



Family Handbook

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White Plains Children's Center Parent Handbook

II. Relationship with the Church	3	2. Placement Suitability	12-13
III. Philosophy	3	3. Supplemental Resources & Agencies	13
IV. Curriculum	4	F. Family-Centered Practices	13
V. Program Information	4	1. Confidentiality	13
A. Overview of Services	4-5	2. Communication	13
1. Service Population	5	a. Daily	13
2. Hours of Operation	5	b. Conferences	13-14
3. Classroom Placement	5	c. Newsletters & Parent Memos	14
4. Program Calendar & Attendance Policy	5	d. Center Bulletin Boards	14
a. Annual Center Calendar	5-6	3. Family Involvement	14-15
b. Inclement Weather Policy	6	a. Parent Teacher Association	15
c. Absences	6	b. Volunteering	15-16
B. Belongings & Possessions	6	c. Gatherings & Parent Meetings	16
1. Clothing	6	4. Program Oversight	16
2. Nap & Rest Items	6	5. Grievance Procedure	16
3. Diapers & Wipes	6	G. Health & Safety Practices	16
4. Additional Personal Items	6-7	1. Illness Policy	16-17
C. Child-Centered Practices	7	2. Immunization Records	17-18
1. Program Guidelines	7	3. Medications	18-19
2. Staff Qualifications	7	4. HIV/AIDS	19
3. Ratios & Supervision	7-8	5. Accidents & Emergencies	19
4. Assessment	8	6. Fire & Tornado Drills	19-20
5. Classroom Environment	8	7. Transportation	20
6. Classroom Schedule	8	8. Child Abuse & Neglect	20
7. Activity Plans	8-9	H. Enrollment Policy	20
8. Learning Experiences	9	1. Wait List & Enrollment Process	20-21
9. Play Yard and Outdoor Use	9-10	2. Records	21
10. Meals & Menus	10	I. Fees & Funds Policy	21
11. Formula/Bottles/Sippy Cups	10	1. Tuition	21-22
12. Nap Time	10-11	2. Non-Payment of Fees	22
13. Sanitation	11	3. Late Pickup Policy	22
D. Additional Practices	11	4. Summer Withdrawal	22-23
1. Arrivals & Departures	11	5. Scholarship Funds	23
2. Birthday & Holiday Celebrations	11-12	6. Endowment	23
3. Screen Time	12	Revision History	24
E. Discipline & Behavior Guidance	12		
I. History			

White Plains Children's Center began in 1982 as a mission of White Plains United Methodist Church to serve the needs of families in the Cary area. After the addition of a new educational wing for children's programs, the church explored options for weekday use of the facility. An assessment of the community determined a need for early childhood education for children with disabilities. The founding Board had great vision in offering services for these children with special needs in an inclusive environment along with typically developing peers.

The Center began with an enrollment of 14 children and 4 staff and has expanded to serve 60 children with an on-site staff of 16 by the year 2013. Children are served in one part-time and four full-time classrooms. White Plains Children's Center was incorporated in February of 1988 and became a United Way Agency. The Children's Center serves as a contract agency for Wake County Public Schools as a site for placement of children with special needs.

The mission of WPCC is *"to create a stimulating and nurturing environment where children of all abilities, regardless of socio-economic or cultural background, can grow and learn together in acceptance of one another"*. This mission is carried out daily by highly trained staff, low teacher/child ratios, specialized curriculum, and therapy services. The staff is committed to this mission and to providing quality services to children and families.

II. Relationship with the Church

The Children's Center continues to be an outreach ministry of White Plains United Methodist Church and receives in-kind support from the church through the donation of space, utilities, and janitorial services. The Children's Center, however, is a separate entity operating as a private, non-profit, incorporated agency.

A Board of Directors oversees the development and implementation of policy, the fiscal affairs, and fundraising activities of the Children's Center. The Board is comprised of church members, people from the community, parent representatives, and staff members.

Families of White Plains Children's Center are invited to take advantage of programs within the church. These programs include the Stephen Ministry through which lay-persons provide Christian one-on-one care to those who are experiencing different kinds of life needs and difficult circumstances. In addition, there is an active Children's Ministry that includes weekly activities as well as Vacation Bible School during the summer. Information concerning all church programs can be obtained in the church office.

III. Philosophy

The philosophy of White Plain's Children's Center is based on a belief that children of all abilities benefit from an inclusive environment, which emphasizes acceptance of individual differences and ability levels. For children with special needs, inclusion facilitates developmental progress by exposure to a varied and complex environment. Role modeling of social, language and physical skills is provided through interactions with peers who are developing typically. Inclusion in a typical, non-restrictive environment prepares children with special needs for the "real world" outside of family and home. The inclusive classroom can teach children who are typically developing an attitude of acceptance, self-confidence and coping skills. This occurs as children interact and observe the accomplishments of children with special needs. The purpose of an inclusive early intervention program is to enable children with special needs to enter a less restrictive setting, and for children who are developing typically, to continue to act on the values gained from an inclusive child care experience

IV. Curriculum

At WPCC, we focus on child-centered teaching, developmentally appropriate practices and the belief that 'play is a child's work'. We currently utilize The Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies Gold. This curriculum aligns with our philosophy by...

- **FOCUSING ON THE PROCESS OF LEARNING RATHER THAN THE PRODUCT...** The process is the important thing, not the end product. It is in this process that children learn how things work. By giving feedback while they are involved in this process and not just when they finish something, the process is reinforced, and new discoveries are made. This encourages creativity and teaches children to do their best, at his or her pace, and does not force them to do something just like everyone else.
- **ACTIVITIES ARE PLANNED WITH A CHILD'S NEEDS IN MIND, RESPECTING INDIVIDUAL STYLES, AND ARE DESIGNED TO ENSURE SUCCESS...** The WPCC curriculum is developmentally based. Activities are planned to meet a wide range of skill levels, learning styles, cultural experiences and developmental areas. Activities are planned so that all children can participate, wherever they happen to be on the developmental continuum. Skills for children with special needs are taught in the context in which they are needed. Since the end product is not the goal, a child can achieve pride at the completion of an activity as well as be appropriately challenged at their individual level of skill.
- **SCHEDULES OFFER FLEXIBILITY, SMOOTH TRANSITIONS AND MINIMAL INTERRUPTIONS IN CHILDREN'S PLAY...** A flow of activities is provided for the children with as little waiting as possible. Play is interrupted only when necessary.
- **AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE CHILDREN ARE ENCOURAGED TO MAKE CHOICES ABOUT ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS...** Most children will independently engage in the variety of activities offered daily. Children are not forced to do all activities that are available. Opportunities are presented, allowing children to make choices of their own. The teachers are available to encourage and facilitate play or practice in areas of need without using forceful, intrusive tactics.
- **THE TEACHING OF SELF-CONTROL THROUGH DISCIPLINE INSTEAD OF PUNISHMENT...** Positive reinforcement such as verbal praise, hugs, and providing successful experiences is utilized. Preventative discipline is practiced by establishing a strong curriculum that ensures challenging and successful experiences. Inappropriate behavior is given minimal value by reinforcing acceptable or alternative behaviors. Redirection and positive guidance methods are used to facilitate appropriate behavior.

V. Program Information

Information concerning most aspects of White Plains Children's Center program is included in this handbook. Most policies, practices, and procedures are identified. Administrative personnel can assist in the event that additional information or clarification is needed.

A. Overview of Services

1. **Service Population** - WPCC provides services to children ages twelve months to five years from the Cary area communities. We accept any child whose needs can be met through the program. Needs may include, but are not limited to, children with physical, cognitive, language, or

emotional disabilities. Service is available to children who are typically developing or who may be gifted as well. No person is excluded from services because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, or physical/mental disability.

2. Hours of Operation - The Center opens at 7:00 a.m. and closes at 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, year-round. The Developmental Day program follows the Wake County traditional calendar and school hours for our students placed here through WCPSS are determined by Wake County each year. For more information please contact the Center.
3. Classroom Placement - The individual developmental needs of each child are considered when placement decisions are made. In order for a child to develop a positive self-image and appropriate social skills, it is important for them to be grouped with peers whose developmental age is similar to their own. In all groups of children there will be varying ability levels. We will take all considerations into account and group children together who may best complement each other. Individual classroom compositions are listed below:
 - Pandas - Typically 10 children, no more than 12 will be enrolled, between the ages of one and three with three educators. We maintain a ratio of 1:4 at all times.
 - Turtles - Typically 12, no more than 14 will be enrolled, two to three years of age with three educators. We maintain a ratio of 1:5 at all times.
 - Bears - Fourteen children, three to five years of age, three educators. We maintain a ratio of 1:6 at all times.
 - Chipmunk - Typically 16 children, no more than 17 will be enrolled, three to five years of age, three educators. We maintain a ratio of 1:6 at all times.

4. Program Calendar and Attendance Policy

- a. Annual Center Calendar - Children who attend White Plains through the Wake County Public School System follow the traditional school calendar developed by the public school system. A calendar is provided for those families at the beginning of the school year. Attendance on days public schools are not in session is available at a daily rate and can be coordinated with the office.

At the beginning of each school year all parents receive a list of dates which are important to the life of White Plains. This list includes special activities, meetings, and days that the Center will be closed. These dates should be marked on your personal calendars. Reminders are sent home and/or posted throughout the year. WPCC observes the following holidays and closings:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday
- Christmas - The dates vary from year to year; depending on what day the holiday occurs. The beginning of the vacation will change, but WPCC remains closed through New Year's Day.
- Spring Holiday (dates will vary)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day

- 3 teacher workdays - These are usually scheduled in conjunction with public school workdays. Some years we may schedule a workday to meet our own staff development needs.
 - Staff Development Week - The church sponsors Vacation Bible School each summer and requires use of space in the children's wing. WPCC is closed during this week to children. Continuing education workshops are planned for staff and they use the remaining time to work in their classrooms.
- b. Inclement Weather Plan - WPCC will make every attempt to remain open during inclement weather conditions. The Director will exercise the authority to make decisions concerning closings or delays, which is frequently in correlation with the Wake County Public School System. Safety of children and staff will be taken into account when making decisions. Closings and delays will be posted as early as possible on WRAL-TV and on the Center's Inclement Weather/Announcements voice mail greeting (919-469-2217 x 607).
- c. Absences - If your child will be absent during any part of a typical school day, please inform the Center as soon as possible. Information concerning illness can be vital to the health and well being of the children in your child's class. Additionally, attendance information is used to determine an appropriate meal plan for the day. Please be aware, that if your child has been absent two days in a row for unknown reasons, a staff member will touch base with you to check in and ensure the child is well and when to expect their return.

B. Belongings and Possessions

1. Clothing - Children should have two complete sets of extra clothing suitable for the current season in their cubby at all times. All items should be labeled with your child's name to eliminate any confusion. Soiled items are placed in a plastic bag and put in your child's cubby or hung on his/her hooks and should be taken home to be laundered. A replacement must be brought back the next day to be kept in the cubby.
2. Nap and Rest Items - Children will need to bring a light blanket, travel-size pillow, and any other item they may need during rest time (cot sheets are provided). All items need to be labeled clearly. Nap items are to be taken home weekly to be laundered. To develop the child's independence, please send child sized nap items that they can help take responsibility for.
3. Diapers and Wipes - Parents of children in diapers and of children who are toilet training, are required to provide an on-going supply of diapers, wipes, and additional necessary clothing. Cubbies and coat hooks should be checked daily for items that need to be laundered. For children who require cloth diapers, the diaper must have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering must be changed as a unit. Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.
4. Additional Personal Items - Although we discourage toys or items being brought from home, teachers may request that items be brought from home for the purpose of "share and tell" or as a

"security blanket," particularly if a child is new to the program. Items to be avoided are: money, toy weapons or action figures. Please clearly label all items to eliminate confusion for the children and teachers. Teachers cannot be held responsible for any items brought from home, particularly library books or videos.

C. Child-Centered Practices

1. Program Guidelines - Meeting the needs of each child is of utmost importance. In order to accomplish this, WPCC individualizes the curriculum tailoring it to meet each child's strengths and needs. A thorough, exciting and stimulating curriculum is developed through the use of many resources and the application of current best practices in Early Childhood Education. The curriculum is implemented by educators who are skillful at providing activities on a level at which all children can participate. Incidental teaching is a skill WPCC educators are trained in applying. Incidental learning takes place when natural occurrences present as possible learning opportunities. Each interaction with a child is viewed as a potential learning opportunity.

Teachers respect all learning styles. Sign language is utilized for children who are non-verbal. Visual cues may be used for children who have difficulty processing information Adaptive equipment will be provided for children with mobility challenges. All children are supported in whatever means necessary to ensure the opportunity to participate at all times. WPCC is dedicated to promoting success for every child in the least intrusive, most concrete manner possible.

2. Staff Qualifications -The quality of the program is due to the quality of the staff. It is important to attract staff that is experienced and knowledgeable in the field of early childhood. Each classroom is staffed with three full-time teachers and one part-time teacher. WPCC strives to hire educators with the following qualifications:

- Lead Teachers - Must be licensed with the Department of Public Instruction with a Birth - Kindergarten License
- Teachers - Must have an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education or a Child Care Credential
- Co-Teachers - Must have a high school diploma or GED

Each staff person is required to receive twenty hours of training in child development or special education each year. This requirement is over and above what state licensing regulations require and is crucial in maintaining qualified teachers for the ongoing success of the WPCC program. All teachers must have some level of experience with young children, as well as demonstrate a genuine interest in children. All staff members are required to have an initial physical, TB test, criminal records check, substance abuse test and a reference inquiry before employment begins.

3. Ratios & Supervision - We follow the enhanced voluntary classroom ratios as set by NC-DCDEE...
 - Pandas (1-2yr old) - 1:4, maximum grouping of 12 children
 - Turtles (2-3yr old) - 1:5, maximum grouping of 14 children
 - Bears (3-4 yr old) - 1:6, maximum grouping of 14 children
 - Chipmunks (4-5 yr old) - 1:6, maximum grouping of 17 children

We maintain the enhanced voluntary ratios stated above, at all awake times including inside and outside time. When children are outside, staff are assigned zones to provide adequate supervision. Classrooms are only combined for the first and last hours of the day and the maximum group size and ratios are maintained based on the youngest child's age.

Teaching staff supervise infants and toddlers/twos by sight and sound at all times. Children 3-5 years of age are supervised primarily by sight, but supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible, as long as teachers check frequently on children who are out of sight.

Transitions - "Name to Face" head counts occur throughout daily transitions. These head counts are done at every threshold when moving about the center.

4. Assessment - WPCC conducts assessments as an integral part of the program. We use assessments to guide instructional planning, support children's learning and share progress with families. We use a variety of methods such as observations, anecdotal notes, work samples, technology and checklists. Assessment is built into our classroom activities and incorporated into classroom planning. Each child is assessed at the beginning, middle and end of the school year. Results are shared with parents during scheduled Parent Conferences. Initial enrollment and annual forms allow parents to provide information about their child that may assist the teacher when completing assessments (ie: dual language learners, cultural norms, skills demonstrated in the home, child's interests). If assessments indicate a need for further evaluation, teachers are prepared to assist in locating additional resources and information. Upon completion of further testing, the agency involved will interpret the results to the parents and provide a written report to the parents and WPCC. If additional services are deemed necessary, a meeting will be arranged to access services through the Wake County CDSA or through Wake County Public Schools. Likewise, strategies may be discussed with classroom staff on incorporating testing results into the classroom program.
5. Classroom Environment - The classrooms are organized into centers or defined interest areas. Activities are planned for each center in which the children move freely throughout each day. The variety of learning centers include:
 - Dramatic Play
 - Sand/Water Play
 - Books/Language
 - Creative Art
 - Blocks/Construction
 - Science/Discovery
 - Manipulatives/Puzzles/Games
 - Music
6. Classroom Schedule - The schedule alternates active and quiet activities throughout the course of the day. Staff is sensitive to the attention spans of young children and plan accordingly, making activities extensive enough to be challenging and fun, but short enough to avoid overwhelming a child. Each classroom has a schedule posted that lists approximate times of activities. Routine provides security, but flexibility is also important in meeting the varying needs of young children as well.
7. Activity Plans - Teachers plan activities for the learning centers in the classrooms on a weekly basis according to a theme or unit idea. Teachers strive to be culturally aware and sensitive in their

approach to planning. They plan concrete activities that can be modified to meet the needs of all children as well as provide challenges in skill development. A copy of the activity plans is always posted in the classroom.

8. Learning Experiences - Teachers connect with and use their community's resources and the families we serve, to expand on our curriculum and provide additional hands on learning experiences. In-house learning events may include cultural experiences through community members as well a cultural experiences provided by families within the center, demonstrations by community helpers, or scientific investigations.
9. Play Yard and Outdoor Use - Children have an opportunity to participate in outdoor play each day unless the air quality guidelines indicate an unhealthy atmosphere. The administrative staff will monitor the conditions and will make decisions using the "air quality forecast and action guide". On days that are labeled code yellow, outdoor time will be reduced. On days that are labeled code red, outdoor time will be eliminated and gross motor activities will occur in the gym. Given the moderate climate indigenous to the area, in most situations, children will use the playground at least twice daily. In exceptional cases such as asthma or an extreme allergy condition, a doctor's note is required outlining proper care for the child. Children should be dressed accordingly for the season. WPCC's playgrounds and facilities are a smoke-free environment.

To keep our children safe when outdoors...

- Please have your children wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather.
- Please have your children wear sun-protective clothing such as clothing made with fabrics rated for ultraviolet protection, or clothing that protects skin areas most prone to sun damage.
- In the morning, before your child arrives, you have applied sunscreen or sun block with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher to all exposed skin. With parental permission, we will apply a broad-spectrum SPF 15 or higher in the afternoon.
- With parental permission, during summer months, we will apply a DEET-free insect repellent in the AM and PM before going outside.
- Please have you child wear appropriate shoes for outdoor play.

WPCC has two play yard areas. The Pandas and Turtles have full access to a play yard built to specifications for children ages 12 months to three years. A play yard built to specifications for children ages three to five years is provided for the Bears and Chipmunks. Both play yards are routinely examined for safety hazards and regular maintenance upkeep is provided. Weekly activities are planned for the following areas of skill development:

Climbing and crawling	Stretching and sliding
Balancing and coordination	Pulling and pushing
Lifting and Building	Digging and pouring
Running and Jumping	Pedaling and riding

Support and assistance are provided as needed in order for all children to fully participate in each outdoor activity.

10. Meals and Menus - Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack are provided daily.

Weekly menus and meal times are posted online and on the Parent Bulletin Board outside the office. All meals are served and prepared in accordance to the Child and Adult Care Food Program/USDA requirements for children ages twelve months to six years. This includes one protein, one grain, two fruits and/or vegetables and milk at lunch. Breakfast and snack include one grain and a fruit or vegetable; milk is served at breakfast and water is served at snack. WPCC receives reimbursement from the USDA for the meal program. As a result, parents will be asked to complete an Income Eligibility Form each year.

The cook maintains a list of regulated food allowances and prepares meals according to the specific allowances. Any significant change in a child's diet must be discussed with the teacher.

It has been the experience at WPCC that children will eventually try foods at school that they may not consume at home simply because the other children are eating it. During meal times students and staff are sitting together and engaging in conversations. Staff use positive reinforcement to encourage children to try new foods.

For those with special dietary needs, alternatives may be sent from home. Please discuss any changes with the classroom teacher beforehand. Please do not send snack foods, candy or gum with your child as this can cause a problem within the classroom. For children with disabilities who have special feeding needs, program staff keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes and provide families with that information.

Requests concerning food items may occasionally be made by the teacher to enhance or supplement an activity planned in the classroom

DUE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTIONS, WE ARE A NUT-FREE FACILITY. NUTS OR FOODS CONTAINING NUTS (INCLUDING ALMOND BUTTER AND ALMOND MILK), SHOULD NOT BE BROUGHT INTO THE BUILDING AND WILL NOT BE SERVED.

11. Formula/Bottles/Sippy Cups - If a child is drinking formula is must come to school premixed and labeled with the child's name and date everyday. We have a refrigerator to store the formula in, it should be noted that we cannot heat bottles in the microwave. If the child is using a bottle or sippy cup, the child will not be laid down to rest with bottle/sippy cup, nor will the bottle/sippy cup be propped. Children cannot walk around the classroom with their bottle/sippy cup. We will work with our families to ensure our students are offered fluids from an open cup as soon as the families and teachers decide together that a child is developmentally ready to use a cup.

12. Nap Time - Each child is assigned a cot. Children will need to bring a light blanket, travel-size pillow, and any other item they may need during rest time (cot sheets are provided). All items need to be labeled clearly. Nap items are to be taken home weekly to be laundered. Please return

sleep items on Mondays. Children rest between 1:00 and 3:00 pm (Bears & Chipmunks classes) and 12:30-2:30 (Turtles & Pandas classes). Most children will nap, especially with the assistance of a back rub or gentle rocking. If a child is unable to fall asleep or has outgrown the need to nap, we have quiet activities for them to engage with in the nap room until nap time is over.

During nap-time, there is always one teacher within the nap room observing by sight and sound within the Turtles, Bears and Chipmunks classes. The Pandas class has two-teachers observing by sight and sound at all times. We do not use mirrors, video or sound monitors in lieu of sight and sound supervision.

13. Sanitation - Each classroom has a “yucky bucket” for toys that have been contaminated with bodily fluids. These toys are specifically washed, sanitized and air dried. All surfaces and toys are sanitized and air-dried on a daily basis upon arrival and departure.

D. Additional Practices

1. Arrivals and Departures - Parents are required to accompany their child to and from the classroom each day. A sign-in sheet is posted by the classroom door. Please note arrival and departure times by initialing the sign-in sheet accordingly. It is imperative for the parent to make contact with the teacher upon the child's arrival and departure. This is a wonderful opportunity to share pertinent information between teachers and families. Please note, if you have concerns or questions that require more in depth conversation please feel free to schedule a conference with your child's teacher.

Educators must be informed when anyone other than the familiar adult is bringing or picking-up the child. Written authorization is required when someone other than designated persons arrive to pick up a child. **Photo identification will be required.**

A special entrance is available for children with physical disabilities or other issues that make it difficult to access the building from the parking lot. This entrance is located at the end of the hall between the Bear's and Chipmunk's classrooms, this is also the entrance that Wake County Schools (WCPSS) transportation utilizes. When a WCPSS transportation vehicle arrives, a member of White Plains staff will meet the WCPSS vehicle and escort children to their classrooms and sign them in. Children are never “dropped off” without being received by one of our staff members. These same procedures are followed at dismissal.

2. Birthday/Holiday Celebrations - There are often many reasons to celebrate throughout the year, such as national and cultural holidays, birthdays, and end of the year parties. Families may be asked to assist the teachers in celebration planning and preparation, donation of items, party set-up, clean up and participation in the festivities.

Parents who wish to celebrate their child's birthday in the classroom are asked to limit that celebration to one simple snack food such as cupcakes or cookies. All families may not be able to afford elaborate parties, and we would like to keep this type of celebration as equitable as possible for all children. The teachers will make sure that it is a special day for your child. **All items must be store bought due to health regulations. **Please remember that we are a nut-free**

environment and avoid foods that contain nuts or nut butter.

3. Screen Time - Effective uses of technology and media are active, hands-on, engaging, and empowering; give the child control; provide adaptive scaffolds to ease the accomplishment of tasks; and are used as one of many options to support children's learning. The use of passive media such as television, film, and videotapes is limited to developmentally appropriate programming. Use of this media is limited to occasional extreme heat, cold, or rainy days and to no more than 30 minutes. In keeping with the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation, the Center does not allow children under 2 years of age to watch television.

E. Discipline and Behavior Guidance -

1. Behavior Interventions - The goal is to guide children in developing self-control and positive self-esteem. Children learn what is right and what is wrong from consequences that result from their actions. WPCC focuses on positive reinforcement and minimal reaction to negative behavior. Teaching staff never use physical punishment such as shaking or hitting and do not engage in psychological abuse or coercion. Teaching staff never use threats or derogatory remarks and neither withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline. A proactive stance is taken through the following behavior guidance ways:
 - Staff reinforces desirable behavior through encouragement, praise, smiles and hugs.
 - Adequate materials are provided to alleviate disputes over toys and equipment.
 - Adequate staff is provided to oversee and intervene before a crisis occurs.
 - Children are re-directed in order to diffuse potentially negative situations.
 - Children are encouraged to utilize calming strategies. This may involve the teacher intervening in a dispute, taking care of the child who has been hurt, and then sitting with the other child while he or she regains self-control. The teacher will talk with the children about the situation and appropriate actions to take in the future. With guidance, children are encouraged to discuss their feelings and thoughts on the matter until resolution has occurred. Parents play an important role in behavior guidance and are informed about their child's behavior daily. Consistency in the guidance approach is important; therefore, questions and discussions between families and staff are necessary in the development of appropriate behavior
2. Placement Suitability - Each child will be free from threat or fear of unwarranted suspension or expulsion from WPCC. For children with persistent, serious, challenging behavior, teachers, families, and other professionals work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success. However, the administrative staff of WPCC reserves the right to make the final decision as to whether a child will remain at the school. Parents, teachers, and consultants will determine if WPCC services are beneficial to the child or if other placement options should be accessed. WPCC staff will assist with appropriate referrals for alternative placement. Alternate placement options will be considered if:
 - The disability is not within the stated guidelines of the child to be served. This is not always evident when a child enters a program.
 - The child is later determined to have special needs or impairments other than those identified by parents or professionals involved with the child prior to enrollment.
 - The child reaches school age or the appropriate staff determines that a public school program

is suitable.

- The child's needs cannot be met by the program.
 - The child endangers the health, morale, and/or the welfare of other children or staff.
 - Parents fail to cooperate with the school's policies and guidelines as stated in the Parent Handbook.
 - Parents fail to pay fees.
 - Chronic parental dissatisfaction with the program or the staff. If this has been properly documented, penalty fees and notice requirements will be waived.
3. Supplemental Resources and Agencies - WPCC actively pursues relationships with outside agencies that can enrich the programming for our children and their families. We will assist families in locating, contacting, and using community resources that support our children's and families' well-being and development. Agencies and resources may include:
- Division of Development and Early Education Center (DCDEE)
 - Pediatric Therapy Associates (Music Therapy)
 - Project Enlightenment
 - Wake County CDSA
 - Wake County Public Schools - Office of Early Learning
 - Smart Start
 - Child and Care Food Program (CACFP)
 - Private Practitioners

F. Family-Centered Practices

1. Confidentiality - Children and families have a right to privacy. WPCC makes every effort to ensure confidentiality concerning your child's records and other school information. Staff and therapists are required to sign a Statement of Assurance of Confidentiality upon employment and annually thereafter. Records are kept in a locked filing cabinet located within the main office. Only administration and staff working with your child will have access to your child's records. (WPCC complies with the Confidentiality Regulations of the State of North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse (10 NCAC 18D; eff. 7/15/80).)
2. Communication
 - a. Daily-We feel strongly that an essential part of a solid education is that parents and staff members have an opportunity to communicate daily. Morning arrival is usually a busy time for all, but is a good time to brief educators on information concerning the child. If additional time is needed to talk with an educator, meeting or phone conference should be scheduled. A good time to reach an educator is when children are sleeping.
 - b. Conferences - Parent conferences are scheduled 2 times each year, however may be requested as needed. The dates are included on the annual calendar and are generally held in the fall and spring. Sign-up sheets will be posted in the classrooms and educators will do all they can to accommodate all schedules. These conferences are not mandatory, but are encouraged as they allow parents the opportunity to follow the progress that the child is making. During these conferences you will be provided with a written report about your child's strengths and

areas of growth. Two additional written reports will be sent in the winter and early summer.

- c. Newsletter/Parent Memos - A newsletter is prepared each month to communicate information about upcoming events, workshops, closing reminders, happenings within the Center, etc. It also includes community resources, upcoming events in the community, and updates about policies that relates to early childhood education. The newsletter is sent out electronically and is full of valuable information. It should be read in order to stay informed about current happenings. Please check your child's cubby or folder daily as various memos are sent out from time to time.
 - d. Center Bulletin Boards - The bulletin board located at the end of hall, is maintained with a number of items of interest. Please check it periodically for information such as:
 - monthly menu & meal times
 - upcoming workshops
 - classroom needs
 - legislative news
 - annual calendar
 - current articles concerning child development
 - information on family fun opportunities in the community
3. Family Involvement - It is important for families to be involved with their child's education, even at the preschool level. At White Plains Children's Center we strive to have high family involvement by offering an "open door" policy. This means our families are encouraged to email, call, write or talk to program staff members in person to share thoughts, ideas or concerns as they arise. As always, if you have significant concerns, conferences can always be setup as needed. Family involvement is very beneficial to the children. They benefit when educators communicate with family members. Involvement helps increase the child's self-esteem because children see educators valuing their families and they see families valuing their education. Family involvement also helps maintain a program that is relevant to the needs of the family and community.

As a non-profit organization, we also depend greatly on support from families to maintain the center, volunteer for events both in the classroom and the center, and donate supplies and time to help make our center one of the best in the area. Unfortunately, we are often desperate for support. Many times, the same families provide us with supplies and volunteer hours. We need ALL of our families to provide us with support through volunteer opportunities.

Volunteer opportunities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Read a story or implement an activity in your child's classroom.
- Sit with children at naptime so teachers can be away from the room for meetings.
- Participate in cleaning, maintenance or renovation days at the center.
- Participate in Parent Association meetings.
- Donate needed items to the center and /or classroom.
- Attend Parent Workshops or other classes that are scheduled throughout the year.

- Participate in the fundraising activities that we sponsor.
- Volunteer to be a Parent Representative on the Board of Directors.
- Attend 'Together Time' events throughout the year.
- Attend Parent-Teacher conferences.
- Make needed items for the classrooms (play-dough, colored noodles, etc).
- Assist teachers with necessary tasks (laminating, cutting items out, etc).
- Telephone other families about upcoming events.
- Solicit items to be used for staff appreciation.
- Help organize a special event, field trip or visit to the program by a community member.
- Join local, state, and /or national parent and early childhood organizations.
- Assist on the playground and play a game with the children.
- Organize a family support group.
- Assist in organizing the teacher resource room.
- Participate in evaluating the effectiveness of the program.
- Assist in orienting a new family to the program.

As special events arise, we will inform you with notices throughout the classrooms as well as through the WPCC e-newsletter. Each team of teachers will also provide you with a list of opportunities specific to individual classrooms.

WPCC is dedicated to being as supportive as possible to families in their efforts to nurture and teach their children. In order to be a family-centered program we encourage parent participation and open communication. There are several opportunities in which parents can be involved in their child's program

- a. Parent Teacher Association- The purpose of the Parent Association is to give parents an opportunity to work together to enrich and enhance the program at WPCC. A meeting is held once a month for planning and discussion of issues. An administrator attends this meeting to hear concerns or assist in working out issues that may arise. At least one volunteer from each classroom is encouraged to be a Classroom Representative within this group. A major function of the Parent Association is to plan and coordinate Teacher Appreciation activities throughout the year and assist with fundraising efforts. Childcare is provided. A representative is selected from the Parent Association to be a non-voting representative on the Board of Directors. Parent representatives provide valuable input as the Board makes programming decisions.
- b. Volunteers - Volunteers are needed for a variety of reasons. Many times meetings are scheduled which involve many staff members. Parents can assist by covering the nap rooms or answering the telephones. Activities such as preparing play-doh, helping set up for Together Times, or sharing an exciting recipe or collection are also ways that parents can volunteer. If a parent has a special activity to share with the children, please contact the teacher and schedule a date. The Center is involved in a number of fund-raisers each year. Fundraisers help cover the costs of running a program such as WPCC. Memos concerning upcoming fund-raisers are placed in each child's cubby or folder, and signup sheets are posted by the office door. WPCC requests that families commit to at least one fund-raiser. Any and

all participation is welcome.

- c. Gatherings and Parent Meetings - "Together Times" are events held three times a year for families and staff to meet one another for fun and to share a meal together. Dates for these gatherings are listed on the annual calendar which is distributed at the beginning of each school year.
4. Program Oversight - Our program's quality and compliance with State laws is carefully regulated and evaluated annually by the NC-DCDEE and other government programs with whom we are affiliated. In addition, we also ask parents to complete and return an evaluation of the program intermittently. Summaries of evaluations are presented to our Board of Directors to enable them to monitor the quality of our services.
5. Grievance Procedure - Disagreements may occur, even with the best of intentions. If this happens, please discuss concerns with the teacher or staff person involved. If concerns are not resolved to the satisfaction of all, a meeting can be arranged between the persons involved and a member of administration. At that time a course of action can be determined.

G. Health and Safety Procedures

1. Illness Policy- WPCC understands how difficult it is for parents to take time off from work to care for a sick child; however, WPCC cannot provide arrangements to care for sick children. Licensing laws require all children to be visually supervised at all times and we cannot spare staff to care for a sick child that must be separated from the group. Generally, WPCC is unable care for children whose illness prohibits them from participating in the regular daily routine. When a child exhibits symptoms that are atypical for that child, the parent will be contacted to discuss the symptoms and make a decision. Requests for a child to stay indoors or have additional rest are generally indicative that the child is not ready to participate in a group situation. Guidelines have been established by WPCC in accordance with state childcare law and other best practices concerning sick children. Guidelines are listed below.

Symptoms that will require children to be picked up immediately are:

- Fever of or in excess of 100.5 degrees
- Two or more incidents of diarrhea or increase in loose stools over the normal amount for the individual
- Vomiting
- Suspected "pink eye" or conjunctivitis
- Impetigo or suspicious rash
- Mouth sores
- Head lice

Parents are required to respond as soon as possible concerning the sick child when contacted by WPCC staff.

The staff at WPCC will come to know when a child is not "acting" him/herself At times like this, the parent will be called to discuss the symptoms and to determine the best course of action. If we

cannot reach the parent within thirty minutes, we will reach out to the family's emergency contacts as stated on enrollment/annual forms. If the illness warrants, the child's pediatrician or WPCC's consulting pediatrician will be contacted for consultation. A public health nurse is available as well for consultation. He/she makes annual visits to the Center to check immunizations, health records and practices.

Children may attend with minor illnesses, as long as it is not contagious and it does not affect the child's ability to participate in the day's routine. Minor illnesses include:

- mild respiratory infections
- acute infections subsiding after treatment, such as pink eye, impetigo, ear infections
- cold symptoms without fever

If at some point in the day the child's health deteriorates, the parent will be contacted.

A child sent home with a fever may return after the child has been fever-free **without medication** for twenty-four (24) hours. A child who has chicken pox may also return after all blisters have dried and crusted over.

Children who were sick with a stomach virus should be symptom free (no diarrhea or vomiting) for at least 24 hours in order to return to school.

When a child arrives at school, the parent and a staff member should discuss the child's health if there are any reasons present for concern. Some signs and symptoms of illness to be on the alert for are:

- Sores on skin that cannot be covered, especially if there is drainage appearing from the sore; skin rash or excessive scratching
- Excessive nasal, eye, or ear drainage
- Complaint of sore throat
- Difficulty breathing
- Persistent cough
- Complaint of sore stomach, decreased appetite or vomiting
- Constipation or decrease in urination
- Unusual sleep patterns
- Unusual behavior, irritability or inactivity

One or more of these symptoms could be indicative that the child may need to be at home. The teacher can request that the child go home immediately. This is to protect all of the children in the child's classroom as well as the staff. If the child is brought to school by someone other than the parent and is found to be ill, the parent will be called and expected to make arrangements for the child to be picked up.

2. Immunization Records- It is the parent's responsibility to provide an up to date immunization record within 30 days of their child's enrollment and update the child's immunization record as age-appropriate. As the child receives new immunizations, the date and type of shot or immunization should be reported to administration to be added to the child's record. Immunizations may be

obtained either through the pediatrician or the Wake County Health Department. A schedule of immunizations can be acquired through the Center office.

WPCC will accept children who are “under-immunized” because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family’s beliefs (documented by NC General Statute section 130A-157). Children who are “under-immunized” is any child who has not received the recommended number or types of vaccines for his/her age according to the current national and local immunization schedules (AAP). see <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/> for current national immunization schedule. “Under-immunized” children, because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family’s beliefs (documented by NC General Statute section 130A-157) may be excluded from care if a vaccine- preventable disease occurs to which children are susceptible.

3. Medications - If a child requires regular daily administering of medication for an illness or medical condition, staff of WPCC may administer medication following the listed guidelines:
 - **We reserve the right to refuse administration of medications if we feel that it is in the best interest of the staff.**
 - A medication form (over the counter & prescription) must be signed by the parent AND a physician stating appropriate dosage, time to be given and duration of the request. Prescription medication must be in its original bottle/package with pharmacist label which includes:
 - Child's name (First and Last)
 - Prescriber's name
 - Current dispensing date
 - Name of medication, strength, quantity, time, route and expiration date of the prescribed drug
 - Name, address and phone number of the pharmacy or dispensing location
 - Over-the-counter medication must be labeled with the manufacturer’s label and the expiration date must be clearly visible. Forms are available in all classrooms or in the office.
 - Medication containers should be tamper resistant.
 - A new form is required for each occurrence of illness. In the event of an ongoing medication need for asthma, seizures or diabetes, the above procedure will be followed but the duration of the request can be noted for up to twelve months at a time. WPCC may request to establish a 'Care Plan' to use with children who require a daily dose of medicine over a long-term period.
 - The procedures apply to all medications, including over-the-counter drugs such as aspirin, non-aspirin pain relievers and decongestants. Blanket permission for one age-appropriate dose of acetaminophen in the case of high fever (103) can be requested by a physician upon enrollment.
 - Medications will be given in accordance with the doctor's written instructions.
 - Medications will be stored in a locked cabinet in the classroom or locked box in the Center refrigerator, depending on the medication. Medications for external use will be stored separately from medications for internal use.
 - Emergency medications (ie: inhalers, Epi-pen, Diastat) will be kept unlocked and easily accessible to adults, but out of children’s reach (at least 5 feet of the ground). This is to

ensure easy access in the case of emergency.

- Medication will be stored separately for each child.
 - Medications will be administered by regular classroom staff who have been trained in medication administration, in the presence of another staff person. All staff follow the “5 rights of medical administration”: right name, right med, right time, right dose, right route. Staff will document each dosage on the medication form, listing time, amount given and initial. If any side effects are noticed they will be noted on the form and the parent notified.
 - Medication forms will be added to the child's file after the medication request is completed. Forms for long-term medication will be considered confidential and treated as such.
 - It is the responsibility of the parent to remove or dispose of any medication after the duration of the request has ended. The classroom staff will dispose of any medication that remains at the Center after the medication form has expired or after a child has left WPCC.
4. HIV/AIDS - According to state guidelines, AIDS is considered a handicapping condition, and it is illegal to discriminate against children who have HIV or AIDS. Since symptoms do not occur immediately, it is possible to serve children with HIV without knowing. As a result, WPCC has adopted a policy for the protection of all children and staff. WPCC ensures that information relative to AIDS or related conditions is disclosed only in accordance with the communicable disease laws. The policy is available for review in the office for families who would like to read it.
5. Accidents and Emergencies - The safety of every child is of utmost concern. WPCC strives to maintain safety standards at all times. Equipment and materials are inspected on a regular basis. All staff members are trained in First Aid and Infant/ Child CPR annually. Should an accident occur, every precaution will be taken. All accidents will be documented on an Accident Report Form which will be read and signed by the parent at the end of the day. If an accident is more than minor, a parent will be called to discuss the need for possible medical treatment. If the accident is more serious, a parent will be contacted and requested to come immediately. **If life threatening, 911 will be called to transport the child to the nearest medical facility (Wake Med-Cary), unless another medial facility is requested by the family.** An Emergency Plan is posted in each classroom for staff reference. All staff members are briefed on emergency procedures during their orientation and review the plan regularly.
6. Fire and Tornado Drills - Monthly fire drills will be held as required by health and safety guidelines according to state laws. When the fire alarm is sounded, each classroom follows the evacuation plan posted in the room they are in. Classroom staff will be responsible for guiding the children to the pre-determined safe place as recommended by the fire marshal. The classroom attendance rosters are carried with the group and used to determine that all children are accounted for. Administrative staff members are responsible for doing an additional sweep of the Center to be sure that all spaces in the building are empty.

A different alarm is sounded to initiate tornado drills. Children are lead to the center hall of the building or to the ground floor of the CLC. Children and staff take cover by kneeling down with heads touching the floor and arms over their heads. In the event of an actual tornado warning, parents are requested to remain where they are until the warning has expired. During the warning, the staff will be with the children on the ground floor of the CLC and may not be able to answer the phone.

In the event that WPCC has to evacuate the actual site at which the Center resides, a message will be recorded on the voice mail outlining as much detail as possible. If an event of this type occurs, parents may also contact the Cary Police Department for additional details.

7. Transportation Policies: Currently, WPCC does not transport children for any reason.
8. Child Abuse and Neglect - White Plains stringently prohibits the mistreatment, neglect or abuse of any child in the program by any staff member.

Employees of WPCC are required to complete a Fingerprint and Criminal Background Check before employment begins. This is a mandatory requirement by the state as well.

WPCC will not hire a person who has been convicted of abuse of any type.

- All staff members are responsible for protecting all children from abuse from any child or Staff member.
- All staff members are required to report any suspected cases of abuse, whether it is suspected at WPCC or away from WPCC.
- All staff members receive training in detection of child abuse and neglect

Should a staff member have reason to suspect abuse, they will contact administrative personnel and follow up with an immediate phone call to the Social Services Department of Protective Services.

If an administrative person is unavailable, staff members have the authority to make the call to Social Services immediately and to prepare a written report of the account.

Any employee found in violation of the abuse and neglect policies shall be immediately terminated. If the charges are not upheld, the Director and the Board of Directors will determine eligibility for reinstatement.

H. Enrollment Policy

In order to provide the most beneficial inclusive environment for all families, WPCC does not exceed a 50/50 ratio of child with developmental delays to children whose development is following a typical pattern. To enable WPCC to carry out the mission, it is important to maintain these ratios and to have typical role models to help enhance the development of children with special needs.

1. Waiting List and Enrollment Process - Families from the community who are interested in enrolling their child for childcare are put on a waiting list. Once an opening occurs, a family from the waiting list will be contacted and asked to come in to meet with administration and to bring their child in for observation. It is then decided whether or not the needs of the child and family can be met by the program at WPCC. Placement suitability is then determined.

Upon acceptance of a space in a classroom, a start date will be set and the family will be given registration materials and the Parent Handbook. A meeting between the parents and their child's

teacher will be set up to allow parents and teacher to become acquainted and discuss how White Plains can best meet the needs of the child and family. The family is encouraged to bring the child in for visits before he/she actually starts to acclimate him/her to the environment.

Spaces are filled from the waiting list according to the following priority system:

- White Plains Church members
- Children's Center staff children
- Siblings of currently enrolled children
- Previous WPCC families
- General Public

WPCC complies with the rules on "Admission Procedures for Minors or Persons Non Compos Mentis to Non-Restrictive Treatment Facilities."

2. Records - Upon enrollment, all forms and fees listed below must be completed and turned in by the first day a child attends the Center, with the exception of the medical form which must be returned with 30 days:

- Non-refundable Registration fee per family
- 1st month's tuition
- Application
- Placement Suitability Statement
- Medical Form (within 30 days)
- Immunizations (copy for file until medical form is returned)
- Permission forms
- Parent agreement
- Child Care Food Program Form
- Tuition Agreement
- Emergency Information Form

WPCC complies with the requirements set forth in the "Records Retention and Disposition Schedule" developed by the NC Division of Archives and History.

I. Fees and Funds Policies

1. Tuition - Information about current tuition rates is available on the website or at tuition box. Tuition increases occur in July at the beginning of each new fiscal year, and typically reflect at least a cost of living increase. Tuition is due in advance each month. All of the tuition should be paid by the 7th of the month and must be paid in full prior to the 15th in order for the child(ren) to remain in the program. Any requests for exceptions must be made with the Executive Director through the completion of a tuition payment plan. A late fee will be assessed on any account that has not been paid in full by the 7th of the month unless these arrangements have been made.
 - Payment should be made by check or money order.
 - There will be a service charge for any returned checks. In the event of a returned

check, a money order will be due immediately and late fees will apply.

- Families with more than one child enrolled receive 10% off the youngest child's tuition.
 - Renewal registration fees are due in April for the following school year. Only one renewal registration fee is due from each family. This fee is nonrefundable. Families who enroll after January 1st of the current calendar year will not be required to pay the renewal fee for that year.
 - WCPSS families who do not use B/A school care or attend the summer program will not pay any registration fee.
 - Any WCPSS families who do not use the B/A school program, but do attend our summer program, will pay the summer registration fee only.
 - Receipts will be given upon request. Please let the Finance Administrator know if this is required by your employer for reimbursement plans.
 - We do not give credit for illness, holidays, or other days that we are closed.
 - In case of withdrawal, two weeks written notice is required, otherwise a fee equal to two weeks tuition will be charged.
 - Tuition will be pro-rated for families entering or leaving during a month.
2. Non-Payment of Fees - While we are a non-profit organization and strive to take the needs and problems of our families into consideration, we must maintain financial stability. If no tuition has been received by the 7th of the month and no special arrangements have been made with the Executive Director, you will receive a reminder for payment and late fees will be assessed. If no special arrangement has been made and full payment has not been received by the 15th of the month, your child(ren) can no longer access the program. Upon enrollment at WPCCC, families will be expected to sign a statement that they have read, understand and will abide by the tuition policy.
3. Late Pickup Policy - As mentioned previously, the Center closes at 6:00 p.m.; however, it is understood that occasionally uncontrollable situations (i.e., emergencies or traffic problems) occur that may prevent arrival at the Center at exactly 6:00 p.m. A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged for every five-minute period, or portion thereof, after 6:00 p.m. The process for exacting late fees is as follows:
- Time will be based on the office clock.
 - A late fee form will need to be signed, and a bill will be placed in your child's cubby at the end of the month. The bill will have the total fees for the month and indicate the dates fees were charged. The fees will be paid directly to the center.
 - When running late, a call is very helpful to give the staff an idea of what time to expect you. Please call the center (919-469-2217).
4. Summer Withdrawal - Parents have the option of withdrawing their child during the summer months. In order to guarantee a space in the fall, 50% of tuition must be paid for each month that your child is out. Intentions to do this must be given to the administrative staff in writing in early May. Families who wish to withdraw their child during track out periods for year round schools must make arrangements in writing with the Executive Director at least 4 weeks in advance. In

order to guarantee that space, 50% of the tuition that would normally be due during that time frame must be paid.

5. Scholarship Funds - WPCC has limited scholarship funds to help families whose financial situation prohibits paying the full amount of tuition and/or fees. Scholarships are based on annual gross income and the number of family members dependent on that income.

All families applying for scholarship assistance must first apply for childcare subsidy through Wake County Human Services. If funds are not immediately available, your name will be added to their waiting list. When funds do become available, you will be notified to fill out the childcare subsidy application. The Human Services Subsidy will reduce the amount of dollars the family is required to pay as their part of the tuition.

Once the WPCC application and the required documentation are submitted to the Center's Director, it will take approximately 2 weeks to process your request. All information will be kept in strict confidence. Families will receive written notification regarding the final decision. The family will be responsible for any tuition payments during the application process. Families who are awarded a scholarship must submit an updated application every 6 months.

If you have any questions about the WPCC scholarship process, feel free to contact the Executive Director at 469-2217.

6. Endowment - The White Plains Children's Center Scholarship Endowment, Inc. was established in July of 1998. The initial funding for this endowment was made possible through a contribution by a donor and friend of the Center. Assets are invested through the United Methodist Foundation, Inc. with its principal place of business in Raleigh, N.C. With the increased awareness of the importance of early childhood intervention and education, and the need to give parents more opportunities; and encouragement to seek and maintain gainful employment, this endowment will help to make the future child care needs of families more of a reality.

Revision History

*To prevent confusion and possible misrepresentation of the policy to families, each revision of this document, submitted to the Board of Directors for approval, must have the revision number, month and year on the footer of this document and the revision number in the file name.

Date of Board Approval	Reason for Revision	Document Revision Number	Committee Responsible
10/13/2003	Document a process. Revise the approval process to ensure consistent guidelines when awarding scholarships.	v.1.1	Policy & Personnel, Gloria Cook, Chair
5/10/2004	Registration fee is prorated at same rate as the parent fee; employee discount of 15% available for employees not receiving a scholarship.	v.1.2	Policy & Personnel, Gloria Cook, Chair
5/12/2008	Families can opt to 'buy out' of the family involvement policy by \$10/required hour of service. Documentation of where volunteer logs will be kept. Amend illness policy to require that children with stomach viruses be free from symptoms for 12 hours before returning to the Center. Add a statement regarding the \$20 late fee that is applied to any account for tuition not received by the 7 th day of each month. Clarification of which families must pay registrations fees and when. Amend the summer withdrawal statement to also include track out time frames for year round schools.	v.1.3	Policy and Personnel Terry Kienle, Chair
3/17/2014	Updated the operational hours for WCPSS students. Updated the names and maximum enrollment numbers for the classrooms. Clarified staff qualifications. Updated resources and agencies. Updated terminology to include new technology such as email notification and PayPal. Changed that children with stomach free for 24 hours, not 12 hours. Eliminated details of fees and funds that are included in the separate written tuition plan signed by parents.	v.1.4	Policy and Personnel, Jeanne Marlowe, Chair