



FAMILY HANDBOOK

86 South Street
Glens Falls NY, 12801
518-804-1020

Jeremy Treadway -Owner

Jordyn Bloem-Director

Bobbie Pond - Assistant Director

WELCOME

Dear Family,

Welcome to Country Meadows Academy, where every child's journey is cherished and celebrated! At our center, we embrace the Reggio Emilia approach, a philosophy that sees children as capable, curious, and full of potential.

Reggio Emilia values the environment as the "third teacher," alongside parents and educators. That's why you'll find our spaces thoughtfully designed to inspire exploration, creativity, and collaboration. From natural materials to inviting play areas, every corner is crafted to ignite curiosity and foster learning.

Incorporating the Reggio Emilia approach into our teaching philosophy means we prioritize *child-led experiences and inquiry-based learning*. Rather than simply imparting information, *we encourage children to ask questions, investigate, and make meaningful discoveries*. Through hands-on activities, projects, and group discussions, *we empower children to express themselves, solve problems, and build connections with their peers and the world around them*.

Our educators serve as facilitators and co-learners, guiding and supporting children on their learning journeys. By listening attentively, observing closely, and documenting children's experiences, we gain insights into their interests, strengths, and developmental needs. This allows us to *tailor our curriculum to each child's unique abilities and preferences, fostering a love for learning that lasts a lifetime*.

We believe that every child is competent, creative, and capable of shaping their own learning experiences. By embracing the principles of the Reggio Emilia approach, we create an environment where children feel valued, respected, and empowered to explore, discover, and grow. We look forward to partnering with you on this exciting journey of learning and discovery!"

Thank you for choosing **Country Meadows Academy**. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment!

Sincerely,

Country Meadows Academy

Jeremy Treadway- Owner

Jordyn Bloem-Director

Bobbie Pond-Assistant Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT US	1
Philosophy.....	1
Mission.....	1
Certification.....	1
Definition of Family.....	1
Hours of Operation.....	1
Holidays.....	1
Admission & Enrollment.....	1
Inclusion.....	2
Non-Discrimination.....	2
Family Activities.....	2
Confidentiality.....	2
Staff Qualifications.....	2
Child to Staff Ratios.....	3
Communication & Family Partnership.....	3
Open Door Policy.....	4
Publicity.....	4
CURRICULA & LEARNING	4
Learning Environment.....	4
Curricula & Assessment.....	4
Developmental Screening.....	5
Outings and Field Trips.....	5
Transitions.....	5
Transition from home to center.....	5
Transition between learning programs.....	5
Transition to elementary school.....	5
Transition for before/after school care.....	6
Electronic Media.....	6
Multiculturalism.....	6
Celebrations.....	6
Rest Time.....	6
Toilet Training.....	6
GUIDANCE	7
General Procedure.....	7
Challenging Behavior.....	7
Physical Restraint.....	7
Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families.....	8
TUITION AND FEES	8
Important Notice.....	8
Tuition Rates.....	8
Tuition Deposit.....	8
Payment.....	9
Methods of Payment.....	9
Late Payment Charges.....	9

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges.....	9
Late Pick-up Fees.....	10
Other Fees.....	10
Credits & No Credits.....	10
ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL	10
Absence.....	10
Vacation.....	10
Withdrawal.....	11
Transfer of Records.....	11
Closing Due to Extreme Weather.....	11
DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP	11
General Procedure.....	11
Cell Phone Usage.....	11
Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up.....	11
Right to Refuse Child Release.....	12
PERSONAL BELONGINGS	12
What to Bring.....	12
Cubbies.....	12
Lost & Found.....	12
Toys from Home.....	12
NUTRITION	13
Foods Brought from Home.....	13
Food Prepared for or at the Center.....	13
Food Allergies.....	13
Meal Time.....	14
Infant Feedings.....	14
Children 24 Months and Older.....	14
School Aged Participants.....	14
HEALTH	15
Immunizations.....	15
Physicals.....	15
Illness.....	15
Allergy Prevention.....	16
Medications.....	16
Communicable Diseases.....	17
SAFETY	17
Clothing.....	17
Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play.....	17
Communal Water-Play.....	18
Injuries.....	18
Biting.....	18
Respectful Behavior.....	18
Smoking.....	18
Prohibited Substances.....	18
Dangerous Weapons.....	18
Child Custody.....	19

Suspected Child Abuse.....	19
EMERGENCIES	19
Lost or Missing Child.....	19
Fire Safety.....	19
Emergency Transportation.....	19
CENTER POLICIES	20
FAMILY ACTIVITIES	21

ABOUT US

Philosophy

Our daycare philosophy is deeply rooted in the principles of the Reggio Emilia approach, recognizing children as curious, competent, and capable learners. We treat each and every child as an individual learner. Country Meadows Academy takes each individual child's learning to the next level and meets them where they are at, so each and every child can thrive.

Mission

"Our mission at Country Meadows Academy is to provide a nurturing and inclusive environment where each and every child excels on their unique learning journey. We believe in honoring the individuality of every child, recognizing that they possess their own techniques, abilities, and learning styles.

Through a blend of play-based exploration, hands-on experiences, and inquiry-driven learning, we empower children to discover the world around them and construct their own knowledge. We celebrate diversity and embrace each child's cultural background, interests, and strengths, fostering a sense of belonging and self-worth.

At Country Meadows Academy, we are committed to not only preparing children for academic success but also for becoming confident, compassionate, and engaged members of society. We believe that by instilling a sense of curiosity, resilience, and empathy, we are shaping future leaders who will contribute positively to their communities.

Our dedicated educators serve as guides and mentors, partnering with families to support each child's holistic development. We prioritize open communication, collaboration, and mutual respect, creating a collaborative learning community where everyone feels valued and empowered.

Together, we strive to create a foundation for lifelong learning, where every child emerges with a strong sense of self, a love for exploration, and the confidence to navigate the world with courage and compassion."

Certification

Country Meadows Academy is a private daycare licensed by the New York Office of Child and Family Services. A copy of the licensing rules is available for review in the office, and on the web at <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/>. Country Meadows Academy is a Quality Stars New York Program.

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to a *family* as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

Hours of Operation

Child care services are provided from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday .
We Provide care for children 6 weeks through 5 years of age.

Holidays

We are closed for the following holidays:

<i>New Year's Day</i>	<i>Good Friday</i>	<i>Memorial Day</i>	<i>Labor Day</i>
<i>Thanksgiving Day</i>	<i>Independence Day</i>	<i>Christmas Eve</i>	<i>Christmas Day</i>

Additionally, **Country Meadows Academy will close up to 2 days per year for staff development days.** These dates will be announced in advance and will coincide with a holiday when possible.

Snow Days will be determined by the Director and Assistant Director, we do NOT follow a school schedule so please monitor your ProCare App for information regarding closings.

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed **and the enrollment fee must be paid to secure your child's enrollment into our program.**

The enrollment fee of \$50 is non-refundable.

First tuition payment must be paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 6 weeks to 5 years of age.

Our process for introducing children to our program is:

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

Inclusion

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

Non-Discrimination

At **Country Meadows Academy** equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Staff Qualifications

Staff members are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

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

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by **Country Meadows Academy**.

Child to Staff Ratios

At Country Meadows Academy, we maintain the following staff-to-child ratios, per OCFS regulations, at all times in our classrooms:

<u>Age of Children</u>	<u>Minimum Ratio of Staff to Children</u>
6 weeks to 18 months	1 staff for every 4 children
18 Months to 36 Months	1 staff for every 5 children
3 years	1 staff for every 7 children
4 years	1 staff for every 8 children
5 years	1 staff for every 9 children

- Children of different age groups may be combined if the following guidelines are followed:
- Infants are never combined with children over the age of 18 months, except in certain circumstances.
- Children 18 to 24 months may be combined in a classroom with children two years of age, as long as the ratio of 1 to 4 is maintained.

- Children 2 years old may be combined with children who are 3-5 years old as long as the ratio of 1 to 5 is maintained. Combining of children will only occur at the beginning or end of day when necessary.

Volunteers such as high school students (at least 16 years of age), college students, parents, or retired individuals may NOT be used to meet staff-to-child ratios.

Country Meadows Academy offers a mixed age, continuity of care classroom, for children of Infant and Toddler age ranges (6 weeks to 36 months). Within this classroom model, children are assigned a primary caregiver who assumes primary care of children and communication with families of their caseload. The purpose of our primary care classroom is to provide respectful and nurturing caregiving to each child with a focus on the emotional development and relationships established between the primary caregiver and the child's peers within their classroom environment. Continuity of care classroom encompasses the Regio Emilia philosophies.

Communication & Family Partnership

Daily Communications. Daily communication will happen through the Procare app. On the app you will get daily notifications about your child's day. For example what they ate, when their diaper was changed/when they used the bathroom, when they napped, as well as pictures and videos. On the app you can also message your child's teacher as well as the administrative team directly.

Bulletin Boards. Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Newsletters. newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are available in the ProCare App, posted in the front lobby and in your child's classroom at the beginning of each month.

Email. We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates. Procare will also generate email reminders for events we put on the calendar.

Family Events. Family events are scheduled on a regular basis. These events include fun filled age-appropriate activities for children and families. Family events allow families and children time to share, learn, and have fun together at the center. Families have an opportunity to be a part of their child's learning experience and connect with other families.

Conferences. Family & teacher conferences occur twice a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. The infant room welcomes parents/guardians to nurse or feed their infants.

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

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

Publicity

Photos will be taken of the children at the center for use within the center.

Written permission will be obtained at this time of enrollment.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

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

Curricula & Assessment

Country Meadows Academy's philosophy is inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach. This is a child led learning philosophy. We do not have a set curriculum that is standardized throughout the center. We take into account the children's likes and needs and develop our curriculum around such.

Developmental Screening

Country Meadows Academy uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. We monitor each child's achievement of developmental milestones, share observations with parents/guardians, and provide resource information as needed for further screenings, evaluations, and early intervention and treatment. Screenings will be conducted by teaching staff twice a year; the first screening being completed within a child's first 45 days in the program.

Outings and Field Trips

Weather permitting; we aim to provide a minimum of 60 minutes of supervised outdoor play and/or walking trips in our community twice a day. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the enrollment package.

Gross Motor Play

Country Meadows Academy includes 15 minutes of developmentally appropriate structured and unstructured, moderate to vigorous physical activity (both inside and outside) for every hour children are in care. This is for all age groups, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Our Infant classrooms are also container free allowing children to move and explore their bodies and environment independently.

Transitions

Your child's transition in child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new teachers are introduced.

Transition from home to center

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you. Please come with a list of questions you have so we can answer them to ease the transition.

Transition between learning programs

Children are transitioned to the next classroom based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. Classroom transitions will be initiated by current teachers and families will be encouraged to meet with future teachers as they see fit.

Electronic Media

Our normal daily routine does not include electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD) viewing and computer use but from time-to-time, we may use a Movie without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. All Electronic Media will be screened prior to use and will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world. Electronic Media will be offered only as a free choice, used to meet a developmental goal, and limited to no more than 30 minutes per week per child.

OCFS prohibits any screen time for children under two. This includes TV, videos and computers.

Multiculturalism

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

Celebrations

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community.

Rest Time

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs. Teachers directly observe infants by sight and sound at all times and check on sleeping infants visually every 15 minutes at minimum.

After lunch, Toddler and Preschool children participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

Toilet Training

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

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

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

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Consistent, clear rules help motivate the child to become self-disciplined.

Discipline Policy

We have created a discipline policy that reflects our philosophy of positive guidance with children.

Challenging Behavior

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

Each student at **Country Meadows Academy** has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect

- Receive the help and support of caring adults

Our goal is to help each child develop self control and assume responsibility for his or her actions through clear and consistent rules and limits.

We try to redirect a child into positive behavior whenever it is possible. When a child's behavior harms or is likely to result in harm to himself or another child, the child may be separated briefly from the group. The child will only be separated long enough until it is necessary for the child to regain self-control.

If a child's behavior is continuous and can not be maintained within the center or is harmful to the child, group of children in the classroom, or teachers it is up to the discretion of Country Meadows Academy to dismiss the child from the program.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted. Intervention is the act of using contact as a short-term immediate response to prevent children from occurring substantial or serious injury to themselves or injuring others. It may involve: picking a child up and moving him or her away from danger or conflict, holding the child's hands, or gently touching the body to direct their movement, rocking a child to sooth them, blocking a child's path when they are about to injure themselves or other or destroy property. This technique allows this child to regain self-control as quickly and safely as possible. A consultation with a child's parent will be requested and required if the child is not receptive to physical intervention.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

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

TUITION AND FEES

Important Notice

All payment and fee processing will be completed by Procure Application. Tuition is due on the Friday BEFORE care is received. Procure billing is recurring and payment is automatic. If you have a question or concern regarding a payment or fee, please contact The Director or Assistant Director for further assistance.

Tuition Rates

Preschool - \$300.00/ weekly

Toddlers- \$340.00/ weekly
Infants- \$360.00/ weekly

A non-refundable registration fee of 50.00 is due annually.

We do NOT offer part time care. Full time care is only offered. We offer a maximum of 10 hrs of care per day as suggested by the best practice of care in NYS stated by Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).

Methods of Payment

Several methods of payment are available for families' convenience. Families can pay by cash or check. Automatic electronic funds transfer, credit card or debit card can be used through the Procure App.

CMA accepts Daycare Assistance through the local department of Social Services. Per family contracts, DSS will cover specific days and hours. If DSS does not cover the full tuition price for the week, it is the family's responsibility to privately pay the remaining balance. Examples of DSS not covering tuition would be holidays or absences during the week.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our program. The business does not have the latitude to allow families to accrue a balance equal to more than one week of tuition. **Late payments will result in a late fee. Failure to pay child care payments will result in child care services being terminated.**

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of \$10 will be added to your next tuition payment for each day that it is late. **Repeated late payments will result in termination of care.**

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date.

If payment is more than 5 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$10. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on "cash only" status.

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$2 per minute will be assessed beginning at 5 PM and will be due upon arrival. **Repeated late pick up may result in child care services being terminated.**

Other Fees

- From time-to-time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip.
- A non-refundable enrollment/ registration fee of \$50 is due annually on August 30th .

Credits & No Credits

- **Families contract for a specific weekly schedule** as completed on the *Enrollment Agreement* Form. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every week year-round whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure or closure due to inclement weather, infectious disease (except as noted below), or weather-related or environmental issues.
- **Families are entitled to one week Half tuition rate for a vacation week to use at their discretion. The half rate is based on their normal tuition rate for their normal week of care.**
- **Weather-related or Environmental Disaster or Pandemic** – in the event of a serious crisis during which we are prohibited from operating, families shall pay for the next week. Payment of your Tuition allows us to retain staff, pay operating expenses, and hold open your child’s spot for when we are safely able to reopen.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:30 AM, please call us or message us through Procure.

Vacation

Each enrolled child is entitled to one week of vacation per year at half rate. Notice for use of your vacation week should be given in advance.

Withdrawal

A written notice, **two** weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in a two week tuition fee being applied to your account. If your normal tuition is covered by subsidy you will be billed privately for this cost.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced on Procure.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

We open at 7 AM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children and bring them into the classroom.

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

Cell Phone Usage

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

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

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

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

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

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

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring

- **Infants:** enough clean bottles for a day's use, at least 6 diapers per day or a pack to last a while, wipes, and at least 2 changes of clothes per day. All bottles must be labeled and dated. A crib sheet and sleep sack(optional)
- **Toddlers:** sippy cup or water bottle, six diapers per day or a pack to last a while, wipes, and at least two changes of clothes per day. A crib sheet, and a small blanket.
- **Preschoolers:** water bottle, a pack of diapers or several pairs of underwear, wipes, and at least two changes of clothes per day (more for a toilet training child). A crib sheet, and a small blanket.

Please keep in mind if it is summer time they will need sunscreen as well

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

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name . Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

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

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity or your child is willing to share them with their peers. We are not responsible for any lost or stolen toys.

NUTRITION

Foods Brought from Home

We request that you do not bring food or drink from home into our center.

*On special occasions children are able to bring in food for parties ect. Please just check with the director or assistant director for approval. Also please make sure you are aware of allergies in the classroom. *

Food Prepared for or at the Center

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions. Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician. Emergency care plans must be updated every 6 months.

Meal Time

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

Infant Feedings

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Infants will be held for bottle-feeding until able to hold his or her own bottle. Bottles will never be propped.
- Infants are fed “on cue” to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/teacher.
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. All breast milk and formula shall be returned to the child’s home or discarded at the end of each day. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child’s name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for up to days.
- Breast milk and formula brought from home must be dated and labeled with the child’s name.
- Labels on all milk/formula containers should be resistant to loss of the name and date/time when washing and handling.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child’s family.

Children 24 Months and Older

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

HEALTH

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. We check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

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

Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical must be received before your child begins the program. Families are responsible for ensuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

Illness

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

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others.
- Fever (100.4°F or higher under the arm) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or more than 2 times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.

- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicates the child is not infectious.
- Rubella, until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash.
- Has a physician or other health professionals written order that the child be separated from other children.

Children who have been ill may return when:

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

Allergy Prevention

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

Medications

Our center does not administer prescription or over the counter medication to children.

Communicable Diseases

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

Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- COVID-19
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)

- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness
- Tuberculosis

SAFETY

Clothing

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

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

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

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 98°F or less than 30 °F degrees. Additionally, outdoor play will be canceled if the air quality rating is too poor.

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

Injuries

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

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

Biting

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

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

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

Respectful Behavior

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

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. **The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.**

Prohibited Substances

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

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

Dangerous Weapons

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

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

Child Custody

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

Suspected Child Abuse

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

EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with fire alarms and a monitoring system

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a regular basis.

Monthly fire drills are conducted.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

CENTER POLICIES

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

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

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

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

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

I have received the **Country Meadows Academy Family Handbook**.
I understand this is a legally binding document. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the **Country Meadows Academy. Family Handbook** that I do not understand.

Recipient Signature

Date

Center Staff Signature

Date

