

**Country Meadows Academy  
for Childcare, LLC  
Parent Handbook**



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

**Jeremy Treadway  
Owner**

**Tori DeLong  
Director**

**Samantha Grogan  
Assistant Director**

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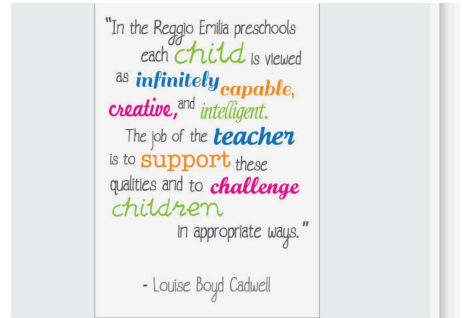
This handbook is intended to familiarize families with current Country Meadows Academy policies, practices and standards. Electronic copies (PDF) of the handbook are available on our website at [www.countrymeadowsacademy.com](http://www.countrymeadowsacademy.com). Country Meadows Academy reserves the right to revise its policies, practices and standards as deemed appropriate by the Director. Families will be notified of updates to the handbook by posted notice on the bulletin board, through our Brightwheel app, and printed copies.

## Welcome Statement

### Welcome to Country Meadows Academy!

Country Meadows Academy is an educational daycare that offers infant care through preschool. Our educational philosophy is based on the “Reggio Emilia” approach to childhood learning. This approach focuses on the child being an active participant in learning. The teacher, parent, and child are collaborators in the learning process, using the environment as another teacher, and making learning visible.

We also will be promoting the Freedom of Movement concept in our infant rooms. Our infants will be mobile, based on their individual development, and encouraged to move often all day long. We have two links to share with you to help you understand and embrace this concept.



<https://www.janetlansbury.com/2009/09/set-me-free/>

<https://hub.permobil.com/blog/why-is-movement-important-in-early-childhood-development>

## Philosophy

At Country Meadows Academy, we recognize each child as an individual. We curate each child’s care based on their unique interest, skill sets and experiences. We treat each child, family and team member with the utmost respect.

## General Center Information

### ADMINISTRATION:

Owner: Jeremy Treadway

Director: Tori DeLong  
[info@countrymeadowsacademy.com](mailto:info@countrymeadowsacademy.com)

Assistant Director: Samantha Grogan  
[Sam.countrymeadowsacademy@gmail.com](mailto:Sam.countrymeadowsacademy@gmail.com)

### HOURS OF OPERATION:

Country Meadows Academy is open Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 6:00pm

A child may have a maximum of 10 hours of care per day in the program. Upon enrollment, parents will sign a daily attendance hour contract for their child.

The center is closed for the following holidays:

*New Year's Day    Easter (Monday)    Memorial Day    Labor Day*  
*Thanksgiving Day    Independence Day    Christmas Day    Christmas Eve*

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.

**CARE**

Country Meadows Academy provides care for infants 6 weeks of age to children through 5 years of age.

**RATIOS**

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

<b><u>Age of Children</u></b>	<b><u>Minimum Ratio of Staff to Children</u></b>
6 weeks to 18 Months	1 staff for every 4 children
18 Month- 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

**LICENSING**

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 lobby, and on the web at <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/>.

**WEATHER-RELATED CLOSINGS**

Country Meadows Academy will remain open during most weather events. The Director and/or Assistant Director will monitor the weather and local news stations to determine when it is appropriate to close the center.

In the event that Country Meadows Academy closes early or cancels care for the following day, parents will be contacted and informed of the situation. Children should be picked up in an hour to ensure all parents, children, and staff can travel safely home.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is a top priority for Country Meadows Academy. Personal information of families

and staff will not be shared for any reason without prior written consent of the individual. When discussing a child's activities and friends in the classroom, only first names will be used. In situations regarding behavior problems and/or Incident/Accident Reports, names of children involved will never be given to families.

## Curriculum

Curriculum at Country Meadows Academy includes child-led and teacher-supported activities and experiences offered to young children that support and enrich their development physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. Country Meadows Academy uses the Reggio Emilia Approach and container free classroom philosophies. Each classroom is set-up in centers, which can include blocks, dramatic play, books, gross motor, fine motor, and art activities. Outdoor play is important to a child's physical development and will be included in both the morning and afternoon schedule. Self-selection or "free-play" is a daily part of the day and means a child has the opportunity to choose which center or activity he/she participates in. This promotes creative expression and development of important social skills.

Country Meadows Academy proudly partners with the NYS Creating Healthy Schools and Communities grant through Glens Falls Hospital to improve policies, practices and environments for physical activities and nutrition in early care and education.

## DAILY SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITIES

The Lead Teacher and Assistant Teacher work cooperatively to create a daily schedule and plan activities that meet each child's interest, developmental abilities and needs. Every staff member is responsible for carrying out the schedule and activities. The daily schedule and activities create a balance between active and quiet times; large and small group, and individual activities; small and large muscle activities; indoor and outdoor play times.

Consistency from day-to-day is particularly important to the overall well-being of the children and classroom environment. Children **thrive** on consistency! Routines will be maintained whenever possible for arrivals and departures; meals and snacks; resting or nap times; personal care routines like diapering/toileting and hand washing; and transitions.

**The daily schedule is posted in the classroom and visible at all times.**

## OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is incorporated into the daily schedule for both the morning and afternoon. There is less structure in an outdoor learning environment; however, staff members actively engage in activities when prompted by the children. Outdoor play is an opportunity for children to run, jump, climb and use their bodies in ways that would otherwise be unsafe in an indoor classroom. In addition, a large amount of social interaction takes place when children play outdoors. Children will go outside year-round, including winter. Only during extreme weather conditions will the children remain indoors. Our teachers refer to the *Child Care Weather Watch* poster from the New York Department of Public Health to determine if it is too hot or cold to play outdoors.

It is important for parents to send their children in appropriate clothing and outerwear for the weather conditions (e.g., coat, snow pants, boots, gloves, etc.). **Please clearly label all articles of clothing with your child's name.** Country Meadows Academy has a few extra hats and mittens, but not enough for every child. Please ask your child's teacher if you have any questions about weather-appropriate clothing.

#### NAP/REST TIME

All children need to be offered a regularly scheduled nap or rest time. Children will not be forced to sleep but may be encouraged to lie quietly for a period of time.

Children 18 months and older can bring a sheet and blanket for rest time. Please label all items with your child's name.

#### WEAPONS/VIOLENT PLAY

No weapons (toy or otherwise) will be permitted at Country Meadows Academy. If a child brings a weapon to Country Meadows Academy, the weapon will be placed out of sight and sent home the same day with a note explaining the policy about weapons.

Competitive behavior is minimized in our programs. In young children, competition often increases negative behavior and decreases acceptance of others. Bullying is not considered acceptable behavior; all efforts will be made to guide children in finding appropriate ways to interact with others.

#### Assessments

Country Meadows Academy will implement an assessment process that aligns with an approved Quality Stars assessment program. Assessments will be completed regularly and results shared with the parents via Brightwheel and during Parent Teacher Conferences when applicable.

#### PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences will typically be offered at least once per year or each time your child transitions classrooms. The goal of the parent-teacher conference is to gain insight into your child's development both in the center setting as well as the home setting. During conferences, your child's development and any goals you may have for your child will be discussed. Parents are encouraged to request conferences whenever they feel it necessary.

#### ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIOS

An assessment portfolio will be kept for each child, and passed to the next teacher when a child transitions. Portfolios will contain a variety of items, including photographs, examples of artwork, assessment profiles, and parent-teacher conference forms. When a child leaves Country Meadows

Academy, the assessment portfolio will be given to the family.

## Field Trips

Country Meadows Academy offers a variety of experiences both at and away from the center. Field trips are a creative way to enrich a study and expand the learning environment. Field trips require a parent to complete a “Field Trip Permission Form.” Parents will be notified at least one week before the planned field trip.

If you do not wish for your child to attend a particular field trip, please find alternative childcare arrangements for that day, as we will not have staff available to stay behind with children not participating in the field trip.

As a participant in our child care program, your child may participate in short, unannounced field trips including but not limited to: walks as a class around the perimeter of the building and/or nearby neighborhoods; trips to local playgrounds, a museum, library, etc. Teacher-child ratios are maintained at all times.

A “Parent/Guardian Permissions” form must be completed at the time of enrollment for this type of field trip.

### RULES RELATED TO FIELD TRIPS

Before a field trip is approved, enough parent volunteers must be available to attend to meet the adult-to-child ratios with staff members included.

#### HEAD COUNTS

Head counts will take place every **5 minutes during a field trip**, as well as at the following times:

1. Before leaving the classroom
2. After entering the field trip location
3. When exiting the field trip location
4. When returning back into the classroom

#### WALKING LINES

When traveling from one destination to the next in a line, one teacher will remain at the beginning of the line and one teacher will remain at the end of the line. Headcounts will happen every five minutes.

#### REQUIRED MATERIALS

1. Permission slips
2. School provided field trip shirts for each child to wear
3. First aid kit
4. Clipboard containing:
  - a. that day’s attendance
  - b. children’s “if lost” headshots.
5. Pocket lanyards for each teacher containing:
  - a. Class list with that day’s attendance

- b. Class total number
  - c. Emergency phone numbers
  - d. Country Meadows Academy phone number
6. A copy of Country Meadows Academy missing child procedure

### **Other Field Trip Policies**

Only staff members or the child's parent are allowed to take children to the bathroom.

## **Meals and Snacks**

At Country Meadows Academy, children are provided a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and PM snack. Country Meadows Academy follows the nutritional guidelines established by the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Menus will be posted on the bulletin board near the main entrance and in the Brightwheel App.

Children will be encouraged to sample all foods that are offered, but will never be forced to eat. Please inform your child's teacher if your child cannot eat a certain food or has different dietary needs (e.g., vegetarian, vegan, lactose intolerant) so a substitution can be made. For certain dietary restrictions, you may be asked to provide food from home for your child.

Aside from special events in a classroom, no outside food or drink is permitted in the center.

## **FOOD ALLERGIES**

Children are welcome to bring in special treats to celebrate a birthday or holiday. Due to various food allergies and dietary restrictions in our classrooms, we request parents supply store-bought snacks still in the original packaging.

Please speak with your child's teacher prior to providing such treats.

## **FOOD ALLERGY ACTION PLAN**

If your child has a food allergy, please complete a Food Allergy Action Plan form, available in the office. This form will be posted in your child's room, as well as in food preparation areas. If medication for an allergic reaction is provided, please have your physician sign the Food Allergy Action Plan as well.

## **Infant & Toddler Rooms**

The following information is specific to the infant and toddler rooms:

- Parents must supply diapers, wipes, diaper cream, bottles, formula, baby food, extra clothing, pacifiers, and blankets (Toddlers only), for rest time. Please label all items with your child's name.
- Children may use pacifiers during rest time. To reduce the likelihood of spreading illness, pacifiers must be kept in a child's cubby or other designated area during all other times of the day.
- If you are breastfeeding, please discuss with your child's teacher when your child should be



fed breast milk, and if/when you would like to come in and feed your child.

- Breast milk must be brought in ready-to-use containers.
- We recommend that all new foods be tried at home first since a child could have an allergic reaction to foods they have not had before. Please inform your child's teachers on the daily charts of any new foods your child has tried.

### SIDS

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexpected, sudden death of a child under age 1 for which a cause of death cannot be identified. It is not known what causes SIDS, however several sleeping practices have been linked to an increased risk for SIDS. Therefore, Country Meadows Academy has a strict policy for infant sleep placement.

#### **All infants less than one year will be placed on their back to sleep.**

Once a child has been placed in his or her crib for a nap, if the infant rolls from back to front - and is also able to roll from front to back - it is acceptable to leave the infant sleeping on his or her stomach. NO heavy blankets, stuffed toys or pillows will ever be placed in a crib. A request for alternative sleeping positions must be accompanied by a signed and dated physician's note stating the reason for the request.

### PLAY CLOTHES

Please send your child to Country Meadows Academy in comfortable play clothes and shoes. Play is usually active and often messy; comfortable, washable clothes are important if your child is to participate fully in the program. Outdoor play is scheduled every day as an essential part of our curriculum. We expect all children to be dressed appropriately for both indoor and outdoor activities.

All children occasionally get their clothes wet and have toileting accidents. Whenever this occurs, it is best to change the child into an extra set of clothing provided by the family. Your child's teacher will request that you bring a complete change of clothing, including underwear, to be kept at school and replenished as needed. Please be sure to clearly label all items of clothing.

### ITEMS FROM HOME

Toys, stuffed animals, or other items from home may help your child feel more comfortable at school from time to time. However, it is often difficult for young children to share their special "treasures" with classmates. We ask that all items brought to Country Meadows Academy from home be placed in your child's cubby shortly after arrival. Please clearly label all belongings brought from home. Country Meadows Academy is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items.

## Arrival and Departure

### ARRIVAL

Parents are required to accompany their child into the center and into their child's classroom. Parents should also speak with the teacher in the classroom, if only briefly. We encourage parents to communicate with their child's teacher: about their child's temperament that particular day, how he/she slept the night before, whether he/she has eaten that morning, etc. Each child must wash their hands upon arriving at their classroom.

Most children go through periods of difficulty with separating from their parent(s). This is common and developmentally appropriate. Try these tips for a successful drop-off:

- **Establish a regular, predictable routine.** Whether you have a kiss and a hug and go, or help your child put their things in their cubby first, do it the same way every day. What often makes separating stressful for children is the uncertainty. If your child can predict what will happen, the separation won't be as difficult.
- **Separate once.** If you come back into the classroom again and again, it will increase your child's stress. Remember the moment of separation is the worst part for your child, so doing it more than once makes it more stressful for your child.
- **Be reliable.** Return when promised. Children who are picked up later than expected may have more difficulties separating. Phrase time in terms your child will understand. For example, you will be back after snack time or before nap time.

### DEPARTURE

Country Meadows Academy closes at 6:00pm Monday through Friday. If you will be late picking up your child, please provide us with as much notice as possible. Please note that there is a late fee for arriving after 6:00pm. If someone we are not familiar with is to pick up your child, it is essential that you inform your child's teacher in advance of the pick-up. This person must be listed as an authorized person on the Emergency Contact and Parent Consent form. Remind the authorized person that they will be asked for identification such as a driver's license to ensure your child's safety. Even if the individual has picked up before, he or she may still need identification if the teacher in charge has never met him or her.

Be sure to say good-bye to your child's teachers so they know you are leaving. Once you have reunited with your child and are departing, Country Meadows Academy is no longer responsible for your child. For safety reasons, please do not let your child run ahead of you inside or outside of the building.

If parents do not arrive to pick up their child from the program, staff members will first try to contact the parents using all phone numbers provided on the Emergency Contact and Medical Consent form. If parents are unable to be reached, staff members will try to contact all emergency contact persons. If staff members are unable to contact emergency contact persons, the Director and/or Assistant Director will be notified and she will then notify the Department of Human Services and/or the local police department.

**Late fee breakdown:** Arrangements must be made prior to the beginning of the program. Country

Meadows Academy charges a late fee of \$5.00 when a child is present past 6:00 pm. After 10 minutes the fee will increase to \$10 for every 5 minutes. After 3 instances of a child being picked up late, enrollment will be reviewed and potentially canceled.

## ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is strongly encouraged for the benefit of the child as well as the classroom as a whole. If your child will be absent, please **call the center by 8:00 am** so staff knows not to expect your child.

If your child will be absent for an extended period of time (more than 2-3 days), the center must be notified in writing of the date the absence will begin and the expected date your child will return. Enrollment may be terminated if a child is absent for a period of 2 weeks or more, no notice has been received and/or contact made by the family.

## Health and Safety Policies

### ILLNESS

Our first priority at Country Meadows Academy is providing a healthy, safe learning environment for all children. Children/staff will be sent home as soon as possible if any of the following is experienced: an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (as determined by the staff); an illness that results in a greater need for care than the staff can reasonably provide without compromising the health or safety of other children in the classroom; or a child experiencing any of the following conditions:

- **Fever** of 100.5 or greater, until 24 hours symptom free without fever reducing medication
- Signs/symptoms of severe illness, including: lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, and/or wheezing
- **Diarrhea** (not associated with diet changes or medications; 2 loose or watery instances within the child's time in care or accompanied with fever and or vomiting) until diarrhea stops for 24 hours or the continued diarrhea is deemed not be infectious by a licensed healthcare professional.
- Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
- **Vomiting** (One instance) the child can return after vomiting has been resolved for 24 hours or until a health care provider determines the cause for vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration
- Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than 2 hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs/ symptoms of illness
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines the sores are not

- contagious
- Rash until a physician determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease
- **Pink eye** (conjunctivitis) until after treatment has been initiated for 24 hours
- **Covid-19**, 5 days after onset of symptoms or positive test and fever-free for 24 hours
- **Head lice**, must be nit free
- **Scabies**, until after treatment has been completed
- **Tuberculosis**, until a health care provider states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend child care
- **Impetigo**, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- **Hand Foot and Mouth** sores have dried and crusted and no fever
- **Strep throat**, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- **Chicken pox**, until all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)
- **Pertussis**, until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed
- **Mumps**, until 9 days after onset of symptoms
- **Hepatitis A virus**, until 1 week after onset of illness
- **Measles**, until 4 days after onset of rash
- **Rubella**, until 6 days after onset of rash
- Unspecified respiratory tract illness accompanied by another illness which requires exclusion
- **Herpes simplex**, with uncontrollable drooling

Country Meadows Academy reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness.

**Please contact the center by 8:00AM whenever your child is ill.**

#### HAND WASHING

Frequent hand washing with soap and warm, running water is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illnesses commonly found in childcares such as the flu, diarrhea, and pink eye. Parents are encouraged to assist their child in the hand washing process upon arrival. Other times your child (and staff members) will be expected to wash their hands:

- Upon arriving at the center or when changing classrooms
- After **each** diaper change or using the toilet
- Before and after meal times
- Before and after administering medication
- After handling bodily fluids (mucus, blood vomit)
- Before and after using the sensory table
- After coming indoors from the playground
- After handling pets and other animals
- After cleaning or handling garbage

Warm, running water (no colder than 60 degrees F) and soap must be used. Hands must be rubbed vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including the backs of hands, between fingers, under nails, and under any jewelry. A disposable paper towel should be used to dry hands and turn off faucet. Help reinforce the importance of hand washing by encouraging frequent hand washing at home as well.

#### PHYSICALS AND IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

Each child must have a current physical and immunization record on file at Country Meadows Academy. The physical on file must be updated at least annually; immunization records must be updated whenever a new immunization is received.

#### DOCUMENTATION OF ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

Staff members shall document accidents and incidents that occur at Country Meadows Academy using Brightwheel and an Incident Report.

#### DOCUMENTATION OF HEALTH INCIDENTS

Each time a parent is contacted regarding an ill child or symptoms of illness, a Health Incident Form will be completed. Parents will be notified of any communicable illnesses present in the center via Brightwheel.

#### DOCUMENTATION OF ALLERGIES

A child with allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan posted in a visible location in the classroom. If the allergy is food related, an Allergy Action Plan must also be posted in the kitchen area. All staff working in the classroom of a child with allergies must review the Allergy Action Plan to ensure understanding of emergency procedures should the child have an allergic reaction. All allergic reactions must be documented with a Health Incident Form.

#### DOCUMENTATION OF SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS

An Emergency Care Plan will be on file for any child with special health care needs (seizures, etc). A copy of the Emergency Care Plan must be kept in the classroom emergency binder. All staff working in the classroom must familiarize themselves with this plan, should an emergency arise. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a child's specific health care needs.

#### EMERGENCY MEDICAL/DENTAL PROCEDURE

It is important that parents complete and update, as needed, an Emergency Contact and Parental Consent Form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. In addition, the form allows Country Meadows Academy staff members to seek emergency medical or dental care from authorized care providers in the event of serious injury. **It is the responsibility of the parent to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary.**

- If a child becomes ill or injured after arriving at the center, the Lead Teacher will attempt to contact the parent(s) at all available telephone numbers. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts/authorized pick up persons on the Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form will be called.

**If the child requires immediate medical attention:**

- The staff member who witnessed the emergency situation will remain with the injured child and instruct someone else to call 911. A staff member who witnessed the emergency situation or is familiar with the child, will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing the child’s physical exam, immunization records, and Emergency Contact & Parental Consent Form.
- The Director or Assistant Director will contact the parent(s).

**SUNSCREEN & INSECT REPELLANT**

All families will be required to supply sunscreen for their child/ren for outdoor activities. A permission slip must be on file before sunscreen will be applied to a child. Sunscreen must be SPF 15 or above, and will be applied by classroom teachers regularly throughout the day. A family may choose to supply insect repellent to be used on their child as well.

**CLOTH DIAPERS**

It is requested that children wear disposable diapers. Cloth diapers may be used but must be laundered by the parent or a commercial company. If using cloth diapers, parents must supply all cloth diapers and waterproof covers/pullover. Also required is a diaper pail with a lid labeled with the child’s name. All cloth diapers will be placed in a plastic bag and placed in the lined diaper pail. All cloth diapers must be removed from the center at pick up time each and every day. The diaper pail must be taken home daily to be cleaned if necessary and every weekend and then returned the following week. Extra diapers and waterproof covers/pullover must be on hand at all times. Cloth diapers must have snaps not pins. In accordance with the United States Public Health Service, any clothing that becomes soiled with bodily fluids (urine, stool, vomit and/or blood) must be placed in a sealed labeled plastic bag. This procedure is to help prevent the spread of infection that may occur from handling soiled clothing. All soiled clothing will be given to the parent at pick up time

**MANDATORY CHILD ABUSE REPORTERS**

As childcare professionals who interact with children on a daily basis, each staff member of Country Meadows Academy is a mandatory child abuse and neglect reporter and must contact the New York Department of Human Services whenever abuse or neglect is suspected.

**TOBACCO USE**

Cigarettes, vaping and smokeless tobacco products are prohibited on Country Meadows Academy premises, including parking lots and outdoor play areas. Smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco products is also prohibited while on field trips.

**ACCESS POLICY**

Any person in the center who is not an owner, staff member, substitute, or subcontracted staff or volunteer who has had a record check and approval to be involved with child care **shall not** have unrestricted access to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian or custodian, nor be counted in the staff to child ratio. **Unrestricted access** means that a person has contact with a child alone or is directly responsible for child care.

Persons who do not have unrestricted access will be under the direct supervision and monitoring of a paid staff member at all times and will not be allowed to assume any child care responsibilities. The primary responsibility of the supervision and monitoring will be assumed by the Lead Teacher unless he/she delegates it to the Assistant Teacher due to a conflict of interest with the person.

Center staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the center without their knowledge to ask what their purpose is. If a staff member is unsure about the reason, the Director or Assistant Director will give approval for the person to be on site if they deem it necessary. If it becomes a dangerous situation, staff will follow the “Dangerous Adult” procedure. Non-agency persons who are on the property for other reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc., will be monitored by a paid staff member and will not be allowed to interact with children on the premises.

A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor (even if the sex offender is the parent, guardian or custodian) who is required to register with the NY sex offender registry:

- Shall not operate, manage, be employed by, or act as a contractor or volunteer at the child care center.
- Shall not be on the property of the child care center without written permission from the Director, except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender’s own minor child to and from the center. The Director is not obligated to provide permission and must consult with their DHS licensing agent first.

## AFFIDAVIT POLICY

At times, families may be dealing with difficult situations at home. When legal matters are present in the home, families may need to collect affidavits for their legal team. Due to the nature of the relationship between caregiver and child, families may choose to ask a Country Meadows Academy staff member to provide such a statement. Our program’s priority is providing the best possible care when children are away from home and our focus will remain on the child, making sure all their needs are met during what could be a difficult time at home. Country Meadows Academy staff members will not provide written statements or affidavits of a professional nature to families.

## GUIDANCE STRATEGIES

Every adult who cares for children has a responsibility to guide, correct and socialize children toward appropriate behaviors. These adult actions often are called child guidance and discipline. Positive guidance and discipline are crucial because they promote children's self-control, teach children responsibility and help children make thoughtful choices. The more effective caregivers are at encouraging appropriate child behavior, the less time and effort adults will spend correcting children's misbehavior.

Effective guidance and discipline focus on the development of the child. They also preserve the child's self-esteem and dignity. Actions that insult or belittle are likely to cause children to view their caregivers negatively, which can inhibit learning and can teach the child to be unkind to others. However, actions that acknowledge the child's efforts and progress, no matter how slow or small, are likely to encourage healthy development. Teaching children self-discipline is a demanding task. It requires patience, thoughtful attention, cooperation and a good understanding of the child. Country Meadows Academy staff will use **only** positive guidance techniques and redirection.

When interacting with young children, staff should ask themselves the following questions:

**“Am I...”**

- Validating feelings?
- Asking open ended questions?
- Encouraging problem solving?
- Respecting children's choices?
- Using praise and positive reinforcement?
- Talking with children – not at them?
- Circulating throughout the classroom?
- At the child's eye level?

## REASONS FOR MISBEHAVIOR

If caregivers understand why children misbehave, they can be more successful at reducing behavior problems. Listed here are some of the possible reasons why children misbehave.

- Children want to test whether caregivers will enforce rules.
- They experience different sets of expectations between school and home.
- A child does not understand the rules, or are held to expectations that are beyond their developmental levels.
- They want to assert themselves and their independence.
- They feel ill, bored, hungry or sleepy.
- They lack accurate information and prior experience.
- They have been previously "rewarded" for their misbehavior with adult attention.

## PREVENTING MISBEHAVIOR

Child misbehavior is impossible to prevent completely. Children, usually curious and endlessly creative, are likely to do things parents and other caregivers have not expected. However, there are many positive steps caregivers can take to help prevent misbehavior.

- Set clear, consistent rules. (*e.g., walking feet; gentle touches*)
- Make certain the environment is safe and worry-free.
- Show interest in the child's activities. (*e.g., participating in activities with the children so they stay interested for longer periods*)
- Encourage self-control and independence by providing meaningful choices. (*e.g., “You may pick up the blocks or art center.”*)
- Focus on the desired behavior, rather than the one to be avoided. (*e.g., “Ashley, please use gentle touches with your friends.”*)
- Build children's images of themselves as trustworthy, responsible and cooperative.
- Give clear directions, one at a time.
- Say "Yes" whenever possible.



- Notice and pay attention to children when they do things right. (e.g., “*Joey is playing so nicely. I like it when you keep the blocks on the table.*”)
- Encourage children often and generously.
- Set a good example. (e.g., *using a quiet voice when children should be quiet*)
- Help children see how their actions affect others.

## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

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 or seriously disrupts group interaction, the child may be separated briefly from the group, but only long enough as it is necessary for the child to regain self-control. Interaction between a caregiver and the child takes place immediately following the separation to guide the child toward appropriate group behavior.

Physical intervention may be necessary. Physical intervention is the act of using bodily 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.

## USEFUL PHRASES

The following phrases are useful when problem-solving with children.

**Instead of** “No” or “Don’t”

**Say** “Please stop”, “I don’t like that”, “That’s not OK”, or “That is not a choice”

**Instead of** “That’s not nice”

**Say** “That’s not OK”, “Please use gentle touches”, or “That hurts Jordan”

**Instead of** “No running”

**Say** “I need you to use your walking feet” or “You may run when we go outside”

**Instead of** “Stop crying”

**Say** “I need you to use your words to tell me what is wrong”

**Instead of** “Can you put away your toys?” (If it is not a choice, do not pose it as a question) **Say** “You may help me pick up the blocks, or help Alyssa pick up the puzzles”

**Instead of** “I said yes” (when a child tells you “no”)

**Say** “No is not a choice, I need you to...”

## Biting Policy

Biting is a behavior that usually appears between the ages of one and three years. While biting is an age-appropriate behavior, it is important to remember it is also an unsafe behavior in a childcare environment. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration and stress. Biting is not something to blame on children, their parents or their teachers. There are a variety of strategies we implement at Country Meadows Academy to prevent and stop biting. This is the process followed when a child bites:

- The biting child is stopped and told, “Stop biting. Biting hurts” in a firm voice. Teachers should remain calm, being careful not to show anger or frustration towards the child.
- The biting child is removed from the situation. Depending upon the observed motive for the bite, the separation may include re-direction or meeting the child’s needs.
- Appropriate first aid will be provided to the child who was bitten. Bite will be washed with soap and water; cold compress will be applied to reduce pain and swelling. A bandage will be applied if necessary.

It is important to explore the reasons for biting when it occurs. Teachers need to work with parents to gather information about the child’s behavior and begin observations to determine the reasons for biting. Examples of triggers would be: communication deficits, transitions, hunger, lack of sleep, need for oral stimulation or teething pain. Once triggers are identified, staff can work on prevention strategies and start teaching replacement skills. Below are the steps the teacher will take to identify triggers and replace the behavior:

1. The teacher will examine the context in which the biting is occurring and look for patterns. The following questions should be asked:
  - Was the space too crowded?
  - Were there too few toys?
  - Was there too little to do or too much waiting?
  - Was the child who bit getting the attention and care he/she deserved at other times?
2. The teacher will change the environment, routines or activities if necessary.
3. The teacher will work with the child who is biting to resolve conflicts and frustrations in more appropriate ways
4. The teacher will observe the child, to get an idea of why and when they are likely to bite.
5. The teacher will identify children likely to be bitten and make special efforts to reduce their chance of being bitten.
6. The teacher, parent and Director and/or Assistant Director will meet regularly to regulate an action plan and measure outcomes.
7. If biting continues the teacher will observe the group more closely and work with the parents to seek out additional resources as necessary to shadow the child who is biting.

All information is confidential and names of the children involved in the incident are NOT shared between parents. In addition, biting is always documented on an Incident/Accident Report which is completed and signed by a teacher and parent. A copy is provided to the parent and the original kept in the child’s permanent enrollment file in the office.

## BRIGHTWHEEL

For children enrolled at Country Meadows Academy an electronic daily sheet will be provided in Brightwheel to tell you about your child's day. This chart contains information about toileting, meals, naps, and activities. On the Brightwheel app. You will also get pictures of your child as well as video updates. You will be able to message the teachers directly as well as the management staff. Teachers' lesson plans will also be uploaded to Brightwheel as well as important center updates.

## ROOM TRANSITIONS

Your child will transition to a new classroom when he/she has reached the developmental milestones for a particular classroom. As the time for a transition to a new room approaches, you will receive a letter containing information about your child's transition into his/her new classroom. Both your child's current and future teacher is available to address any questions or concerns you have during the transition process. Before the transition into a new classroom has been completed, parents are encouraged to schedule a meeting with the new teacher in order to familiarize themselves with the new classroom, children, and curriculum.

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent participation is strongly encouraged in our program. Some possible opportunities to participate and contribute to your child's Country Meadows Academy experience:

- Field trip supervision
- Leading or assisting special projects (sewing, carpentry, cooking, etc.)
- Construction or collection of raw materials for art projects, dramatic play props, etc.
- Eating lunch or snack with your child – please inform the teachers one day in advance
- Volunteering in your child's classroom

## PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences will typically be offered each time your child transitions classrooms. The goal of the parent-teacher conference is to gain insight into your child's development both in the center setting as well as the home setting. During conferences, your child's development and any goals you may have for your child will be discussed. Parents are encouraged to request conferences whenever they feel it necessary.

## PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Country Meadows Academy asks parents to complete a program evaluation annually. The information gathered from these anonymous surveys is used by the staff to develop goals for our center and to improve the overall quality of care at our center. A parent's point of-view is different from a teacher's point-of-view. Therefore, parent feedback on the program evaluations is very important to the success of our program and satisfaction of our families.

## Fees and Billing Policies

### Cost/week

Infant Room: Age 6 weeks - 18 months -\$340

Toddler Room: 18 months-36 months-\$320

Pre-School: 36 months - 5 years-\$250

- **Per school year, Registration Fee: \$25 per child School Session Sept – Aug. Re-registration Fees will be charged once a year in September for families that were enrolled prior to July 1 of that year.**
- **VACATION POLICY: For ONE week each year (52 week period), half price tuition will be allowed for a child that will be absent from care for their scheduled days that week. Two weeks' written notice will be needed in order to receive the discount.**
- **Payment Due Schedule: All Payments are due by 6:00 pm Friday of the week prior to the start of the week attending. A late fee of \$10.00 Per Day will be assessed on any account which is not paid in full by 6:00 p.m. on the previous Friday. All payments will be automatically processed on the date due thru our Brightwheel App payment processing software using a credit card or ACH payment option or via check. In the event that the check you have provided has been returned you will be responsible for paying the return fee along with the previous week's tuition and the next week's tuition to avoid any further instances. Invoices are located in the Brightwheel app.**
- **County Assistance:** any payments not covered by the county will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian on the child's account. If the county does not cover all of the child's hours or sick days. The primary payer on the account will then be responsible for the remainder of the bill.
- **Termination of care:** In the event that a family wishes to no longer utilize Country Meadows Academy for child care a two-week written notice is required. Failure to provide such notice will result in a two week tuition fee for the previously enrolled child.

### FINANCIAL AGREEMENT AND TUITION INCREASE

Upon enrollment and any changes to tuition, families are provided a Fee Policy & Financial Agreement. This agreement should be carefully reviewed then signed.

### PART-TIME ENROLLMENT

Country Meadows Academy generally does not offer a part-time enrollment rate. However, part-time rates may be available if two or more families seeking part-time enrollment are able to coordinate their schedules to occupy **one** full-time spot. For example: Family A attends Monday, Tuesday, and

Wednesday. Family B attends Thursday and Friday. Part-time rates are at the discretion of the Director and based upon several factors including number of hours of care needed. Due to the nature of a part-time enrollment, all changes to a part-time schedule must be approved by the Director and cannot be guaranteed.

#### LATE PICK-UP FEE

Arrangements must be made prior to the beginning of the program. Country Meadows Academy charges a late fee of \$5.00 when a child is present past 6:00 pm. After 10 minutes the fee will increase to \$10 for every 5 minutes. After 3 instances of a child being picked up late, enrollment will be reviewed and potentially canceled.

#### DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

Families that are more than 1 week behind in payments may have their child care services terminated. For information about assistance programs that will help cover the cost of child care tuition, please speak with the Director. A payment plan must be agreed upon between family and Center before an account will be considered “in good standing” and no longer eligible for termination.

### Emergency Procedures

#### EMERGENCY MEDICAL/ DENTAL PROCEDURE

It is important that parents complete and update, as needed, an Emergency Contact and Parental Consent Form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. In addition, the form allows Country Meadows Academy staff members to seek emergency medical or dental care from authorized care providers in the event of serious injury. **It is the responsibility of the parent to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary.**

- If a child becomes ill or injured after arriving at the center, the Lead Teacher will attempt to contact the parent(s) at all available telephone numbers. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts/authorized pick up persons on the Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form will be called.

**If the child requires immediate medical attention:**

- The staff member who witnessed the emergency situation will remain with the injured child and instruct someone else to call 911. A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing

the child's physical exam, immunization records, and Emergency Contact & Parental Consent Form.

### FIRE, BOMB OR OTHER EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Fire regulations and procedures are posted near the exits in each classroom. Fire drills are conducted each month; all classrooms are required to participate.

In the event of a fire, bomb threat, or other evacuation emergencies, the children and teachers will immediately leave the building and meet at their designated spots.. Children at Country Meadows Academy take shelter at Union Square. . Parents will be called as soon as safely possible following an emergency situation.

**For the safety of children, parents, and staff, we ask that parents do not attempt to pick up their child during an emergency situation.**

### BLIZZARD/SEVERE WINTER WEATHER

The Director and/or Assistant Director will monitor the weather and local news stations throughout the day to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day. Parents will be informed by Brightwheel of the situation.

In the event that Country Meadows Academy closes early children should be picked up within an hour to ensure all parents, children, and staff can travel safely home.

Routine classroom activities will continue until parents arrive.

### MISSING OR ABDUCTED CHILD

- In the event of a *missing* child, the Lead Teacher will search for the child in the immediate area, while another staff member calls the Director and/or Assistant Director to help with the search.
  - If the child cannot be located in a reasonable amount of time, the Director and/or Assistant Director will call the police and the child's parents.
- In the event of an *abducted* child, the Lead Teacher must **immediately** contact the Director and/or Assistant Director, the Police Department, and the child's parents.

### DANGEROUS INTRUDER

A dangerous adult is considered someone who is displaying inappropriate or threatening behavior, carrying a weapon, or showing signs of intoxication from either drugs or alcohol. This also includes an individual that is prohibited by court order from picking up or having contact with a child.

If there is an intruder or dangerous adult in the center:

- Staff members in the immediate area will position themselves between the children and the intruder/dangerous adult. •A staff member will attempt to have the parent/intruder move to the hallway and close the classroom door, while a second staff member calls the Director or

Assistant Director to assist with the situation.

**IN THE EVENT OF AN INTRUDER OR DANGEROUS ADULT:**

- Staff members will be notified by the Director and/or Assistant Director of the threat using the “All Page” feature on the telephones.
- ALL staff and children must return to their classrooms; lock all classroom doors; and sit on the floor away from doors and windows. Wait for an “All Clear” from the Director or Assistant Director before continuing with activities.
- The Director and/or Assistant Director, or a staff member designated by the Director and/or Assistant Director, will contact the local police department to notify them of the situation.
- The Director and/or Assistant Director will instruct the intruder or dangerous adult to leave the premises, maintaining visual contact with the individual until the police arrive, or until the individual leaves.

**POWER FAILURE**

Staff members and children should remain in the classroom and if possible, proceed with activities as usual, or may go to the outdoor playground until power resumes.

If power cannot be restored within a reasonable amount of time, the center will close and parents contacted via Brightwheel to inform them of the closing and the need to immediately pick up their child.

- Activities will resume as soon as possible until parents arrive.

**WEAPONS**

**Country Meadows Academy will not permit or tolerate the possession, display, or use of weapons by any person on center premises or vehicles.**

Definition.

Any object which could be used to injure another person and which has no center-related purpose will be considered a weapon. An object which has a center-related purpose but which is used to threaten or inflict injury will also be considered a weapon. Weapons include, but are not limited to, knives of all types, guns, firearms, fireworks, explosives or other chemicals, and simulated (including toy) weapons.

Sanctions.

Families may be subject to expulsion for violating this policy. The administration may impose a lesser sanction if in their judgment all of the circumstances surrounding the incident warrant a less severe sanction. The following serve as guidelines for the administration when weapons which are not firearms are involved.

1. Suspension for three to five days for possession of a weapon.
2. Suspension for five to ten days for display of a weapon.
3. Suspension with recommendation for expulsion for displaying a weapon in a threatening manner or for use of a weapon to inflict harm or injury to another person or for placing others in imminent danger.

**PERMISSIONS**

**Photography Permission**

Country Meadows Academy occasionally uses photography/video for publicity purposes. We would like your permission to photograph/video you/your relatives for possible inclusion in our publications, website and other publicity material. The image(s) will remain the property of Country Meadows Academy and will be used for the designated purpose of promoting The Center

Name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

I permit Country Meadows Academy to use photographs/videos of me/my relatives in Country Meadows Academy publications and publicity material. Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Field Trip Permission**

Country Meadows Academy encourages our students to be active participants in their community. Teachers will be taking their classrooms on many local excursions in the downtown area. By signing this section you are granting Country Meadows Academy staff permission to bring your child on these short trips. Safety procedures and ratios will always be followed. Field trips requiring transportation or outside of walking distance will require their own permission slips. This permission is solely for short local trips around the center.

Name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child \_\_\_\_\_



I grant permission for Country Meadows Academy and its staff to take my child on field trips around the center.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Country Meadows Academy CANNOT ACCEPT THIS REGISTRATION FORM AND WE CANNOT RESERVE A SPOT FOR YOUR CHILD IN OUR PROGRAM UNTIL:**

1. This registration form is completely filled out and accepted by Country Meadows Academy.
2. Your child's immunization records must be submitted with this registration form.
3. A NYS Blue Card will be provided to you. It must be filled out and signed in person at Country Meadows Academy.
4. The \$25.00 registration fee and payment for the first week your child will be attending.

I understand this is a legally binding document. I have read and understand all Country Meadows Academy policies and procedures.

**Signatures:**

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Director/Assistant Director: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_