each child is required by state regulations to have an afternoon nap/rest period. NECC Early Learning Program recommends that each child have their own blanket provided by parent/guardian. The NYS Office of Children and Family Services does not allow pillows for children under the age of three. A stuffed animal may be provided by the parent/guardian if desired. All enrolled children will have an afternoon rest period following lunch. If a child is unable to sleep after an appropriate rest period, the teacher will provide quiet activities for them to do. When you enroll your child, you are given an agreement form that states that you understand our Nap Policy that you must initial, sign, and return to the program manager.

Nutrition policy:

NECC Early Learning Program strives to provide positive models for children, families, and early childhood professionals. Nutrition, food storage, service, and handling, as well as the social environment surrounding food are some of the many areas of child development and care that are approached with respect for creating comfortable, encouraging, and healthy environments. These environments are made to acknowledge individual differences while recognizing that group settings offer educational opportunities, challenges and experiences that are not always present within a single household.

Within a group setting, toddlers and preschoolers share a social experience surrounding meals and snacks. This involves not only eating, but also talking about food and observing other children and adults make food related choices, including the way food is packaged, prepared, and served. Children develop attitudes about food from infancy. They learn by tasting, touching, and observing. Children learn to try new foods by having the opportunity to observe others eat and by being presented with the opportunity to sample foods over days and weeks. Developing competence in using cups, dishes and eating utensils is part of the total experience. Food preferences are influenced by the responses of other children, as well as adults. Since eating is very much a social event, some young children will eat particular foods in one social setting while still rejecting them in others. Children’s emergent literacy skills develop simultaneously with these non-verbal and verbal communication skills. They learn to associate

symbols with types of foods and eating environments. All these skills are very beneficial in their development.

Meals and snacks:

NECC Early Learning Program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program – CACFP. Our on-staff chef will cultivate and prepare a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack to all enrolled children Monday through Friday and prepares meals to be served for program on Saturday. Each meal follows the CACFP's child meal pattern and is approved by a registered dietitian. 1% milk and water will be served and available at every meal. 100% fruit juice may be served as a component to breakfast or lunch. A menu will be sent home with newsletters and calendars monthly. Copies of these will be available on the website www.neccmillerton.org.

Food allergies, dietary restrictions, and other medical issues:

WE ARE PEANUT FREE FACILITY

NECC Early learning program will serve breakfast, lunch, and snack. All components will be peanut free. Additional precautions will be taken in the classrooms to minimize the risk of incidental contact to nuts. Classroom materials not intended for consumption (art activities, sensory table materials, science, and math materials, etc.) may not contain or have traces of peanut. Staff and children will wash hands upon arrival, throughout the day. Tables, chairs, and other surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected before and after meals are served.

NECC Early Learning Program will make accommodations for children with disabilities, food allergies, or other dietary restrictions. These requests can be in the form of a health care provider written note or simply upon parent verbal request. Staff should be notified in writing if the health care provider's assessment, food allergies may result in severe, life-threatening (anaphylactic) reactions. In this case, we will implement an individual Health Care Plan.

Staff and volunteers are trained in preventing, recognizing, and responding to allergic reactions and anaphylaxis. Staff will keep a current knowledge of the NYS DOH list of communicable diseases (attached).

Children will be monitored throughout the day. Parents/ guardians will be notified immediately of any changes in the child's condition or if the care of the child exceeds what the program can safely provide. If necessary, the program will plan with the parent/ guardian for obtaining medical treatment. If a parent cannot be reached or if the child's condition warrants, emergency medical treatment will be obtained without delay by calling 9-1-1. Families remain liable for all emergency medical service charges if required.

Cleaning and laundering:

Besides the daily cleaning after classroom activities and meals, all areas of the program are cleaned after program hours. Teachers will disinfect classroom supplies such as cots, toys, play areas, etc. on a regular basis as well as when contagious illnesses pass through the program. Children blankets and stuffed toys will be sent home at the end of each week (Friday, Saturday, OR the last day of the week your child attends) for parents to wash. This also helps cut down on

the spread of germs. Wet or soiled clothing will be placed in a bag and put in a child's cubby to be washed at home.

Our Partnership with Families

Communication:

Families are an important part of our program, and we encourage constant communication between parents and teachers. Parents are welcome in the Center at any time. "My Day" sheets are available for parents from each classroom to inform parents of specific details from their child's day. Parents can call or ProCare message the program at any time to check on their child. If their call is not answered, they are encouraged to leave a message and/ or call back. It is important for parents to communicate all concerns regarding their child so that the teachers and program manager can be informed and work with the parent to resolve any and all concerns.

Confidentiality policy:

At NECC Early Learning Program, we respect the privacy of children and their families, and all personal records will be treated in a strictly confidential manner. We will ensure that all parents/guardians can share information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children. The program will only share information with other professionals or agencies with consent from the parents.

The NYS Office of Children and Family Services (licensing agency) may have access to personal files without consent.

Personal records include registration and admission forms, medical history forms, signed consents and correspondence concerning the child or family, reports or minutes from meetings concerning the child, an ongoing record of relevant contact with parents, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child. These confidential records are stored in a locked cabinet and are kept in a secure place.

Parents have access to the records and files of their own children, but do not have access to information about any other child. The names of children who have caused injury to other children while in program are not to be disclosed to parents or anyone other than the staff members. The name of any child who has an infectious disease will not be disclosed to any other parents.

Staff members are not to discuss any financial details of families in the program with persons other than the parent/guardian who is responsible for paying the child's fees. If information regarding the financial status, or any other matter relating to the child needs to be discussed with the parent/ guardian, and they do not pick up the child personally, a letter should be sent home, or they should be contacted by phone. Verbal messages regarding these matters will not be given to friends, neighbors, or relatives who may be picking up the child.

Student aides/interns or volunteers do not have access to children's files and are always supervised while working with the children. All staff, student aides/interns or volunteers are advised of the programs confidentiality policy and are required to adhere to it.

Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents/ guardians with other staff except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Staff is advised of the importance of confidentiality, and breaches of confidentiality may be grounds for dismissal. Staff personal records, which include medical records, criminal history forms, references, education, evaluations, etc., are to remain confidential. Employees may have access to their own files.

Parent/ Guardian's right to immediate access:

Parents/ Guardians of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at NECC's Early Learning Program, as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., custody order, restraining order, or protection from abuse order) NECC's Early Learning Program must be provided with a certified copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto.

In the absence of a court order on file with NECC's Early Learning Program, both parents/ guardians shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. NECC's Early Learning Program cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent/ guardian by request of the other parent/ guardian, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other to have access to their child, NECC Early Learning Program suggests that the parent/ guardian keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our legal ability to retain your child is secondary to the other parent/ guardians right to immediate access.

Once presented with a court order, NECC Early Learning Program is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of the program cannot, at the request of anyone, except the issuing judge, allow a court order to be violated.

Custodial matters:

In families in which a custody agreement indicates that one parent/ guardian does not have the right to visit a child at the program, NECC Early Learning Program requires the official court papers be on file before preventing a parent/ guardian from seeing a child. These papers will be strictly confidential and will be kept in the child's file.

Discipline and behavior policy:

Effective methods of behavior management are positive reinforcements and praise. When children receive positive, non-aggressive, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem-solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on these practices, the NECC Early Learning Program will practice the following discipline policy:

We Do:

- Praise, reward, and encourage children.
- Reason and set limits with children.
- Model appropriate behavior for children.
- Modify the environment to attempt to prevent behaviors before they occur.
- Use active listening with children.
- Provide alternatives for inappropriate behaviors.
- Provide all children natural and logical consequences of their behaviors.
- Treat children as people and respect their needs, wishes, and feelings.
- Ignore or redirect minor misbehaviors.
- Explain things to children at their level.
- Use effective guidance and behavior management techniques that focus on the child's development.

We Do NOT:

- Physically punish children.
- Verbally abuse children.
- Shame children.
- Deny food or rest as punishment.
- Deny outdoor play as punishment.
- Relate discipline to eating, resting, or sleeping.
- Place children in isolation.
- Criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle children, parents, families, or ethnic groups.

Videotaping and photographing:

Parents, guardians, or family members are not allowed to photograph or videotape children under the care of NECC Early Learning Program without permission from program staff. Staff must present proof of parent permission.

Photo policy:

Upon registering, parents are asked to sign a consent regarding photos and videos. We use photos in our classrooms to document the children as they play and learn with their peers, to use for special projects, to share with families, and to post on our agency marketing fliers, brochures, social media platforms (i.e., Facebook and Instagram), and agency website. If you do not want your child's photo taken at program, you must notify the ELP Manager and program staff. Parents/ guardians are given the option to opt out of any of these uses.

Holidays, celebrations, & birthdays:

There are several times throughout the year when families bring in food for their child to share with their class. These times include holiday parties, birthdays, and other special events. This food should be prepackaged, store bought food items. This is so that we can be sure of what ingredients are being used for children that have food allergies. Families may speak with their individual teacher or ELP program manager to find out about any allergies in the program so

that all children can participate in the event. Additionally, parents who do not want their child to participate in such events, should inform the program manager in writing; the child will be provided with the regularly scheduled snack on those days. PLEASE do not bring candy into program to share with the children or give out in a goody bag. If this is done, then it will be sent home for the parents of each child to decide whether their child can have it.

Health & Safety:

NYS Office of Children and Family Services requires children in a child care setting to receive a physical examination following the recommendations of the American Pediatric Association. The program must keep documentation of immunizations the child has received to date, in accordance with the NYS public health law. All immunizations must be kept up-to-date and reported to the program manager in the form of a written statement from the doctor.

We highly recommend lead testing for every child. Parents are encouraged to talk with their physician or local county health department for more information.

NECC Early Learning Program is responsible for maintaining the health and safety of the program's environment and children enrolled. The following procedures are in effect if a child should become seriously ill or injured during the day:

1. The program manager or designee will assess the injury/illness.
2. The parents/guardians of the child will be called and advised of the situation.
3. If emergency room treatment is necessary and the parent is not available, the program manager or designee will call 9-1-1, obtain the child's emergency blue card and attend to the child until the parent arrives.

COVID-19 Procedure:

NECC Early Learning Program is committed to keeping the children, families, and staff well and safe. CDC recommends those who work or participate in Early Childhood Educational programs to implement the layered approach. To facilitate learning and social and emotional development. All staff are fully vaccinated and will layer by wearing a well fitted mask/ face covering.

Children will not be required to wear a face covering while indoors or while outdoors unless the family would like their child to wear one or if the child has tested positive. The child would be required to quarantine for five days and wear a mask for up to ten day's post positive, depending on the child's symptoms. If all symptoms of COVID-19 are gone, the child may return to program as usual.

*Families with children who will be wearing a mask must provide at least 2 masks labeled with first and last names.

Immunizations:

NECC Early Learning Program will not disclose general immunization information about any of our children, but please note that our program follows the law that the children are either immunized if required or have valid waivers.

Cleaning and disinfecting:

Handwashing is required of children after toileting, contact with mucus or other bodily fluids, when coming into the classroom from outside and after each activity as needed. Teachers and staff wash hands before and after handling food, toileting, diapering, and cleaning. Staff also wear disposable gloves when in contact with bodily fluids. Disinfectant is used for diapering surfaces, eating surfaces, toys that have been mouthed, tables and chairs after eating and all contaminated surfaces. We use soap and water to clean contaminated surfaces and a bleach and water solution to disinfect thereafter.

- *Spray Solution #1:* Food Contact Surface Spray (countertops, tables, highchair trays with 2 minutes contact time) ½ teaspoon bleach to 1 quart of water
- *Spray Solution #2:* Surfaces Contaminated with Bodily Fluids (diapering surfaces, blood/intestinal fluid covered surfaces with 2 minutes of contact time) 1 Tablespoon bleach to 1 quart of water
- *Soaking Solution:* (mouthed toys at 5 min contact time) 1 teaspoon bleach to 1 gallon of water

Daily health check:

All classroom staff greet children and parents every day. Teachers will conduct a simple health check of each child at this time. Parents/ guardians are asked to let the teachers know if their child has been injured, how they are feeling, whether there are any health concerns, and whether the teachers need to know any important instructions for the day regarding their child. Teachers will keep a log of each child regarding their health, behavior, accidents, etc. as a means of communicating with parents/ guardians. If teachers notice a child is not feeling well, has a rash, fever, diarrhea, vomiting, or any other symptoms during the day, they will bring the child to the program manager. The child's temperature will be taken, and if the program manager determines the child is too sick to remain in school, parents/ guardians will be notified to pick up their child as soon as possible. Please notify the program if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness. This way we can notify other families of symptoms to look for in their children.

Medication policy:

NECC Early Learning Program will **NOT** administer any medication, prescription, or any other remedy or treatment. The Early Learning Program is authorized to administer over the counter, topical ointments, and child-specific epinephrine auto injectors, diphenhydramine in combination with the auto injector, asthma inhalers and nebulizers **ONLY**. This is stated in our Health Care Plan, required by NYS Office of Children and Family Services.

Common child care illnesses and exclusion criteria:

Please **DO NOT** send your child to program if they are ill (i.e., **fever, vomiting or had diarrhea within the last 24-hour period**). In the event your child becomes ill during the day and, in the judgement of the staff and/ or program manager, is too ill to remain in program, the parent/ guardian will be notified and arrangements for the child to be picked up will be made immediately. Please do not use Tylenol or Motrin to try and mask your child's illness. These medications do not address the underlying cause of a child's illness.

A child should be temporarily excluded from care when the child's illness causes one or more of the following:

- Prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
- A need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- An acute change in behavior: lethargy, lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or a quickly spreading rash.
- A fever of 101 degrees with behavior changes or other signs and symptoms (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea).
- **See attached communicable disease list with symptoms**

Emergencies:

All staff members are fully trained in emergency procedures. All teachers are certified in First Aid and CPR procedures. In the case of a minor accident at the Center, the Center staff will administer first aid. First aid supplies are available for minor injuries in classroom emergency bags. Emergency bags are available in each classroom and are taken with the group when they leave the classroom.

Scrapes and cuts are washed well with soap and water and bandaged. Ice packs are applied to bumps. Tender loving care from a comforting staff member is usually the best "medicine."

OCFS-4436 Incident Report for Child Day Care will be completed after any injury, describing the circumstances and the first aid procedures used. Parents/ guardians are given a copy. A copy will also be placed in the child's file.

In the event of an emergency, the program manager or designee will secure emergency medical care. If for some reason the staff is unable to reach either parent, then the emergency contact listed on the enrollment application will be notified. For this reason, parents/ guardians should be sure to keep the Center informed of any changes in phone number(s), even if it is only for one day.

Fire drills:

Fire drills are conducted monthly [practicing both primary and secondary exits alternately] and documented records are kept on file at the Center. Fire drill evacuation plans are posted in each classroom. If the need for evacuation arises, all children will be taken to a safe location and parents will be notified by telephone and text message. It is essential that parents make sure all contact numbers are updated and accurate.

Shelter-in-place:

The program must hold two shelter-in-place drills annually during which procedures and supplies are reviewed. Parents will be made aware of the drills in advance. This is a regulation required by NYS Office of Children and Family Services.

Evacuation plan:

Our program has written and posted evacuation plan in the Center. All program staff are trained in our emergency and evacuation plan. When we evacuate the building, we carry our emergency bags with us carrying in them each child's emergency blue card, child specific emergency medications (when applicable), as well as a first aid kit.

Child abuse and neglect policy/ procedure:

NECC Early Learning Program follows the NYS Office of Children and Family Services Regulations regarding child abuse and neglect prevention. The "Child Protective Services Act" of New York requires that all persons involved in child care and supervision must take a course in identification and reporting incidents which might indicate child abuse and maltreatment.

Our program's reporting procedure:

As soon as a Mandated Reporter suspects abuse or maltreatment, they must report concerns by telephone to the New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR). Mandated Reporter (800) 635-1522.

- The LDSS-2221- The mandated reporter form must be submitted to Dutchess County Department of Social Services Child Protective Services within 48 hours of the call. Be sure to ask the SCR specialist for the "Call I.D." assigned to the report you have made.
- NYS Office of Children and Family Services must be notified of the report immediately.
- If a child is left unsupervised at the Center, the parent/ guardian, OCFS, and the SCR must be notified immediately.
- The Program Manager and Executive Director must be notified of the report.
- Only the appropriate staff persons will be debriefed on the incident.

Report of child abuse indicated against a staff member:Following a report of inquiry of a staff person:

- The Program Manager and Executive Director must be notified of the report.
- Staff member will be notified of inquiry by the Program Manager and Executive Director.
- Information will be cooperatively given to all agencies involved in report.
- Only the appropriate staff person will be debriefed and review policies and regulations about child abuse and maltreatment.
- Procedures will continue as directed by the Office of Children and Family Services' regulations.

- The Center may take one or more of the following actions with regard to any staff, volunteer or other person who is the subject of a child abuse or maltreatment report involving a child while in attendance at the program:

418-1.10 Child Abuse and Maltreatment

(e) In meeting his or her responsibilities pursuant to section 418-1.10, the director or licensee of the child day care center may, consistent with any appropriate collective bargaining agreements or applicable provisions of law, take one or more of the following actions regarding staff of the center relevant to a report of child abuse or maltreatment involving a child while in attendance at the center:

- (1) dismissal, suspension or transfer of any staff, volunteer or other person who is the subject of a child abuse or maltreatment report.*
- (2) increased supervision over a person who is the subject of a report.*
- (3) provision of instruction and/or remedial counseling to a person who is the subject of a report.*
- (4) initiation of appropriate disciplinary action where applicable; and/or*
- (5) provision of appropriate training to and/or increased supervision of staff and/or volunteers pertinent to the prevention and remediation of child abuse and maltreatment.*

Procedure of safety for reported child abuse & maltreatment:

There are regulatory requirements that require a description of specific procedures that will assure the safety of a child who is reported to the SCR, as well as other children provided care in the Center. Under Regulations:

418-1.2 Procedures for Applying for and Renewing a License

(a) Applicants for a license must submit to the Office (NYS OCFS):

- (1) a completed application, including required attestations, on forms furnished by the Office (NYS OCFS) or approved equivalents. Such application and attestations must include an agreement by the applicant to operate the child day care center in conformity with applicable laws and regulations.*

418-1.10 Child Abuse and Maltreatment

(a) Any abuse or maltreatment of a child is prohibited. A day care center must prohibit and may not tolerate or in any manner condone an act of abuse or maltreatment by a staff, volunteer, or any other person. An abused child or maltreated child means a child defined as an abused child or maltreated child pursuant to Section 412 of the Social Services Law.

418-1.10 Child Abuse and Maltreatment

(d) The director or licensee of the child day care center is responsible for implementing procedures which ensure the safety and protection of any child named in a report of child abuse or maltreatment involving a situation which occurs while the child is in attendance at the center. Immediately after making or causing to be made a report pursuant to section 418-1.10(c), the director or licensee of the center must take such appropriate action as is necessary to ensure the health and safety of the children involved in the report and, as necessary, of any other children in the care of the center. The director or licensee must also take all reasonable steps to preserve any potential evidence of abuse or maltreatment. Insofar as possible, any action taken under this subdivision must cause as little disruption as possible to the daily routine of the children in the center.

NECC Early Learning Program has an established reporting procedure, which will assure the safety of a child who is reported to the SCR of child abuse and maltreatment, as well as other children provided care in the center, immediately upon notification that a SCR Report has been made.

- The program will take the necessary steps to keep the child, and other children in the program from further harm.
- The program will obtain medical attention for the child if appropriate.
- The program will follow regulations and procedures regarding staff indicated in a Child Abuse and Neglect Report.
- The program will review all regulations regarding supervision and child abuse and neglect.
- The program will require staff to take trainings regarding the regulations, supervision, and mandated reporting.
- The program will follow the requirements of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services, and the Department of Social Services Child Protective Services.

As professionals who are trained in early child development our first concern is for the health and safety of each child in our program. We are experienced with daily normal childhood accidents, behaviors, and injuries. Our staff is experienced and well trained. We maintain an open and helpful relationship with parents/ guardians. We are however, mandated by NYS law to report any concerns and incidents.

Firearms:

Firearms are not permitted at any time at NECC Early Learning Program.

Compliance with NYS Office of children and family services:

NECC Early Learning Program is licensed by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. Our Center's policies are in compliance with the NYS Child Day Care Center Regulations. We are required by law to follow these regulations to provide the safest and highest quality care for all children.

Common child care illnesses and exclusion criteria

*A child should be temporarily excluded from care when the child's illness causes one or more of the following:

- Prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
- A need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- An acute change in behavior: lethargy, lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or a quickly spreading rash.
- A fever of 101 degrees F with behavior changes or other signs and symptoms in a child (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea).
- A child with a temperature elevated above normal is not necessarily an indication of a significant health problem.

Communicable Disease List		
Illness	Exclude	Return to program
Chicken Pox	Yes – highly contagious	When all blisters are crusted and dried completely.
COVID-19	Yes – contagious* Family must notify the program manager immediately after positive test.	After 5-day quarantine and when symptoms have improved. Children 2 years and older will have to be masked day 6 – 10 and until all symptoms have resolved.
Diarrhea (infectious) Mild or severe diarrhea (which may be watery or bloody), abdominal pain, sometimes fever.	Yes – There are special exclusion rules for E. coli 0157.H7, Shigella and cryptosporidiosis.	When diarrhea stops and health care provider states the child may return.
Diarrhea (non-infectious)	Yes* - if stool cannot be contained in the diaper, or if toileted child has 2 or more loose stools in 24 hours, or blood in stool.	When diarrhea stops and resolution of exclusion criteria.
Fifths Disease Intensely red facial rash (“slapped-cheek” appearance). Lace-like rash proceeding from trunk to arms, buttocks, and thighs. Fever is not common.	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria*	Not applicable unless child met other exclusion criteria.
Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease [Coxsackie Virus] Mild illness with a blister-like rash on the hands, feet and/or mouth. A low-grade fever, poor appetite and sore throat may also occur.	Yes – contagious *	When fever is gone, and child can participate in normal activities; skin lesions may still be present
Impetigo A skin infection that is usually red and tender with blisters, pimples and/or honey-colored crusted sores and/or pus.	Yes - contagious	When topical, oral, or other systemic antibiotics are started if the sores can be covered and kept dry.
Influenza Sudden onset of fever, chills, headache, malaise, myalgia and nonproductive cough. Sore throat, nasal congestion, abdominal pain, nausea, and vomiting can occur especially in children.	Yes – highly contagious *	When fever has been gone 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
Head Lice (Pediculosis) Itching of the head, especially behind the ears and back of the	Yes, if viable nits or lice are present.	When first treatment is complete.

head. Eggs (nits) can be detected on hair shaft.		
Pertussis (whooping cough) Begins with cold-like symptoms. Within 2 weeks, cough becomes more severe and is characterized by episodes of numerous rapid coughs followed by deep inspiration that mimics a high-pitched whoop. May cause vomiting, loss of breath and cyanosis.	Yes. *	After completion of 5 days of total 5-to-14-day antibiotic course. With doctor note noting return to care date.
Pinkeye (conjunctivitis) Red, itchy eyes with drainage which may be clear or contain pus; eyelids may become swollen or crusty.	Yes.	After treatment by healthcare provider and symptoms have improved.
Pneumococcal Disease (Strep pneumo) A severe infection with abrupt onset of fever, chills, cough, chest pain, dyspnea, tachypnea, and hypoxia.	Yes. *	When antibiotics have been started and symptoms have resolved.
Streptococcal Infection (Strep throat, scarlet fever) Sudden onset of headache, fever, sore throat, or sometimes accompanied by rash. Scarlet Fever is characterized by a skin rash that often appears as fine, red bumps that feel like sandpaper on the neck, chest, groin and/or inner surface of knees, thighs, and elbows.	Yes. *	When treated with antibiotics for 24 hrs. and note from health care provider noting date of return.
Molluscum Contagiosum Molluscum contagiosum is an infection caused by a poxvirus (molluscum contagiosum virus). The result of the infection is usually a benign, mild skin disease characterized by lesions (growths) that may appear anywhere on the body.	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria. *	Skin disease like warts. Do not share towels or clothing and use good hand washing hygiene.
MRSA skin infections that may appear as pustules or boils which often are red, swollen, painful or have pus/other drainage.	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria. *	If infected skin can be kept covered with a clean, dry bandage.
Vomiting	Yes. *	When vomiting has resolved for 24 hrs. and all other exclusion criteria are resolved.