

Early Childhood Program Staff Handbook



2026-2027

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Introduction

This Handbook is a compilation of policies adopted by Prairie Early Learning regarding its relationship with its employees. The policies contained in this Handbook are designed and intended to be general guidelines and are not to be considered binding upon Prairie Early Learning. The contents of this Handbook are compiled for information only.

Although adherence to these Personnel Policies is considered a condition of employment, the plans, policies, and procedures described in this Handbook are not conditions of employment. The language contained in these policies is not intended to create nor should it be construed to constitute a contract of employment between Prairie Early Learning and any one or all of its employees. Furthermore, the language contained in these policies is not intended to create nor should it be construed to constitute any type of promise or guarantee of specific treatment. These policies shall apply in addition to any applicable laws and regulations.

The following policies supersede and replace any prior expression of policy on the subject by Prairie Early Learning. With the exception of employee wages, which must be approved by the College Community Board of Directors. ECC serves the exclusive right to modify, revoke, suspend, terminate, or change any or all of the following plans, policies, or procedures, in whole or in part, in the sole discretion of ECC and at any time with or without notice. Annually, the Board reviews and approves this document for publication.

Programs

Prairie Early Learning strives to meet the needs of our community by offering a variety of quality programs, which include; full-day childcare, part day preschool, before and after school care, and summer camp. Programming is available at all elementary buildings and the ECC:

- **Crest:** Pre-K, Wrap-Around, School Age
- **View:** Pre-K, Wrap-Around, School Age
- **Heights:** School Age, School Age Summer Programming
- **Hill:** Pre-K Half and full day option, Wrap-Around, School Age
- **Ridge:** Pre-K, Wrap-Around, School Age
- **ECC:** Infants, Toddlers, Preschool, Head Start, Shared Visions, Pre-K, Wrap-Around
- **CVT (Cedar Valley Townhomes):** Pre-K, Wrap-Around
- **All God's Children Daycare:** Pre-K
- **Creek:** School Age



The number of children we are able to serve in each program is limited. A waiting list of families desiring to enroll their children in one of our programs has been established. Placement on this list is determined by priority status and date of application. Direct all inquiries regarding enrollment to the Prairie Early Learning office.

Mission - *Who are we?*

Guided by high expectations, partnerships with our schools and families, and extensive knowledge of child development, Early Learning Staff provide a broad range of educational opportunities that enable students to engage in school with the skills necessary to ensure quality learning today for tomorrow.

Vision - *What are we here to accomplish?*

Creating an environment of mutual respect and trust that leads to collaborative teaming and learning at high levels for all staff and all students.

Philosophy & Core Values - *How will we accomplish our goals?*

We believe that each child is a unique individual with the ability to succeed to his/her greatest potential. Prairie Early Learning strives to meet each child's individual needs by:

- Utilizing developmentally appropriate practices that match the way each child develops and learns in all content areas.
- Maintaining consistent staff in classrooms that are well educated and experienced in child development practices.
- Developing lessons that align with assessment data and learning objectives.
- Creating settings in which children will find comfort and security, as well as an abundance of opportunities that support learning and self-guided exploration.
- Respecting the families of students and assisting families in understanding the development stage of their child, and enabling them to contribute to the educational opportunities of their student.

School Improvement Plan

Our Early Learning Programs are always looking for new ways to better meet the needs of the students and families it serves. To do this, each year a School Improvement Plan is developed. A copy of this plan, along with related benchmarks and standards are available in the Prairie Early Learning Office and the ECC teacher workroom for review.

Accreditation

Accreditation is an activity, not a status. The benefits of accreditation are the external mark of quality, high standards, process improvements, and support. All Prairie Early Learning programs have undergone a rigorous accreditation process through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC administers the largest and most widely recognized accreditation system for early childhood programs.

Early childhood programs accredited by NAEYC have voluntarily undergone a comprehensive process of internal self-study and improvement. Each NAEYC accredited program must meet all 10 of the NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards:

- Promote positive relationships for all children and adults
- Implement a curriculum that fosters all areas of child development
- Use developmentally appropriate and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching practices
- Provide ongoing assessment of child progress
- Promote the nutrition and health of children and staff
- Employ and support qualified teaching staff
- Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with families
- Establish and maintain relationships with and use resources of the community
- Provide a safe and healthy physical environment
- Implement strong program management policies that result in high-quality services

NAEYC Accreditation is valid for 5 years. During that period, the program will make annual reports documenting that they remain in compliance with program standards. All programs are subject to unannounced visits by NAEYC, and undergo a re-accreditation visit at the end of the 5-year period.

Standards of Conduct

(See also NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct located at the back of this handbook)

The code of employee conduct requires that employees conduct themselves according to the highest standards of fairness, decency, professional and personal integrity and that employees act in good faith, within the scope of their authority, within the law, within Prairie Early Learning policies and procedures, and in the best interest of Prairie Early Learning and its consumers.

Prairie Early Learning has established, and may establish from time to time, standards of employee conduct. Violations of Prairie Early Learning standards of employee conduct may, at the discretion of administration, result in disciplinary or corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

A wide variety of conduct may violate Prairie Early Learning standards of employee conduct, including but not limited to the following:

- Violation of Prairie Early Learning policies and/or DHS licensing policies.
- Violation of a family's right to confidentiality and privacy.
- Falsification of records, either prior to or during employment at Prairie Early Learning.
- Willful misrepresentation of dependents for purposes of medical coverage or other benefits.
- Use of alcohol or other drugs during working hours.
- Smoking on campus.
- Abuse of sick leave or excessive use of leave time.
- Excessive absenteeism or tardiness (not being in your classroom at your shift start-time).
- Continual tardiness (even a few minutes) creates a hardship on the center and interferes with child-to teacher

ratios. Employees are expected to arrive for duty in sufficient time to be in their classroom at the assigned time. Tardiness will result in disciplinary action. This also applies to repeated tardiness when returning to work from breaks & lunch.

- Excessive use of telephones or other office equipment during work hours for personal business.
- Lack of cooperation or refusal to follow instructions.
 - Unreasonable acts which result, or may result, in personal injury, property damage, or other loss to others.
- Disorderly conduct, including disrupting the workplace, fighting, threatening, insulting or otherwise abusing others.
- Inappropriate dress and/or grooming. Clothing should be comfortable enough to allow staff to participate in children's activities yet appropriate to the workplace. (See dress code)
- Theft or misuse of CCSD/ Prairie Early Learning equipment, supplies and other property.
- Sexual harassment or sexual misconduct in violation of Prairie Early Learning policies.
- Completing personal business on work time this includes but not limited to reading newspapers, personal books, completing homework, personal crafts, and items of personal gain.
- Participation in outside activities that may create a real or perceived conflict of interest.

Employees are expected to conduct themselves with the utmost professionalism while on or near the premises or off the premises on Prairie Early Learning business such as a field trip or Prairie Early Learning family event. This includes but is not limited to demonstrating tact about the children or their families in front of others and in the classroom, discretion and integrity in interactions with others, and exhibiting respectful and polite behavior towards staff, parents, and children. Employees are expected to be interacting/supervising children at all times.

Workplace Expectation

It is the workplace expectation that staff inform the principal or assistant director if they see inappropriate action by other staff members toward the children in our care. This is mandatory for all staff members.

Non-Discrimination

It is an unfair practice for any employer to discriminate against any person in terms, conditions, or privileges of employment. Prairie Early Learning has a corresponding obligation to maintain a working environment free of harassment. No employee or applicant shall suffer any form of discrimination because of his or her age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, disability, race, national origin, color, religion, genetic information and creed.

Teamwork

It is our belief that every member of the organization is an important element to the group's success and therefore they should have the opportunity to contribute. Teamwork can be best defined using these words: Communication, Helpful, Attainable Goals, Approachable, Creative and Effective Problem Solving Skills.

Key Universal Items

Staff Attendance

Prairie Early Learning recognizes that circumstances beyond an employee's control may cause him or her to be absent from work on occasion. However, Prairie Early Learning defines generally accepted standards of attendance as no more than three percent (3%) of scheduled time off from work during a one-year period, not including vacation, or bereavement leave. In that regard, Prairie Early Learning recognizes two distinctly different categories of absenteeism:

- Excessive use of leave time: Absence caused by legitimate illness or other legitimate circumstances, but which exceeds the standard, interferes with proper performance and/or hinders the ratios necessary for the safety of the children.
- Abuse of sick leave: Use of accrued sick leave when legitimate illness is not involved.

Absence must be entered into Frontline within 48 hours for ALL staff.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see working agreement

Depending on the cause of the absences, disciplinary action could be taken. Each employee's special circumstances will be looked at individually. Prairie Early Learning reserves the right to discipline, including the right to terminate an employee for excessive use of leave time or abuse of sick leave.

Attendance Incentive

Staff that do not utilize sick leave or unpaid leave during a full quarter will receive an attendance incentive of \$250.00 for each quarter sick leave and unpaid leave was not utilized by the individual staff member.

Reporting Time Worked

Hourly staff members are responsible for swiping their ID Badge through the designated Time Clock to record the actual time worked. All changes in your schedule, vacations, floater leave, unpaid leave, sick time, etc. must be documented appropriately.

The use of the "orange" Punch Authorization form is strongly discouraged and repeated missed punches will be grounds for disciplinary actions. It is the responsibility of hourly staff to use the Time Clock to record the actual time worked.

If an "orange" Punch Authorization forms must be completed, it must be filled out immediately for the following:

- Changes in your schedule not emailed to the Business Office
- Missed swipes
- Early/late swipes.

The Punch Authorization sheet must be turned in to the Assistant Director immediately for signature.

- All punches and sign in/out times need to accurately reflect actual work time.
- All work time, either during normal shifts or otherwise, directed or allowed by management, must be tracked and paid for.

- Hourly employees can never be allowed, or asked, to work outside their normal work hours without being compensated.
- Hourly employees are not authorized to work overtime or outside their approved schedule unless approved by the Principal or Assistant Director.

All employee time is reported to the Business Office in “military time” and to the nearest quarter hour:

Clock Time	Military Time	Clock Time	Quarter Hour
6:00 AM	6:00	:15	.25
7:00 AM	7:00	:30	.5
8:00 AM	8:00	:45	.75
9:00 AM	9:00	:00	.0
10:00 AM	10:00		
11:00 AM	11:00		
12:00 AM	12:00		
1:00 PM	13:00		
2:00 PM	14:00		
3:00 PM	15:00		
4:00 PM	16:00		
5:00 PM	17:00		
6:00 PM	18:00		

Request for Absence/Substitute Policy

Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School Age Staff may request time off **in advance** for various reasons. All requests must be documented on the Google doc “Time Off calendar” with the intended substitute’s name after the employee’s name accompanied by a submitting a request on Frontline. **The Frontline request must be submitted NO LESS than seven (7) working days in advance.** Approval of requests is subject to staffing and center needs; no more than 2 people will be approved on the same date unless there is a hardship. **Submission of “Request for Absence” does not guarantee approval of time off.**

To avoid any problems, employees should refrain from making plans such as travel/vacation arrangements until after a request has been approved. Pre-arranged travel/vacation plans do not guarantee approval for absence.

All employees are expected to obtain coverage. Coverage may be obtained by utilizing substitutes from the substitute list or internal staff willing to work additional hours that will not interfere with their regular assignment. (Please make sure to follow up with your sub one week prior to your time off, and then at 48 hours for final preparations with your sub.)

****Absences that do not require a full day or half day entry may be taken in 1 hour increments by notifying the employees administrator and clocking out and back in again for the pre-approved absence.**

Preschool Staff:

It is your responsibility to file your absence into Frontline and make sure the job has been recorded. It is not uncommon in our district to have open positions go unfilled. The key to preventing open positions is to report absences as early as possible in order to give the system the most time to fill them.

For unfilled positions, a variety of options will be considered. The principal or designee will make the best judgment to ensure safety, quality of programs and least disruption. Flexibility and cooperation from all parties is necessary

****Absences that do not require a full day or half day entry may be taken in 1 hour increments by notifying the employees administrator and clocking out and back in again for the pre-approved absence.**

Lesson Plans

Up to date plans should be written to ensure quality learning.

Completed and up-to-date guest teacher folder with updated schedule, policies and procedures included.

Any students that require special attention should be noted and procedures or materials that are necessary should be in place for the sub (i.e. behavior modification plans, injury or illness, etc.). The teacher should consider, in advance, options that might be best for individual students who have difficulty with guest teachers. It will be difficult for both the guest teacher and the students if these special conditions are not specified in the plans.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

Substitute Procedures

Please add to your sub binder

- Wash hands every time you enter a classroom.
- Use “Key Phrases”.
- Make the interactions with students positive.
- Position yourself at the children's level.
- Position yourself so you can see all the children. Dividing the playground with other teacher associates/teachers by “areas to watch” is a possibility.
- Limit adult conversation.
- Consult with the lead teacher or administrator before addressing a concern with a parent/guardian. When talking with families, state your concern in a positive, nonjudgmental manner.
- Keep negative feelings to yourself.
- Do not discuss issues in front of the children or other parents. Remember our confidentiality policy.

Unscheduled Absences

Whenever possible, you should schedule your time off in advance. Unscheduled absences place a hardship on the

children and fellow employees. In order to ensure proper coverage it is essential that you directly contact the Director, Assistant Director (School Age Coordinator for School Age staff) when you are sick or, if an emergency comes up, as early as possible. (The evening before work, or 2 hours prior to the start of your shift but no earlier than 6:00am.) Leaving a voicemail, email, or text message is NOT considered having made contact in and of itself. In the event that your attempts to contact the Principal, Assistant Director or School Age Coordinator are unsuccessful you are expected to either arrange a substitute on your own, ensuring that the substitute can cover your shift immediately OR attend work until coverage is obtained.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

Building Hours

- **ECC:** 6:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
- **Cedar Valley Townhomes:** 8:15-4:15 Follows School Year Calendar
- **ECC Head Start:** 8:15-4:15 Follows School Year Calendar

Preschool Hours for 2022-2027

- AM: 9:10-12:00 T, W, Th & F
- PM: 1:10-4:00 T, W, Th & F

Cell Phone and Telephone Usage

The district telephone system is intended as a support service to the instructional program. The use of the system for personal use limits its availability for its intended purpose and should be kept to a minimum. The use of the system for business activities of a profit making nature is considered an unethical and unacceptable practice.

Cellular telephone, and related device usage (including Smart Watches), is strictly prohibited in classrooms and anytime an employee is responsible for the supervision of children. Usage of a cell phone while in charge of children, including nap/rest periods, is a serious violation of ratio policy, and employees will be subject to discipline. Cell phone usage during staff training will be allowed only at break times.

Computers are available for staff use (i.e. in the workroom, building computer labs) and may be used only for work related projects.

Social Media

The posting of confidential and identifying information about children, parents, or staff on social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, etc.) is strictly prohibited. In no way does College Community Prairie Early Learning wish to abridge the rights of its employees to engage in critical commentary and observations that may relate to the program and its operations; however, when such commentary and observations occur within a public forum and contain confidential information, it may result in disciplinary action for the employee. The posting of non-confidential information (promotional materials and the like) shall be restricted to official channels of communication (the ECC website/Facebook page, etc.) unless prior written approval from the Principal has been obtained.

The publication of photos, whether online or otherwise, is generally prohibited without prior approval from the Principal. In general, approval will usually be granted for pictures which advance the program's mission, demonstrate the educational achievements of the program or the children in our care, or which otherwise portray the program's positive contributions to the community. Staff may take pictures of the activities in their classrooms to share with the families of the children in our care, as appropriate (to document a child's progress, etc.). Some families have chosen to restrict photograph permissions, and it is expected that all employees will abide by those wishes.

Confidentiality

1. Strict Confidence Mandate

In alignment with the **NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct**, staff must treat all information regarding members of the school community (including children, parents, staff, student teachers, and volunteers) with strict confidence. [1]

- **Need-to-Know Sharing:** Private records, development data, or family situations must only be discussed in private spaces with individuals directly involved who require access to work effectively with the individual.
- **Confidential Items:** This includes, but is not limited to: phone numbers, addresses, work schedules, medical history or conditions, family financial or custody circumstances, and behavioral/developmental challenges of adults or children.
- **Consequences:** Breaches of confidentiality violate privacy laws, damage community trust, and are grounds for immediate discipline up to and including termination of employment.

2. Personal Social Media Restrictions (Privacy & Consent)

With the ease of access to digital devices, the line between personal and professional online presence must remain distinct to protect our community from unwanted exposure:

- **Absolute Personal Media Ban:** Staff are prohibited from posting photos, videos, names, or identifying descriptions of classroom children, families, or colleagues on their personal social media accounts (e.g., personal Facebook, Instagram, TikTok).
- **Prior Written Consent Requirement:** No child's photo, video, or work sample may ever be uploaded to any digital platform—including official district-approved channels like Teaching Strategies GOLD Creative Curriculum Resources—unless a parent or legal guardian has signed a formal, written Media Consent and Privacy Release Form.
- **Colleague Privacy:** Staff members must obtain explicit verbal or written consent from their coworkers before posting images or information involving colleagues on any professional platform.

Parents' Right to Privacy

Parents have the right to privacy, which means that staff should not be contacting them outside of the workday, or excessively during the workday. All calls/communication to parents should be made on a school issued phone or computer during an employee's workday and kept to a minimum. Parents may or may not give permission to publish their child's pictures for educational purposes. This is notated on the child's enrollment packet. This prohibits staff from publishing children's pictures on the internet/social media. This is a violation of the parents' right to privacy.

Shredding

A shredding receptacle is available in the main office for staff usage.

Copy/Print Shop Expectations

A photocopier is located in the ECC Teacher Workroom. Students should never be sent to make copies. For large print jobs, collating, padding, binding, etc. please send to the print shop. Print shop turn-around is generally 48 hours or less. Please keep printing to a minimum.

← Least Expensive		Most Expensive →	
\$	\$\$	\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$
No printing: Technology, spiral notebooks	District print shop for class orders	Workroom copy machine	Laser printer (should ONLY be used for creating a master, no class printing)

Supplies/Materials

Prairie Early Learning has access to storage areas at ECC and Prairie Crest. Staff is encouraged to utilize these materials for purposes of enhancing children's learning and development. If staff wish to store items in this area they must receive prior authorization from the ECC Office staff. Failure to do so will result in removal of the materials. *Employees are expected to maintain the organization of any storage area.

If supplies are needed for your classroom, please check the storage bins in the ECC Workroom. Prairie Hawks preschool teachers must alert the ECC office of what materials they remove from this area for budget purposes. If the item is not available, please make a request to the Assistant Director and Early Childhood Principal. The item will either be ordered or picked up on the next regularly scheduled supply run. Target/HyVee supply runs are completed weekly; material orders are completed twice a month. Staff are not allowed, per district policy, to purchase items themselves and receive reimbursement.

Vendor	Items	Method of Purchase
HyVee	Food Items	Credit Card
Target	Classroom Items; Food	Credit Card
Hobby Lobby	Art Supplies not available through another vendor	Credit Card
Walmart	Classroom Supplies not available through another vendor	Credit Card
Constructive Playthings	Classroom Items	GW PO System
Lakeshore Learning	Classroom Items	GW PO System
School Specialty	Classroom Items	GW PO System
Discount School Supply	Art Supplies; Classroom Items	GW PO System
Oriental Trader	Classroom Items	GW PO System
Amazon	Classroom Supplies not available through another vendor	GW PO System

Exterior Doors

It is the district's policy to lock all entrances at all times except the main entrance. The main entrance is locked for most of the instructional day. The reason for this is to monitor people who are entering and exiting the building. During recess

time, the supervisors should carry the key in order to reenter the building. Doors should not be chained open or propped open at any time

If you are in the building after school or during the weekend, you need to lock all doors that you have unlocked or that you find unlocked (including hallway doors). Please make sure that all lights are turned off and doors secured before you leave a room/building. Please do not prop doors open.

- All doors are locked during normal operating hours
- All staff and visitors are to enter/exit through the Main Entrance
- Students/Staff are not to prop doors open
- Students/Staff will not allow persons in through locked exterior doors

Building Keys

Building keys and appropriate room keys are issued to select staff as needed. Staff members are responsible for the security of their room. It is the teacher's responsibility to unlock and lock their classroom door. When the custodial staff cleans your room, they will leave the room as the teacher left it, locked or unlocked. Teachers are responsible for the keys. If a security card or key is lost, report it to the ECC office immediately.

Keys are not to be loaned to unauthorized personnel or duplicated. All keys and the security card need to be returned to the office at the end of each school year for an inventory.

Employees are not encouraged to enter the buildings after hours or on weekends. If an employee does enter a school building after hours, security system procedures must be followed.

Security Cameras & Access Control

Security systems, including cameras, have been installed on campus.

An access control system is installed at the front entrance of each of the following buildings (Crest; Heights; Hill; Ridge; View).

ECC doors will be locked at all times. In order for families and staff to access the building a unique door code will be assigned. This door code is unique to each family and staff and is not to be shared with others. Failure to follow these security guidelines at any time will result in loss of door code access and you will be asked to use the doorbell. It is essential that you do not allow other families or staff to follow you into the building as they will need to enter their own code for security purposes.

All visitors without visible identification and/or a name tag will be provided a visitor pass to wear while they are in the facility if they are deemed to have a legitimate reason for visiting the facility.

ID Badge

All employees will be provided an Identification Badge. For safety purposes, staff must wear their badge so it is visible at all times during work hours. In addition, this badge is used to document your hours worked each day. Please refer to the "Reporting Time Worked" section for additional information. *If you are rehired and neglected to turn in your badge from previous employment you must surrender the previous badge; it cannot be used to record time worked.

Emergency Procedures

In order to ensure the safety of staff and children Prairie Early Learning has established emergency guidelines. These

include procedures in the event of a fire, tornado, or intruder. Each classroom needs to post the Emergency Guidelines by each exit. In addition, each classroom is equipped with the District's "Crisis Binder" which identifies specific emergencies and protocol for responding to each emergency. Employees are expected to know what to do in the event of an Emergency, having full knowledge of all Center emergency procedures and being familiar with the information contained in the "Crisis Binder".

In an emergency, please remember to remain calm, and use common sense. In the event that you must leave your classroom or the building, always bring your classroom attendance, sign in/out sheets, Face to Name, first aid kit, and children's emergency numbers.

Emergency instructions, telephone numbers, and diagrams for fire, tornado, and flood (if the area is susceptible to floods) shall be visibly posted by all program and outdoor exits. Emergency plan procedures shall be practiced and documented at least once a month for fire and for tornadoes. Records on the practice of fire and tornado drills shall be maintained for the current and previous year.

Each classroom should have an emergency lockdown key; make sure you familiarize yourself with its location. (Should be hung by the door)

Safety in the Workplace

The personal safety and health of each employee of the College Community School District is of primary importance. To the greatest extent possible, the District is committed to providing the safest work environment possible for all employees regardless of job duties. It is the philosophy of the District that all employees shall cooperate in all areas of safety while performing the functions of their position. Only through such cooperation can the District effectively provide a safe working environment for all employees.

The District accepts the responsibility for leadership of the safety and well being of all employees, for the effectiveness and improvement of work conditions, and for providing the safeguards necessary to ensure safe working conditions. It is the Administration's responsibility to develop the proper attitudes toward safety for themselves and for those they supervise. Employees are responsible for cooperation concerning safety in the workplace and to be in compliance with safety rules and guidelines established by the District.

The following list of guidelines is meant to be general rules to follow by all employees of the College Community School District. In addition to items mentioned below, workers will follow all guidelines and safety precautions associated specifically with their job duties as outlined by District Handbooks and Manufacturer's Specifications.

- It is everyone's responsibility to work in a safe manner and follow all safety guidelines as prescribed in employee manuals.
- All employees shall immediately report unsafe working conditions or practices.
- Employees will be provided instructions, manuals, and safe handling procedures for products and equipment. If this does not occur, employees should request training, and/or, safe-handling instructions of all items used in the workplace that they are not familiar with or feel they are not adequately trained to utilize.
- Employees shall practice "proper lifting techniques" when handling heavy objects. Lift with the legs and a straight, upright back.
- Employees shall not handle or operate equipment outside the scope of their normally assigned duties without proper training.
- Appropriate attire, including footwear, shall be worn at all times depending on the job to be performed and the weather conditions.

- Protective clothing, goggles, gloves, etc. shall be worn when prescribed by the manufacturer.
- Ladders or approved step stools shall be utilized to reach high areas. Stepping on desks, chairs, other furniture or items not meant for this purpose is prohibited.
- All employees should work to maintain a clean working environment at all times, free of waste paper and items that may cause a hazard.
- Employees should be familiar with the location of Fire Extinguishers, Defibrillators, First Aid Bags, Escape Plans in the buildings and locations they are assigned.

Faculty Room Expectations-Breaks

The ECC employee lounge/work room is located next to the ECC office. Employee mailboxes, a community computer and printer, and various materials and supplies are located in this area. Employees are encouraged to utilize this room during their breaks as well. Breaks may not be taken in classrooms where children are present; this also applies to off duty staff. Children shall not be in the staff workroom.

Staff Breaks and Professional Relief Protocols

1. Scheduled Rest and Meal Breaks

To reduce stress, prevent physical exhaustion, and maintain emotional regulation, full-time employees are provided with regular scheduled relief from direct child care:

- **Rest Breaks:** Employees receive a minimum of one paid 15-minute break for every 4 hours of working directly with children.
- **Meal Breaks:** Employees working 6 or more hours per day receive an unpaid 30-minute lunch break.

2. Emergency and Brief Relief Breaks

Immediate Brief Breaks: Working directly with children requires constant attention and presence. If at any point a staff member feels overwhelmed, lacks emotional regulation, or experiences a sudden health or safety issue that prevents them from performing their duties safely and appropriately, **they may immediately request a brief relief break of a few minutes.**

- **Request Protocol:** The educator must contact the ECC office via walkie talkie or intercom system. Administration will send a floating staff member to relieve the educator so they can step away from the children to reset.

3. Campus and Time Clock Requirements

- **Scheduled Breaks:** Only the unpaid 30-minute meal break may be taken off campus. Paid 15-minute rest breaks and immediate brief relief breaks must be taken on school grounds.
- **Off-Campus Tracking:** Administration is responsible for scheduling all standard breaks and lunches. If leaving campus for a meal break, the employee must clock out and in on the time clock and complete a punch/ pink sheet.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

Parking

In order to allow adequate parking for parents, staff must refrain from parking in the main lot directly in front of the building. Staff is required to park directly across from or to the right of Prairie Crest's main lot. At Prairie Ridge, Prairie Crest, Prairie View, Prairie Hill, and Prairie Heights, please make all attempts to park in spaces furthest from the buildings. Prairie Heights and Hill does have an additional back parking lot, just left of the building, and Prairie Early Learning staff must park there. Each elementary building has its own parking restrictions. Please check with other staff at each building to determine where employees are able to park.

Mailboxes

All employee mailboxes are located in the ECC staff workroom and/or Elementary Office. It is very important that staff check their mailbox on a daily basis for important information or documents vital to your employment and clean your mailbox out once a week. A staff newsletter will be provided monthly. This document will be e-mailed to staff, if you want a hard copy placed in your mailbox please contact the Administrative Assistant. Each staff member is responsible for his/her own mailbox and its contents.

Personal Items

Every employee must limit their personal items that they bring and leave at ECC for use in their designated classroom. **All purses and backpacks must be placed in a locked cabinet.**

Items brought in must meet the safety expectations of the age group within the classroom. Make sure to label your personal items with your name. These items can only be brought in for educational purposes. If you resign your position or your position is terminated, your items will be located and given to you on your last day of employment or at a time arranged by you and Administration.

Cash Handling

Tuition payments are to be placed in the payment boxes located at each school. Staff cannot accept tuition payments from parents. All cash must be taken to the ECC office and a receipt will be provided. Cash cannot be deposited in the payment boxes, desk drawers, file cabinets, etc.

Scheduling Activities

Wednesday night is reserved for family events that are separate from school events at CCSD. School activities are not scheduled on this night.

Schedule Changes

Sometimes a scheduled event may be canceled due to weather conditions (i.e. field days being canceled on a rainy day). Please be proactive and prepare your lesson plans and all parents for the back-up plans by communicating the backup plan to them in advance. Office staff and other school personnel need to be informed about scheduling changes. Communicate changes in advance so office staff are prepared to answer staff questions.

All staff members are employed subject to assignments or reassignments, including hours per week one is employed, at the discretion of the EC Principal and Assistant Director. The EC Principal and Assistant Director reserve the right to change staff assignments and schedules according to the needs of the center.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

Job Descriptions

Individuals will be provided a copy of their job description. All employees are expected to be aware of and to carry out duties detailed in the job descriptions. Copies of all job descriptions are located in the ECC office, The ECC Orientation and Professional Learning site, and the District's Administrative office.

Employment Classifications

The following is a list of classification categories for Prairie Early Learning employees:

- Full-time: Means an employee who is assigned to work a regularly scheduled position for thirty hours or more per week. Full time employees are eligible for benefits as outlined in this handbook
- Part-time: Indicates an employee is scheduled to work 29.75 or fewer hours per week.
- School Year Only: An employee who is scheduled to work during the school year only following the public school calendar.
- Substitute

Classroom Make-Up

College Community Early Learning Programs are organized and staffed to minimize the number of:

- Groupings
- Teaching staff
- Classroom transitions experienced by an individual child during the day and program year.
- Staff transitions - Our goal is to keep infants, toddlers, twos, and preschool children together with the same educators for nine months or longer. Children are not transitioned until August of each year except for circumstances where parents request a change in placement.

Every attempt is made to maintain continuity of relationships between teaching staff, children, and among groups of children.

Classroom Ratios

1. Mandatory Ratio & Group Size Limits

Prairie Early Learning strictly enforces NAEYC-recommended staff-to-child ratios and maximum class sizes. Only permanent staff and approved substitutes are counted in ratios; parents and volunteers are excluded.

Age Group	Staff-to-Child Ratio	Maximum Class/Group Size
Infants (Birth to 15 months)	1:4	8 children

Toddlers / Twos (12 to 36 months)	1:6	12 children
Preschool/ 4-Year-Olds (30 months to 5 years)	1:10	20 children

- **Combined Age Groups:** If age groups are combined, the mandatory ratio and group size are determined by the youngest **child present in the room at that time.**

2. Operational Procedures for Continuous Compliance

To ensure children are safely supervised, appropriate ratios and class sizes must be actively maintained during all four specific operational settings:

- **1. All Hours of Operation:** Ratios are tracked continuously from opening until closing. Staff are strictly prohibited from leaving a group unsupervised or letting a classroom drop below ratio for any duration of time. The "5-minute absence" rule does not apply; an adult must be present at all times.
- **2. Indoor Learning Environments (Including Nap & Meals):** Staff must maintain the required ratios during transitions, meal times, and nap periods. During rest times, ambient lighting must remain bright enough to see faces, and staff must be positioned to visually scan all children.
- **3. Outdoor Learning Environments:** Playground zones require the exact same staff-to-child ratios as indoor classrooms. Staff must distribute themselves strategically across the outdoor space to ensure sight and sound coverage.
- **4. Field Trips and Transportation:** When leaving school grounds, Prairie Early Learning requires at least **one extra staff member in addition to the standard ratio** to handle logistics and emergencies. Face-to-Name counts must be performed before, during, and after transit.

3. Procedures for Managing Staff Breaks and Absences

- **Fulfilling Ratios:** A program administrator or an approved substitute may be counted in the classroom ratio if they are fully focused on teaching duties and directly supervising the children.
- **Leaving the Classroom:** Before leaving the group for any reason (e.g., retrieving craft supplies, speaking to a parent, or using the restroom), a teacher must ensure a replacement is present. If coverage is needed to maintain ratios, the teacher must call the ECC office to deploy a floating staff member *before* exiting the room.

Before leaving the classroom for any reason, make sure that the classroom will still be within the ratio guidelines during your absence. If you need additional staff to meet the ratio guidelines, call the ECC office.



Employment Requirements

Equal Opportunity Employer

Prairie Early Learning shall provide equal opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment in accordance with all applicable Equal Employment Opportunity laws, directives and regulations of federal, state and local governing bodies and agencies. Prairie Early Learning shall take affirmative action in recruitment, appointment, assignment and advancement of women, minorities and disabled. Individuals who file an application with Prairie Early Learning will be given consideration for employment if they meet or exceed the qualifications for the position for which they apply. In employing personnel, Prairie Early Learning shall consider the qualifications, credentials, and records of the applicants without regard to race, color, creed, sex, marital status, national origin, religion, age or disability. In keeping with the law, Prairie Early Learning shall consider the veteran status of applicants.

For further information regarding inquiries by employees or applicants for employment regarding compliance with equal employment opportunity and affirmative action, please refer to EOE policies as set by the School Board.

Hiring Procedures

Procedures may include, but may not be limited to the following:

- Application
- Interview
- Classroom observation & evaluation for lead teacher positions
- Reference Inquiries of at least three references, professional and/or personal
- Copies of transcripts, diplomas, or certificates
- Background and criminal records check (Federal and State)
- Fingerprinting - Effective January 1, 2019: Prospective employees are required to have fingerprints rolled and submitted prior to employment with the childcare center.
- Completion of Employment Verification Forms
- Submission of current Physical including tb test (must be no more than 6 months prior to the hire date) The physical will be on the form provided by ECC. ECC will reimburse the Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School Age employee for the cost of the physical that is not covered by insurance up to \$100.00.
- The employee must present the insurance explanation of benefits to show the expense that is not covered or a

signed statement if the employee has no insurance coverage.

Employment At-Will

Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School Age Staff

We hope that you will have a productive and rewarding employment relationship with our childcare center. You should understand that your employment is at will. This means that just as you are free to resign at any time, we reserve the right to discharge you at any time for performance related issues or Prairie Early Learning policy infractions for reasons that are not arbitrary or capricious. You will receive compensation for time actually worked. Nothing in this handbook or that is said or written anywhere else should be construed as a promise of permanent employment.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

Staff Qualification Requirements

Teachers

Preschool Classrooms are staffed with certified teachers. All Teachers have a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education with at least 12 credit hours in Early Childhood Education.

Lead Teachers

Little Hawks and Wrap-Around Lead Teachers have a minimum of an Associates Degree in Early Childhood/Child Development or an education related degree program.

Assistant Teachers

Teacher Associates must attain, or currently working towards, a minimum of a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA).

Hire Date/Seniority

Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School Age Staff

The date of hire of a regular employee will become the seniority date for determining wage increases in regards to longevity. Time worked as a substitute employee will NOT count toward the seniority date or towards the probationary period.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

Probationary Period

Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School Age Staff

All new employees shall be on probation for a minimum of 90 working days from their initial date of hire. Absences will not count towards the 90 working days. Absences during the probationary period for every new employee are strongly discouraged. If at any time during the probationary period it is determined by the Principal or Assistant Director that the employee is incapable of successfully performing the job, the employee will be immediately terminated.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

Performance Evaluations

Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School Age Staff

All new employees will be subject to an evaluation during their Probationary Period. Subsequent performance

evaluations will be conducted annually for all staff. Supervisors will periodically, and may at any time, conduct a written appraisal of an employee's performance. Such appraisals are intended to provide employees with feedback regarding their work performance and an opportunity to set individual performance goals. Some of the behaviors that management considers in a performance appraisal include job performance, job commitment, attendance, punctuality, attitude, cooperation, and interactions with children & families.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

Resignation, Termination, Progressive Discipline, and Grievance Procedures

Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School Age Staff

1. Resignation Procedures

To support transparency, professional accountability, and smooth transition periods, staff members intending to leave employment must follow these guidelines:

- **Written Notice:** Staff must submit their written resignation directly to the Early Childhood Principal or Assistant Director at least **fourteen (14) work days** prior to their effective end date. Departing staff are expected to bring all classroom work up to date before leaving.
- **Sick Leave Payout:** Employees who separate in good standing with more than 10 accumulated sick days will be paid for remaining sick leave above that 10-day buffer (capped at 12.5 days). Payout rates are **\$110 per day** for full-time staff and **\$55 per day** for part-time staff.
- **Vacation Payout:** Staff employed for more than 12 months who give a 14-work-day notice will receive a prorated payout of their unutilized vacation days at **\$110 per day** (full-time) or **\$55 per day** (part-time).
- **Internal District Transfers:** To ensure student-to-staff ratios are strictly maintained and avoid classroom closures, any ECC employee hired for another position within the College Community School District will not be released from their ECC duties until a suitable replacement has been hired.
- **Post-Employment ESS Access:** Employees must log into Employee Self Serve (ESS) prior to their last day to change their primary email to a personal email to maintain post-employment access to paystubs and tax documents.

2. Progressive Discipline and Corrective Action Procedures

*Prairie Early Learning utilizes the principle of **progressive discipline** or corrective action in addressing performance deficiencies or misconduct of employees. Corrective and/or disciplinary action taken against employees must be appropriate to the circumstances. In determining what constitutes appropriate corrective or **progressive discipline** action, Prairie Early Learning may consider, but is not limited to, the following factors:*

- *The nature of the misconduct.*
- *The severity of the performance problem.*
- *Other causes for the disciplinary actions that have been taken with the employee in the past.*

3. Termination Procedures

Prairie Early Learning and the College Community School District (CCSD) reserve the right to terminate employment to protect the safety, quality, and legal compliance of our learning environments.

- **Administrative Separation:** Involuntary termination may occur due to programmatic changes, financial restructuring, unresolved **progressive discipline** or performance issues, or serious misconduct.
- **Written Statement Requirement:** Any employee whose employment is involuntarily terminated by CCSD shall receive a written statement of the basis for that action.

- **Review and Authority:** All final decisions regarding involuntary termination of employment, communication of identified performance issues, and official separation paperwork will be managed and approved exclusively by the Early Learning Administration and District Human Resources.

4. Staff Grievance Procedures

We recognize that job-related or personal concerns may affect an individual employee's ability to function to full potential. We believe that the employee and the other party(ies) can best resolve most problems on the job. If you need assistance with the best approach, it is recommended that you discuss the problem with the Principal or Assistant Director.

The complaint procedure outlined below deals with problems or conflicts that are a violation of Prairie Early Learning policy, procedure, or condition. Recognizing that differences may arise in the workplace, the following procedure has been developed to ensure that work-related problems might be expressed and investigated so that an outcome can be decided which is fair to all parties. For purposes of this policy and procedure, a complaint shall be defined as an alleged violation of policy, procedure, or condition of employment. The following steps are to be taken in succession to that point of resolution of the complaint.

- **Step 1 (Notification & Investigation):** An employee with a complaint should bring the situation to the attention of the Principal or Assistant Director as soon as the complaint is known. The Principal and/or the Assistant Director will investigate the complaint within **seven (7) calendar days** of notification by the employee.
- **Step 2 (District Escalation):** If the proposed resolution of the complaint is not satisfactory to the employee, the employee will submit written information concerning the complaint to the Executive Director of Learning Supports, who will investigate and reply in writing to the employee within **fourteen (14) calendar days**.

Re-Employment

A person who has worked for the CCSD Early Learning Program in the past, left in good standing, and subsequently returns to work at the Center will be considered a new employee for qualifying for benefits and are subject to the 90-day probationary period and/or completion of required training. Employees may be subject to a 6-month wait period prior to rehire.

CCSD Non-Discrimination Statement:

It is the policy of the College Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact:

Jeri Moritz, Executive Director of Human Resources, 401 76th Ave SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404
Contact phone: 319-848-5246 or Email: jmoritz@crprairie.org

ECC Staff Compensation/Benefits/Wages/Salaries

Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School Age Staff

Wages are subject to approval by the board of directors. Wages and salary ranges are assigned for each position depending on job responsibilities and/or compensation for flexibility within assignment for reasons related to the employee's educational needs. For pay purposes the workweek of the employer runs midnight Sunday of one (1) week to midnight Sunday of the next week. The hourly wage schedules are effective July 1 of each year.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

**2026-27 Little Hawks, School Age, ECC Summer Camp Salary
College Community School District**

% Increase

2.12%

Position	Base Rate	CDA or Equivalent	1st Longevity	2nd Longevity	3rd Longevity	4th Longevity
Infant/Toddler/Preschool Lead Teacher (4 year degree)	\$ 19.71		\$ 19.93	\$ 20.27	\$ 20.50	\$ 20.73
Infant/Toddler/Preschool Lead Teacher (2 year degree)	\$ 17.89		\$ 18.12	\$ 18.46	\$ 18.69	\$ 18.93
Infant/Toddler/Preschool Lead Teacher (No EC degree)	\$ 16.56	\$ 17.32	\$ 17.53	\$ 17.70	\$ 17.92	\$ 18.28
Asst Teacher Early Childhood (College Degree or Equivalent)	\$ 16.53		\$ 16.76	\$ 16.98	\$ 17.21	\$ 17.43
Asst Teacher Early Childhood (CDA Required; No EC Degree)	\$ 15.73	\$ 16.34	\$ 16.54	\$ 16.77	\$ 16.99	\$ 17.35
School Age Teacher	\$ 15.73		\$ 15.95	\$ 16.28	\$ 16.34	\$ 16.65
Non IPERS Eligible School Age & EC Asst. Teachers	\$ 13.53		\$ 13.86			
Summer Camp Counselor	\$ 15.73					
Non IPERS Eligible Summer Camp Counselor	\$ 13.53					
Floating Program Coordinator	\$ 20.22		\$ 20.44	\$ 20.67	\$ 20.89	\$ 21.12
Admin Asst. and Database Systems	\$ 22.73		\$ 22.97	\$ 23.21	\$ 23.45	\$ 23.65
ECC Substitute	\$ 15.73					
Non IPERS Eligible ECC Substitute	\$ 13.53					

1st Longevity - 2 years	Longevity Requires a minimum of CDA or Equivalent for Lead or Asst ECC Staff
2nd Longevity - 4 Years	
3rd Longevity - 6 Years	
4th Longevity - 8 Years	

* TEACH Grandfathered as center now utilizes the BT2/AT2 model (Bonus)
* Attendance Incentive: \$250.00 per quarter, hourly staff with no sick or unpaid leave

*TEACH grandfathered as center now utilizes the BT2/AT2 model (Bonus)

- Attendance incentive: **\$250.00** for each quarter for hourly staff who do not utilize sick leave and unpaid leave.

***College degrees must be in child development, early childhood education, or education

****TEACH Scholarship recipients have completed TEACH contract and specified credit hours

All required training must be completed prior to the completion of 90 working days.

All employees designated above will move to the first (1st) longevity rate on their second (2nd) anniversary of their hire date. Employees will move to the second (2nd) longevity rate on their fourth (4th) anniversary of their hire date.

Hourly employees **are not** permitted to “donate” their time to the district doing their actual job. That is not to say that employees can’t donate their time doing things other than their normal/regular job. (i.e. PTO work, booster club, serving on district committees)

Payment/Pay Periods

Employees shall be paid twice a month. Employees are required to have their paychecks deposited directly into their checking or savings account.

Overtime

Hourly staff members who work more than 40 hours per week will be entitled to overtime pay at a rate of one and a half times the regular wage rate. The Principal or Assistant Director must pre-authorize all overtime. Overtime is based on a 40-hour week.

Payroll Pay Periods & Pay Dates for the 2026-2027 School Year

Pay Period	Pay Date
June 15 - June 28, 2026	July 15, 2026
June 29 - July 12, 2026	July 30, 2026
July 13 - July 26, 2026	August 14, 2026
July 27 - August 09, 2026	August 28, 2026
August 10 - August 30, 2026	September 15, 2026
August 31 - September 13, 2026	September 30, 2026
September 14 - September 27, 2026	October 15, 2026
September 28 - October 11, 2026	October 30, 2026
October 12 - October 25, 2026	November 13, 2026
October 26 - November 08, 2026	November 30, 2026
November 09 - November 22, 2026	December 15, 2026
November 23 - December 06, 2026	December 30, 2026
December 07 - December 20, 2026	January 15, 2027
December 21, 2026 - January 10, 2027	January 29, 2027
January 11 - January 24, 2027	February 12, 2027
January 25 - February 07, 2027	February 26, 2027
February 08 - February 21, 2027	March 15, 2027
February 22 - March 07, 2027	March 30, 2027
March 08 - March 28, 2027	April 15, 2027
March 29 - April 11, 2027	April 30, 2027
April 12 - April 25, 2027	May 14, 2027
April 26 - May 09, 2027	May 28, 2027
May 10 - May 23, 2027	June 15, 2027
May 24 - June 13, 2027	June 30, 2027
June 14 - June 27, 2027	July 15, 2027

The work week runs Monday through Sunday

Paid Holidays

Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School Age Staff

Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School Age recognizes ten holidays per year in which all employees who work 30 or more hours per week shall receive their regular day's compensation. These holidays are:

- New Year's Day

- Good Friday
- Memorial Day (observed the last Monday in May)
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day (observed the first Monday in September)
- Thanksgiving Day
- The Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve

When a holiday listed in this section falls on Saturday or Sunday the employer will designate the Friday preceding or the Monday following as the recognized holiday.

Holidays, which occur during scheduled vacation time, will be paid as holiday pay and not as no pay. If an employee is on a leave of absence without pay, then the employee will not be paid for that holiday. Other days surrounding holidays that ECC is closed will be used as unpaid days or can be used as vacation pay.

Employees must be available to work their normal working hours the workday prior and the workday following the holiday unless the time-off has been pre-approved by the Principal or Assistant Director. If an employee is ill the day before or after a paid holiday, they must provide a doctor's note to receive the holiday pay.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

Medical & Dental Insurance

Prairie Early Learning and the College Community School District offer a comprehensive employee benefits package designed to support a healthy, resilient, and well-trained staff. This package consists of four core areas detailed throughout this manual: **1) Health and Dental Insurance** (Page 23), **2) Retirement/IPERS Pension Plan** (Page 25), **3) Education Benefits**, including the Iowa AEYC T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Program and CDA assessment incentives (Pages 25), and **4) Paid Sick, Vacation, Personal, and Floater Leave Allocations** (Pages 26-29).

Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School Age Staff

For the purpose of this article, it is understood that only those employees who work at least an average of 130 hours per month, as determined by the district's measurement period, are eligible to participate in the school district's group dental and medical plans.

Employees who qualify for this benefit and choose to participate shall be responsible for \$900.00 of the annual premium, which may be paid with pre-tax dollars through payroll deduction. The ECC shall pay the remaining premium for single medical coverage for all eligible employees at the PPO Core Plan level as offered by the (MIIP) group. Employees who choose to participate in a plan richer than the PPO Core shall be responsible for the additional premium, in addition to the \$900.00 base payment.

Employees who choose to participate in the school district's dental program shall be responsible for 100% of the

premium.

Enrollment forms will need to be completed annually by all eligible employees indicating participation or waiver of these benefits. New employees shall enroll with an American Fidelity Representative prior to the 1st of the month following their hire date.

All terms and conditions of insurance provided including eligibility for coverage, coverage period, and date of premium payments necessary for such coverage shall be determined by the insurance carrier (company).

Upon termination of employment, or permanent reduction of hours to less than 30 hours per week, all school district premium payments shall cease from the last day of the month in which the employee terminates or begins reduced hours. During a layoff or unpaid leave of absence for any reason the employee may continue his/her insurance coverage in accordance with the master contract of the insurance company, by making arrangements with the school district insurance carrier to pay the entire cost of monthly premiums for each month. Failure to make such payment on time will result in the employee being dropped from coverage in accordance with the eligibility provisions for plan benefits. The district shall have the right to procure the insurance referred to in this article. Employees may pay premiums above the single HMO Core coverage amounts with regular payroll deductions or with reduction dollars in accordance with IRS regulations.

Per Section 509 A.13 of the Iowa Code, employees who are over age 55 and retire from the district shall be allowed to continue participation in the plan until age 65 so long as they pay 100% of the monthly premium and meet the requirements of the plan.

All insurance benefits shall be subject to all applicable state and federal regulations for each benefit.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

Employee Wellbeing Services

Resources are available via our District Employee Assistance Program through My Life Expert in order to provide our staff confidential support for stress management, mental health, work life balance, and general overall well being.

[My Life Expert](https://www.mylifeexpert.com/) is an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that provides integrated Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) for you and your family. This includes online learning opportunities, assessments, 3 free counseling visits per life event, financial tools, and a comprehensive list of services and programs to support a work life balance. This is free to all employees and immediate family members for the staff of the College Community School District. To enroll go to <https://www.mylifeexpert.com/> and use the pass code of **phawk** to create your account.

Worker's Compensation

Any employee injured while engaged in work covered by Workers Compensation Insurance which results in absence from work, may be compensated by the school district for loss of wages caused by such injury, for the difference between the amount paid by the Workers Compensation Fund and the basic compensation rate of the employee, for a period not to exceed the number of sick leave days credited to the employee, and if the employee requests sick leave. In order to receive such supplemental benefits, a written statement from a practicing physician licensed under the state of Iowa describing the nature and the appropriate department head may require the extent of the injury in detail.

Designated clinics are posted at the posting location in each building. All employees are required to sign a Workers' Compensation Medical Treatment Form upon hire indicating that they have read the list of medical facilities which are the designated workers' compensation treatment centers and understand where they are to go for treatment of the work injury. This signed form is placed in the employee's personnel file.

If you choose to be treated by any other medical facility and/or physician, you may not qualify for any workers'

compensation insurance benefits and you may be responsible for all medical costs related to this incident. This is in accordance with your state's Workers' Compensation statute.

If the employee needs to be treated by a physician, they are required to go to the designated clinic listed below. The Attending Physician's Return to Work Recommendations Record Form must be given to the clinic when going in for the initial treatment. This form will authorize the clinic to treat the employee.

The *SilverLinings Nurse Advantage* triage nurse will contact the clinic and make the appointment for the employee. They will inform the clinic of the nature of the injury. Injuries that may need more than one-time treatment (sprain/strain injuries to the back, shoulders, arms, wrists, and neck) as well as minor injuries should be sent to Mercy Care Occupational Health at Prairie Creek (next to Kirkwood Hotel) (319-558-0352) during their office hours. If after hours they can be sent to Mercy Care South (319-396-9097).

The College Community School District has a policy of providing suitable temporary work assignments for employees who suffer work related injuries and are placed on work restrictions. Any paperwork given to the employee by the clinic must be sent or delivered to the Human Resources Office by the employee so that it can be processed with the work injury claim. This may include but is not limited to work restrictions, medication purchase, work release, required follow-up appointments.

Retirement/IPERS

As a defined benefit pension plan, IPERS provides retirement benefits to public employees that have graduated from high school. Contributions are automatically taken from an employee's paycheck when they work in an IPERS-covered job. Employees and their employers contribute to IPERS a set percentage of employees' wages.

Flexible Spending

Employees who qualify for benefits (work at least 30 hours per week) may pay for out of pocket medical expenses and dependent care utilizing a flexible spending account, set up by the employee. Flexible spending accounts allow participants to pay for medical or dependent care expenses on a pre-tax basis.

Iowa AEYC T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Program Incentive

Little Hawks and Wrap Around

Full-time (at least 30 hours/week) teachers will be given incentive to work with the Iowa AEYC T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program to work toward an AA or BA in early childhood education. Please check with the EC Principal or Assistant Director for availability.

The center will...

- Provide paid release each week for the scholarship employee. The paid release time is equal to 48 hours per semester. Release time will be provided when the college is in session.
- Scholarship options AT2, AT2+, BT2, BT2+ as determined by the Prairie Early Learning administrative team. For additional information see: <https://iowaaec.org/programs/teach/>

All full-time (at least 30 hours/week) assistant teachers working toward a CDA will be given the following incentives:

- Prairie Early Learning administration will assist in securing the candidate's CDA advisor assigned to observe the candidate in their classroom
- The Little Hawks, or Wrap-Around candidate may be eligible for a pay increase to the next level of pay, unless they were previously "Grandfathered" into that level of pay.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff may utilize the following TEACH option, this option is also available to additional Prairie Early Learning staff:

The assessment fee is \$425. TEACH Early Childhood® Iowa offers scholarships to help with this fee. Not only will TEACH pay for 85% of the CDA assessment fee, but if you are eligible for a [TEACH scholarship](#), TEACH will also help you pay for any college coursework needed to earn your CDA.

Employee Self Serve (ESS)

ESS is a convenient, secure, and user-friendly resource with personal login accessible through the Grant Wood AEA Computer Service portal. The site is available to all current and former employees. ESS allows an employee to access their own personal information (i.e. name, address, email, phone #, etc.), payroll information (i.e. W-4 and if applicable direct deposit), payroll payment history (i.e. official copies of pay stubs), W-2 history (official W-2 forms), 1095 history (official ACA forms), and other information related to employment with the College Community School District.

Employee Child Care

Prairie Early Learning employees may enroll their children in available programs, including Infant, Toddler, and Preschool classrooms, consistent with program availability, staffing capacity, and enrollment policies. Employee children must follow the same expectations as all enrolled children, including consistent scheduling and adherence to center policies. Employees must add their child(ren) to the waitlist, where priority status will be applied.

Prior to enrollment, employees must complete an ECC Staff-Child Care Agreement.

Employees working 30 or more hours per week (excluding temporary assignments) with at least 90 days of seniority may receive a 20% tuition subsidy, subject to space availability and compliance with all ECC tuition policies. Failure to remain current in tuition payments (2 or more weeks past due) may result in loss of employee childcare discounts.

Child Care Assistance (CCA) Availability for Staff

Employees may also be eligible to apply for Iowa Child Care Assistance (CCA) to help cover the cost of their child care while employed. Under Iowa House File 2514, child care workers who meet program requirements—including working at least 32 hours per week—may qualify for CCA without household income limits. Staff are encouraged to explore this benefit as an additional support option for child care costs.

Eligibility for CCA is determined by the State of Iowa and is separate from ECC employment-based tuition benefits.

Due to limited enrollment capacity, ECC does not accept Child Care Assistance (CCA) for children enrolled in the Infant and Toddler classrooms from the general public. However, as an employee benefit, ECC staff may utilize Iowa Child Care Assistance (CCA) for their children enrolled in the Infant and Toddler programs, provided they meet all State of Iowa eligibility requirements.

Eligibility for this benefit is contingent upon continued employment with ECC. Upon separation of employment for any reason, eligibility to use CCA in the Infant and Toddler classrooms ends effective the last day of employment, and all standard tuition rates, billing procedures, and payment requirements will apply.

Employee Childcare Priority Enrollment

ECC employees may receive priority enrollment based on employment status. Priority enrollment is available only while actively employed. Upon separation of employment, priority status ends, and any enrollment obtained through employee priority may be forfeited. Continued enrollment will be subject to space availability and standard enrollment and waitlist procedures.

Vacation Policy for Childcare Staff

Fiscal Year: July 1 – June 30

Upon hire, all full time childcare staff will receive:

- 1 Vacation Day
- 1 Personal Day

Vacation days will be awarded based on the employee's hire date as follows:

Hire Date	Vacation Days Awarded After Successful Completion of 90-Day Probation
July 1 – December 15	5 additional vacation days
December 16 – February 28 (February 29 in leap years)	2 additional vacation days
March 1 – June 30	10 vacation days, awarded on or after July 1 following completion of the 90-day probationary period

Annual Vacation Allocation

Beginning July 1 of each new fiscal year, employees who have successfully completed their 90-day probationary period will receive:

- 10 Vacation Days
- 1 Personal Day

Additional Clarification for Employees Hired March 1 – June 30

Employees hired between March 1 and June 30 will continue to receive their initial **1 vacation day and 1 personal day upon hire**. After successfully completing their 90-day probationary period, they will be awarded **10 vacation days on or after July 1**, provided the probationary period has been completed. If the probationary period extends beyond July 1, the vacation allocation will be awarded immediately upon successful completion of the probationary period.

Example: An employee hired on May 15 would complete their 90-day probationary period in August. They would

receive their **10 vacation days upon successful completion of probation in August rather than on July 1.**

After 12 years of employment staff will receive 15 vacation days and 1 additional personal day.

The Principal or Assistant Director shall approve all vacation leaves. ALL time-off requests need to be submitted to the Administrative office a **minimum** of 7 working days prior to the time that is being requested off. To avoid any problems, employees should refrain from making plans such as travel/vacation arrangements until after a request has been approved. Pre-arranged travel/vacation plans do not guarantee approval for absence.

- * Vacation time will not be granted during the first week of the school year or the first week of the summer program.
- * Staff shall not be granted vacation time during the ECC shutdown week in August or on other Staff Development days; this includes all staff. Unique leave circumstances may be considered and will need to be discussed with administration.

Staff absent without approved leave will be considered a no call/no show for that day and is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees who have not earned vacation days are strongly discouraged from requesting unpaid days. Final decisions as to the number of employees on vacation at any time, for any shift or classification, as to any vacation dates are subject to the approval of the Principal or the Assistant Director.

Staff absent without approved leave will be considered a no call/no show for that day.

If an employee has been employed for a period of more than twelve months, payment for vacation days earned will be paid on a pro-rated basis upon layoff, retirement, or resignation, if an employee gives **14 work days'** notice in case of resignation or retirement.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

Sick Leave

Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School Age Staff

Every regular full-time and regular part-time employee shall be entitled to sick leave as follows:

Years of Employment	Number of Sick Days
1st Year of Employment	10 days
2nd Year of Employment	11 days
3rd Year of Employment	12 days
4th Year of Employment	13 days
5th Year of Employment	14 days
6th Year of Employment	15 days

- Sick leave days shall be awarded on a prorated basis upon hire then on July 1 each year.
- Unused sick leave may be accumulated to 90 days.
- An employee eligible for sick leave with pay may use such sick leave upon approval of Early Childhood Principal or designee for absence due to illness or injury. An employee on sick leave shall inform the Early Childhood Principal or designee of the fact and the reason thereof as soon as possible and failure to do so within a reasonable time may be cause for denial of pay for the period of absence.
- Absences that do not require a full day or half day entry may be taken in 1 hour increments by notifying the employees administrator and clocking out and back in again for the pre-approved absence.
- Sick Leave applies only to non-elective healthcare needs. Elective procedures (ex. Dental cleaning, yearly checkup) should not be scheduled during working hours.
- Sick Leave is applied only to the employee's health needs and cannot be used for other purposes.
- Employees will be asked to provide a doctor's excuse if two or more sick days are taken in a row or if requested by the supervisor.
- Pregnancy, in and by itself, does not qualify an employee for benefits of sick leave. Only illness of temporary disability resulting from this condition shall qualify an employee to use the available sick leave benefits.
- Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School Age employees who accumulate more than 10 days of sick leave by December 1 and have a minimum of 1 year seniority, may buy back-unused sick leave, but shall be limited to 12.5 days per year and shall leave 10 days of accumulated sick leave available for sick leave use. This benefit will be paid back on the 30th of December each year.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

Personal Days

Little Hawks, Wrap Around, and School Age Staff

Full time employees who work year round will qualify for one floater day each year. (1 day is given to each employee upon hire.)

* Floater days cannot be used the first thirty days of the school year.

* Final decisions as to approval floater day usage will be at the sole discretion of the EC Principal or Assistant Director. At 15 years of employment and beyond, each employee will receive one additional floater day. This is a longevity benefit.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see working agreement

FMLA

Employees are entitled to family medical leave to the same extent and subject to the same terms and conditions as set forth in the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 and the regulations implementing the Act. No provisions of the Act are diminished by the inclusion of this provision in this agreement nor are the preexisting family or medical leave provisions in this document. FMLA includes, but may not be limited to:

- All eligible employees are eligible for 12 weeks of unpaid leave in accordance with the provisions of FMLA.

However, allowed/available paid leaves must be utilized prior to and counted as a part of said 12 weeks of leave.

- Intermittent leave and reduced work-week are permitted subject to department head approval or medical necessity.
- Employees shall provide 30 days' advance notice of their desire to use FMLA leave when its use is foreseeable.
- Employees shall provide medical certification within 15 calendar days of a request for medical certification by the district.

Bereavement Leave

Little Hawks, Wrap Around, and School Age Staff

Employees will be granted up to five days leave for the purpose of attending the funeral of or attending to urgent business connected with the death of a spouse, parent, children, stepchildren, brother, sister, or grandchildren.

An employee will be granted two days leave for the purpose of attending the funeral of, or attending to urgent business connected with the death of parents-in-law, grandparents, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

Jury Duty and Legal Leave

Little Hawks, Wrap Around, and School Age Staff

Any employee called for jury duty or to testify on behalf of the school district during school hours shall be provided such time. **Any fees or remuneration the employee receives during such leave shall be turned over to the College Community School District in the form of a payroll deduction.**

When an employee is excused from jury service before noon, either temporarily or permanently, on any work day, the employee shall promptly report to his/her immediate supervisor and shall complete any remaining hours of work in the work day, if required. An employee subpoenaed as a witness, and who is denied the option of submitting a deposition, shall be granted leave as needed, up to three (3) days.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

Weather or Building Closure

Late Start

In the event that the College Community School District has a late start due to inclement weather all AM ½ Day Preschool Classes and Head Start will be canceled. Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and

Before and After School program, will try to follow traditional business hours, with extended school age services provided until school starts. If weather is deemed too severe or prevents us from providing adequate care, a decision to close or delay the start of the program will be made no later than 6:00am. If this occurs, ECC will provide updated information on the District website, www.craprairie.org. In addition, ECC will strive to post information on local news

stations, KCRG Channel 9, KWWL Channel 7, and Fox.

Early Outs

In the event that the College Community School District has an early dismissal due to inclement weather, all ½ Day PM Preschool Classes and Head Start will be canceled. Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and After School programs, will always try to remain open. However, if the safety of our staff and children becomes a concern, Prairie Early Learning reserves the right to close early. If a decision is made to close programs early all parents whose children are in attendance that day, will be directly notified by phone, approximately 2 hours prior to the designated closing time. If we are unable to reach parents, emergency contacts will be notified. If your child is picked up later than the designated closing time, late fees will be assessed.

If the College Community School District announces an unscheduled early dismissal, all children enrolled in our Before/After school program will remain at their school sites where care will be provided for the remainder of the day if they have been served lunch. If lunch has not been served, they will be transported to Prairie Hill and continue their day at that site. Prairie Early Learning will strive to post information at the main entrances of Prairie View, Ridge, Hill, Crest, and Heights reminding parents where they may locate their child.

School Closures

In the event that College Community School District closes for the day due to weather, all ½ day preschool classes and Head Start will be canceled. Little Hawks, Wrap-Around and Before and After School Programs will make every attempt to remain open. If weather is deemed too severe or prevents us from providing adequate care, a decision to close programs will be made no later than 6:00am. If this occurs, Prairie Early Learning will provide updated information on the District website, www.prairiepride.org. In addition, the district will strive to post information on local news stations, KCRG Channel 9, KWWL Channel 7, and Fox.

It is essential that every employee reports to work as usual. You must call the Principal or Assistant Director to inform them of any absence. Failure to do so will be considered an unapproved absence subject to disciplinary action.

Weather Watches and Warnings

During tornado watches and high wind advisories students are to remain off of the playgrounds.

Staff should familiarize themselves with shelter locations and ensure this posting is prominently displayed by the classroom door.

During Tornado Warnings, families are not permitted to leave the school building. Families are to shelter in place with students until an all clear has been announced by the administrator in charge.

See crisis binder for additional information.

Interruptible Power

If the school district is placed on Interruptible Power during the summer months, Prairie Early Learning will follow the following procedures:

- School Age and Wrap Around Students will be bussed to Prairie Heights elementary.
- ECC Students will remain at the ECC.

Parents are to be notified by the classroom of the change in location due to Interruptible Power.

Classroom Supervision Guidelines

1. Absolute Ratio and Attendance Rules

- **Never Unattended:** Children must never be left unattended under any circumstances, and classrooms must remain in legal staff-to-child ratios at all times.
- **Building Transit:** Children are never permitted to walk to the restroom or other areas of the building unattended. Staff must accompany them.
- **Face-to-Name:** Staff must execute official "Face-to-Name" alignment procedures every single time a group leaves or returns to a classroom space. This must be completed prior to and following every transition in and out of the classroom.

2. Infant and Toddler Supervision (Ages 0 to 3)

- **Sight and Sound Mandate:** Teaching staff must supervise all infants, toddlers, and two-year-olds by **both sight and sound at all times**.
- **Rest Time Visibility:** This strict sight-and-sound requirement remains fully in effect during rest and nap times. The classroom cannot be too dark; ambient lighting must be maintained so that staff are always able to clearly supervise and observe every sleeping child by sight, even while managing children who are awake.

3. Preschool Supervision (Ages 3-5)

- **Primary Supervision:** Preschoolers and kindergarteners must be supervised primarily by **both sight and sound**.
- **Rest Time Ambient Light Rule:** During preschool rest periods, rooms must remain bright enough for staff to easily supervise and visually scan the faces and bodies of all resting children by sight. Blinds may be adjusted, but the room must never be dark. Sound-only supervision is acceptable for short intervals during preschool rest periods, provided staff maintain regular physical visual checks on all resting children.
- **Developmentally Appropriate Exceptions:** Brief periods of sound-only supervision are permissible *only* for these older age groups when developmentally appropriate for self-help skills.
- **Restroom Stall Privacy:** A child who can use the toilet independently may be behind a closed restroom stall door out of sight, provided a teacher is in the room supervising by sound and checking frequently.

Children cannot be left unattended and classrooms cannot be left out of ratio.

- Face to Name procedures are to be followed every time students leave/return the classroom (described in the Procedures Section of this manual).
- Children may not walk to the restroom or other areas of the building unattended.

Dress and Personal Hygiene

Board Policy 404.02 states: Employees are role models for the students who come in contact with them during and after school hours. The Board recognizes the positive effect employees can have on students in this capacity. An effective educational program requires the services of employees of integrity, high ideals, and human understanding.

To maintain and promote these essentials, all employees of the College Community School District are expected to maintain high standards in their school relationships. **All district employees are expected to present and conduct themselves in a professional manner, including in employee dress.** Discretion and common sense call for good judgment in decision-making. Employees should avoid actions that would interfere with or have an effect on the educational process or an employees' ability to maintain a professional reputation and perform the essential functions of their job.

In reference to this Board Policy in ensuring that our staff present and conduct themselves in a professional manner, including in employee dress, the following guidelines are to be observed.

As employees of the College Community School District, we should dress appropriately and be distinguishable from our students in our daily dress.

Employees who are not provided uniforms or exempted per job assignment by HR will follow a dress expectation of Smart Casual **as determined by work role and their supervisor:**

- **Smart Casual includes:** blazers and sport jackets, dresses, sweaters, trousers, slacks, khakis, denim jeans without holes or cut off, skirts, blouses, button down shirts, polo's, and Prairie Pride and building specific t-shirts and sweatshirts. Shoes may include flats, loafers, mules, boots, sneakers (with leather or canvas), oxfords, sandals, or heels. No flip flops.
- **Smart Casual does not include:** jeans with rips, holes, or cut off; all versions of shorts, work out clothing, swimwear, pajamas, costumes or cosplay outfits and/or accessories, worn out tennis shoes/sneakers, and hats.

Any exceptions to this policy are to be rare, connected to a special student event or need and be at the explicit approval of the direct supervisor.

Please note that anytime; all clothing must be in good repair (free of holes and rips, even if purchased with rips, tears, etc.) and clean (laundered and free of stains).

Administrators and supervisors shall interpret and enforce this policy. It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent, in conjunction with administrators and supervisors, to develop administrative procedures regarding this policy.

Smoking/Substance Abuse

Smoking, or the use of alcohol or drugs of any kind (except for valid prescription medication) are not permitted

anywhere in the building or on campus. Use of these substances in or on district property is grounds for immediate termination.

The manufacturing, distribution, dispensing, possession, sale, purchase, or use of a controlled substance on district property is prohibited. Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs on district property is also prohibited.

Discipline Procedures

Prairie Early Learning utilizes the principle of progressive discipline or corrective action in addressing performance deficiencies or misconduct of employees. Corrective and/or disciplinary action taken against employees must be appropriate to the circumstances. In determining what constitutes appropriate corrective/disciplinary action, Prairie Early Learning, may consider, but is not limited to consideration, of the following factors:

- Nature of the misconduct
- Performance problem
- Or other cause for the disciplinary actions that have been taken with the employee in the past

Any employee, whose employment is involuntarily terminated by CCSD, shall receive a written statement of the basis for that action.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see Working Agreement

Child Abuse Accusations, Rights, and Protections

1. Protection of Rights During an Abuse/Neglect Accusation

To ensure a fair, unbiased process that balances the paramount safety of children with the legal and professional rights of our educators, Prairie Early Learning will implement the following steps if a staff member is accused of child abuse or neglect:

- **Immediate Child Safety Realignment:** The accused staff member will be immediately reassigned to administrative duties away from children, or placed on paid administrative leave, until the investigation is complete. This protects children from potential harm and shields the employee from further allegations.
- **Independent Investigation & Confidentiality:** The program will immediately report the allegation to Iowa Health and Human Services (HHS). To prevent defamation and protect the employee's professional reputation, details of the accusation will remain strictly confidential and will only be shared with the investigator, the accused staff member, and authorized administrative personnel.
- **Due Process & Fair Treatment:** The accused employee has the right to a transparent review process. They will be given a clear written summary of the allegations, the opportunity to provide a statement, and the right to submit supporting documentation before any final employment decisions or disciplinary actions are determined by administration.

2. Protection from Retaliation

Our program holds an absolute ethical responsibility to protect children against abuse (NAEYC 1.7.b). To remove all obstacles to timely reporting:

- **Protection Mandate:** Any staff member who reports a legitimate, good-faith suspicion of child abuse or neglect—whether occurring inside the center or within a child's home—is strictly protected under Iowa law and program policy from any form of workplace retaliation.
- **Zero Tolerance for Retaliation:** Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, demotion, termination, reduction of hours, negative performance reviews, harassment, or social isolation. Any administrator or team member who attempts to retaliate against a reporter will face immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Visitors

Visitors and/or volunteers (this includes college students completing service/training hours) must be cleared through the ECC office. Parents will be asked to check with ECC/Elementary building office personnel before visiting. The purpose of the visitation should be cleared with the Early Childhood Principal or Administrative Assistant. Visitors must sign in at the office and fill out appropriate paperwork before going to the classroom. Any visitor without an identification badge should be escorted to the main office.

Parent Volunteers

For the safety of children, all parent volunteers must pass a criminal background check prior to volunteering for an event. ALL volunteer paperwork must be submitted to the ECC office 15 school days prior to the scheduled event to guarantee adequate time for checks to be completed.

- **If the parent only plans to assist their child** - a background check form must be completed
- **If the parent plans on assisting with the entire class** - **BOTH** a background check **AND** fingerprinting must be completed.

Pre-Event Considerations

- Teachers will discuss the upcoming study trip with the children. Expectations and information that will help children appreciate the trip will be shared.
- Parents will be notified of dates and times prior to the event.
- A first aid kit will be taken on each trip.
- A person trained in first aid and CPR must accompany the group.
- Emergency information for each child will be taken on each trip.
- All medications will be taken in a locked box. IF medications need to be administered, a staff member with Medication Administration approval must attend.
- The parent must give written permission for his/her child to attend.
- One (1) staff over licensed ratio is required for all trips away from the building
 - **Licensing reads** - *Any child care center sponsored program activity involving five or more children conducted away from the licensed facility shall provide a minimum of one additional staff over the required staff ratio for the protection of the children.*
- Check the weather
 - DHS Guidelines will be followed to determine if it is safe for children to participate.

- **Refer to the DHS Weather Watch chart.**

- Before leaving the classroom, a note will be posted on the door of the classroom listing the location of the trip, departure time from the center, and returning time.
- Face to Name procedures must be followed before, during, and after the trip
- Children must stay in the group with staff.
- Children will cross streets in organized groups: partners are recommended.
- Children must be properly dressed to go on study trips.
- While parents/guardians are welcome on study trips, it is policy that siblings of participants may not attend study trips.

Open Door Policy

Staff is approachable and accessible to parents and guardians during program operating hours. Parents can voice their concerns, complaints, and compliments regarding their customer service experience. We offer a family friendly environment that encourages parents to drop in or visit or observe their child at any time. Please keep in mind all visitor policies must be followed including checking in with the office. Staff is required to check for visitor badges.

Mobile Device Etiquette (District Radios)

- Using radio equipment properly. Hold the microphone an inch or two from the mouth
- Manage volume
- Speaking carefully and purposefully, especially in an emergency. Responding — not reacting. Stop and think before speaking.
- Use brief and appropriate terms.
- Limit transmissions to immediate operational issues.
- Be Aware of other transmissions.
- Please do not talk on the radio in emergencies except to respond/communicate information as warranted.

Staff Health Exam

As directed by DHS, NAEYC, and IQPPS, a current physical (completed within six months before beginning employment), **is required for all employees upon initiation of employment, and volunteers who work more than 40 hours per month and have contact with children.** The physical exam must be received by the ECC Office before the employee starts work or before the volunteer has contact with children. The physical examination must include: immunization status, capabilities and limitations that may impact job performance, and documentation that the employee is free of communicable disease.

Employees are responsible for updating their physical. Physicals must be updated every three years on the form provided by ECC. ECC will reimburse the Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, or School Age employee for the cost of the physical that is not covered by insurance up to \$100.00. The employee must present the insurance explanation of benefits to show the

expense that is not covered or a signed statement if the employee has no insurance coverage.

TB Test

All childcare employees and providers shall receive a baseline screening for Tuberculosis. Baseline screening shall consist of two components:

- Assessing for current symptoms of TB disease
- Screening for risk factors associated with TB

Those individuals identified as belonging to a defined high-risk group or who have signs and symptoms consistent with TB disease shall be evaluated for TB infection and TB disease (i.e. undergo a TB skin test).

Criminal Background Check and Fingerprinting

All persons working in a DHS licensed classroom who have direct access to the children and are counted toward ratio, whether paid or volunteer, in a DHS licensed classroom must complete a Federal and State Criminal Background Check and Fingerprinting prior to working at the Center. Employees are required to complete a Criminal Background Check every two years thereafter. In the event that an individual's background check is returned having a founded criminal history, the employee has the right to appeal and must do so within ten days of receiving notification. At the discretion of the Principal/ Assistant Director, the employee may continue to work at the Center during the appeal process. Employment would then be contingent upon the final notification from the Iowa Department of Human Services, and the final decision of the Administration of the School District and Prairie Early Learning.

Iowa Code 726.23 does not currently permit government officials to fingerprint a child for purposes of employment. Child Care Centers are not required to complete record checks through the use of fingerprints for those staff members that are 16 and 17 years of age. All staff, including those under the age of 18, must have the SING (Iowa) record check completed before becoming involved in the childcare center.

New Staff Orientation & Onboarding Plan

1. Mandatory Pre-Service Onboarding

To promote safety, consistency of care, and classroom accountability, all newly hired educators must successfully complete our program's official orientation and onboarding process **before they are permitted to work alone with children.**

2. Core Orientation Competencies

The onboarding curriculum is detailed in our [Orientation and Professional Development Plan](#). Prior to independent child supervision, new staff must demonstrate competence and understanding in:

- Positive child guidance techniques and protection from harm policies.
- Classroom health, safety, and hygiene regulations (including diapering, handwashing, and food safety protocols).
- Emergency evacuation plans and crisis response procedures.
- Daily classroom schedules, management routines, and curriculum implementation.

3. Mentor Observation & Sign-Off Process

- **Classroom Observation:** Following the review of our core orientation documents, the new staff member will complete guided observations within an active classroom setting.
- **Mentorship Support:** The classroom lead teacher will act as a mentor, guiding the new hire through daily operations and evaluating their performance.
- **The Training Summary:** The onboarding process is only complete when the mentor and program administrator officially sign off on the *Training Summary* (located in the Appendix). New educators cannot be counted alone in a classroom ratio until this signed summary is filed in the main office.

Communication Expectations:

Communication with Fellow Staff

- The official channel of communication is to use email.

Communication to and from Office Staff

- Please use the intercom system or email. The intercom is to be utilized when assistance is required.

Communication with Parents

- Staff shall provide communication to families daily via the Brightwheel app. Staff have the option to add photos and video messages to their daily messages. Parents receive messages through push notifications right to their smartphones.

The Prairie Early Learning Parent Handbook provides information about the center, the services we offer, and written policies and procedures that parents/guardians are expected to follow. To ensure the consistency of implementation of these policies and procedures all employees are expected to be familiar with the parent handbook and implement all policies contained within it.

Daily/Weekly Notes Home

- Keep your comments positive. Try to share what the child has learned, what they enjoyed, who they played with, what they discovered, etc.
- Your message should relay how much you enjoy their child.
- If you must communicate negative information, please do so on a separate piece of paper and make a copy of it. You could also communicate what happened by making a phone call or arranging your schedule so that you catch the parent/guardian at the end of the day. Remember to utilize BIR's (Behavior Incident Reports) for this type of information. Please document all communication. This documentation may be requested by administration as needed.

In the case of children of divorced parents, all communications and information, direct or indirect, must be supplied to the parent having legal custody. The divorce laws stipulate, "The custodial parent alone has responsibility for the custody, care, control and education of said children". If both parents have custody, duplicate information should be sent to both custodial parents.

Be cautious when communicating with families and avoid language that might convey a personal judgment or impression. Work with the school counselor and/or building principal to review legal documentation and/or written

consent related to agreements between divorced parents.

Special Needs Referral & Family Partnership Process

Sharable Link for Families - Information on Early ACCESS, CART and Early Childhood teams

Our program partners transparently and respectfully with families to support early identification of developmental delays or special needs. Teachers must follow these four precise steps.

Step 1: Collect TSG Evidence

- **No Guesswork:** Compile a comprehensive Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) profile before talking to the family.
- **Gather Proof:** Include objective anecdotal notes, developmental checklists, assessment data, photos, and video clips from regular classroom play.

Step 2: Host a Family Care Conference

- **Share Evidence:** Meet privately with the family alongside a program administrator to review the TSG data and explain milestones of concern.
- **Collaborate:** Set initial classroom goals together and invite parents to share their home observations.

Step 3: Connect with Grant Wood AEA

- **Leverage Specialists:** Provide information on free support from Grant Wood AEA (Speech Pathologists, Psychologists, OT, PT, Vision/Hearing).
- **Get Written Consent:** You are strictly prohibited from starting observations or assessments with AEA until the parent signs a formal permission form.
- **Keep Families Involved:** Parents remain active team members who help plan data collection and review all evaluation results.

Step 4: Eligibility & IEP Meeting (Mandatory)

- **Hold Eligibility Review:** An IEP cannot be developed without a formal eligibility meeting first.
- **Analyze Progress:** The team (staff, parents, and AEA) must review the intervention data to legally determine if the child qualifies for services.
- **Track the 30-Day Deadline:** If the child qualifies, the team has exactly **30 calendar days** from the eligibility date to finalize the official IEP. If they do not, continue with general classroom interventions.

Communication to and from the Main Office

Communication information is distributed via email and postings

- Each staff person needs to read notices and email upon arrival and throughout the day. Notices are posted in the ECC workroom and available via email.

Meetings:

PLC Meetings

- Preschool Teachers will meet weekly with their designated PLC.

Staff Meetings

- In the event of an absence on a scheduled staff meeting date, you are responsible for finding out from a colleague what happened and for following through on items that pertain to you.

Weekly Collaboration and Planning Time

1. Mandatory Weekly Planning Time

To ensure intentional teaching, support professional reflection, and maintain consistent curriculum implementation, Prairie Early Learning guarantees dedicated planning time for its educational teams:

- **Weekly Requirement:**

All Preschool, Little Hawks, and Wrap-Around Lead Teachers and Teaching Teams are scheduled for a minimum of at least 60 minutes of planning time weekly.

This planning time takes place completely outside of the classroom ratio. Educators are prohibited from supervising awake children during these scheduled 60 minutes.

2. Approved Planning & Collaboration Activities

This dedicated weekly block must be used intentionally to support classroom quality and professional growth,

including:

Developing weekly lesson plans and gathering curriculum materials.

Entering observation notes and tracking assessment data into Teaching Strategies GOLD.

Interpreting current assessment results as a team to align teaching practices to the specific interests and developmental needs of the children.

3. Accountability & Documentation

- **Weekly Meeting Logs:** Teams must use the designated program meeting forms to document their agendas, collaboration notes, and curriculum adjustments.
- **Administrative Access:** Completed weekly forms and meeting schedules must remain updated and accessible to the Program Administrator at all times for audit and compliance reviews.

Teacher/Teacher Associate Meetings

Classroom teaching teams meet at least weekly to interpret and use assessment results to align curriculum and teaching practices to the interests and needs of the children. In order to meet this criterion and the needs of our students each classroom will have a regularly scheduled weekly meeting. Meeting schedule and the form for agenda and notes must be accessible to the administrator at any given time. Staff is to use the weekly meeting forms to document meeting notes.

Who to Contact:

Administrators/Administrative Support Staff

On days when there is no Early Childhood Principal in the building and/or in the event that the Early Childhood Principal cannot be reached, the Assistant Director has been appointed as Administrative designee. If neither the Early Childhood Principal nor Assistant Director is available, then the Administrative Assistant has been appointed as Administrative designee.

The duties of the Administrative Designee will include:

- Supervise staff and attend to minimal personal issues
- Direct all communications and actions in cases of personnel illness or injury.
- Maintain office coverage.
- Assist staff, children, and parents
 - Act as a representative for the building and spokesperson for the staff in case of emergency (fire, tornado)



Contact Information	
ECC Office 401 76th Ave SW Cedar Rapids, IA 52404 319-848-5296	Social Media Facebook: Early Childhood Center Instagram: Prairie_Prairie Early Learning
Principal Kathy Schulte 319-848-5296 ext. 1802 kschulte@crprairie.org	Assistant Director Erin Hill 319-848-5296 ext. 1801 erinhill@crprairie.org
Admin Asst/Enrollment Specialist/Billing Jenna Langhurst 319-848-5296 ext. 1800 jennalanghurst@crprairie.org	
Preschool Instructional Coach Alaina Daters 319-848-5296 ext 1806 adaters@crprairie.org	School Age Coordinator/Billing Whitney Hinrich 319-848-5296 ext. 1803 whinrichs@crprairie.org
Administrative Assistant of Database/Billing Systems Chase Schulte 319-848-3432 chaseschulte@crprairie.org	

To arrange long term substitutes, please work with the ECC office staff:

- Kathy Schulte
- Whitney Hinrichs
- Erin Hill
- Jenna Langhurst

Custodial Staff:

- Troy Schuetzle tschuetzle@crprairie.org
- Anna Garcia agarcia@crprairie.org
- Adam McSpadden amcspadden@crprairie.org

Food and Nutrition Staff: Food and Nutrition

Office: 319-848-5337 or ext. 1724, 1725, 1726

- Ginny Scott, Director of Food and Nutrition
- Amy Robinson Valley, Site Supervisor
- Kelly Crossley, Assistant Director of Food and Nutrition

Worker's Comp Injury:

- Kathy Schulte
- Jenna Langhurst

School Board

The School Board is the basic governing body of Prairie Early Learning which includes the SWVP Preschool. The staff will be responsible to the Early Childhood Principal. The Principal will be responsible to the Superintendent and Executive Director of Learning Supports.

Department of Human Services (DHS)

The Iowa Department of Human Services has been delegated the authority to develop and enforce rules governing the licensing of childcare centers and preschools. All licensed childcare centers and preschools must follow these state regulations. A copy of the Iowa Department of Human Services Licensing Standards and Procedures for Child Care Centers is located in the ECC office, online, and is available to all Prairie Early Learning parents, guardians, employees, and visitors.

Family Advisory Board

Family Advisory Board meetings are open to all parents and are advertised through newsletters, email, social media, and in the facilities. Through this board families have the opportunity to provide input on programming and policy changes. Minutes for the meetings are shared on the ECC website and sent to parents. Families are also encouraged to participate in volunteer opportunities, and to provide feedback through program surveys.

Where do I find it? (Locations)

Faculty Room

- Next to the office in the ECC building.

Staff Mailboxes

- Located in the faculty room at the ECC building.

Tornado Shelters

- ECC building rooms 301, 302, 501 and 502.

Custodial Responsibilities within the Classroom:

Caring for the Classroom

- Sensory (sand/water) tables need to be placed on tile and all materials need to be cleaned up on an as needed basis. Sensory tables cannot contain recognizable food items.
- Children need to wipe their feet prior to entering the building.
- Sweep after each meal as needed.
- Wash and sanitize eating and serving surfaces prior to use. First wash the surface with soap and water, then sanitize with solution. Separate clothes should be used for washing and sanitizing.
- A toy that a child has placed in his or her mouth or that is otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion is either to be (a) washed by hand using water and detergent, then rinsed, sanitized, and air dried or (b) washed and dried in a mechanical dishwasher before it can be used by another child.

Opening Procedures

- WASH YOUR HANDS
- Place chairs around tables.
- Make a bleach water solution in a spray bottle each morning. Use 1 Tablespoon bleach to 1-quart cool water. Do not exceed 1 Tablespoon per each quart.
- Make soapy water
- Wash tables with soapy water solution and spray with bleach solution
- Make sure all trash cans have liners
- Put away bleached toys
- Open blinds
- Greet children and families as they come in the room and have them wash hands

Closing Procedures

- Wipe off the tables and chairs and stack and/or place chairs on tables
- Disinfect the diaper pail with bleach water and leave open
- Make sure radio/cd player is off
- Leave the bathroom door open

- Make sure that all windows are closed
- Close all of the blinds
- Straighten the classroom
- Dispose of soapy water, bleach water in spray bottles, and lay dishrag over the edge of the laundry basket. ● Sweep floors and bathroom
- Shut off lights/fans as you leave

Don't "close-up" the room while children are present. We don't want to give families the impression that we want them to leave. However, if it is past 6:00 p.m., then it is all right to close the room down.

Chemicals Used to Control Odors

The use of the following shall be prohibited:

- Incense;
- Moth crystals or moth balls;
- Chemical air fresheners, potpourri, plug-ins, incense, sprays, essential oils, mists, and diffusers ●

Toilet/urinal deodorizer blocks.

Rationale:

Many chemicals are sold to cover up noxious odors or ward off pests. Many of these chemicals are hazardous (1). As an alternative, caregivers/teachers should remove the source of noxious odors to the extent possible by dissipating noxious odors through cleaning and ventilation (e.g., opening windows) and controlling pests using nontoxic methods.

Toilet/urinal deodorizer blocks commonly contain para-dichlorobenzene (PDCB), a toxic chemical, designated as a possible human carcinogen (2), that has no cleaning function. These deodorizers only serve to mask odors that should be eliminated by proper cleaning.

Focus Items:

Guidelines for Setting Up the Classroom

The first set of guidelines comes from the local Fire Code. Be sure that these rules are followed completely so we can continue to provide a safe learning environment for our students.

1. Any 'stuffed' item, such as pillows, oversized chairs, stuffed animals, etc., must have a tag attached to them that says they meet the California Fine Home Furnishings Bulletin 117. This is the required label that must be attached to all items of these types that are used in student and staff areas within our buildings. It is important that the tags are attached to the item. If they are torn off, the item must be removed from the building.
2. No items can be suspended from the ceilings. They can hinder the flow and path of smoke reaching a detector in the event of a fire.
3. No flammable items can be attached to the inside of the classroom door or an exit door.

4. If your classroom does not have a sprinkler system, any item that is stored on a shelf or cabinet cannot be closer to the ceiling than 24”.
5. If your classroom has a sprinkler system, storage items cannot be closer to the ceiling than 18”.
6. If your classroom has an exterior door it cannot be hidden or obstructed by objects. A clear path 36” wide must be maintained.
7. If you have a microwave or refrigerator in your room, they must be plugged directly into a wall receptacle. You cannot use an extension cord on these devices.
8. If your room uses an overhead projector, the fire marshal requests that they be unplugged from the wall each night before you go home.
9. The fire code states that ‘no more than 20% of the wall space in the room can be covered by paper’. Please keep that in mind when hanging posters or student work

A few other items to keep in mind

1. Do not stick tape to the carpet. When the tape is removed a sticky residue is left behind that collects dirt. It is nearly impossible to remove.
2. Make sure exterior doors latch behind you. Even if you know someone else is in the building, take a minute to make sure the door has latched behind you so the building is secure.
3. Do not bring cleaning supplies into your classroom from home. Our custodial staff will clean your room each night. We are required by OSHA to maintain records of all the chemicals we use in the event that someone would come into contact with a cleaner or have an allergic reaction.
4. Do not paint or stencil the walls in your room or in the building. Do not write on the walls with permanent markers or crayons. Do not allow students to write on the interior or the exterior of the building with sidewalk chalk.

Please take time to look around your room for anything that may need to be changed because of these guidelines. Your cooperation is required to continue to provide classrooms that meet code and are safe for you and your students.

Leaving the classroom

Please be certain to post a note on your classroom door when the class leaves the room. Post the time leaving, place going, and time returning. This is mandatory for all early learning and school age classrooms.

Large Motor Play

Outdoor Play

Children in all rooms play outdoors daily, weather permitting. Prairie Early Learning guidelines for weather conditions are: No outdoor play when it is 10 degrees or below with wind-chill in winter, and when the heat index is 98 degrees or higher in the summer. Please refer to the DHS weather watch chart for detailed and explicit guidance at

<https://hhs.iowa.gov/media/2901/download?inline>

Our playgrounds feature a variety of types of activities for outdoor play and separate play spaces are available for each age group. Outdoor play spaces also include a variety of surfaces and textures, including grass, sand, dirt, and asphalt, for different play activities. While playing outdoors children can try new skills, develop appreciation for the natural environment, develop and refine large muscle skills, notice seasonal changes, and play cooperatively with other children.

Student Recess Attire

Dress children to maintain a comfortable body temperature. During warmer months, lightweight, breathable clothing such as cotton is recommended. During colder months, children should wear layers that can be added or removed as needed to stay comfortable.

Large Motor Supervision

Teachers provide time daily for indoor and outdoor activities (except when conditions pose a health risk as defined by local health officials or if it is dark. This includes high pollen or high levels of polluting). When outdoor opportunities for large-motor activities are not possible because of conditions, the program provides similar activities inside. Indoor equipment for large-motor activities meets national safety standards and is supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment. The area protects children from injury from falls; catch points, sharp points, and entrapments, tripping hazards and excessive wind and sunlight. A minimum of 75 feet of outdoor play space is provided to each child.

Entering and Leaving the Playground or Gym

- Be sure to greet all adults picking up the children. When an adult picks up a child, be sure to move to the gate area and monitor the situation. If you do not know who the adult is, ask to see identification and check the child's pick-up list.

Whenever leaving with a group of children or an individual, Little Hawks, Wrap Around, and School Age Staff **always** use the Face to Name system.

Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School-Age staff must follow the below protocol when leaving the classroom with a group of children:

- As you leave your classroom, be certain to do a "headcount" and use the Face to Name system. Position one teacher at the beginning of the group and one teacher at the end of the group as you leave and re-enter the building. You are also required to use the Face to Name when you arrive at your destination.
- Take your first aid bag out each time you leave the classroom for large motor or playground play. Add gloves, Kleenex and emergency medications (epi-pens, inhalers, etc.) as prescribed. Attach your shed key to your fanny pack.
- Playground must be in a fenced area. Only teachers/families open the gates/doors. This meets NAEYC requirement 9.B.04.
- Be certain gates/doors are closed and latched after you enter and/or leave the playground.
- If you are leaving the playground with your class, you must have a third person with you if you exceed the child-to-staff ratio for one teacher.
- Infants: One teacher for every four children, plus an extra person.
- Two/three year olds: One teacher for every six children, plus an extra person.

- Preschoolers: One teacher for every eight children, plus an extra person.
- If you are leaving the playground/large motor room, please be certain to write your destination in the office notebook and take a “walkie-talkie” with you. Be sure to charge the “walkie-talkie” when returning to school.
- Equipment needs to be put away neatly. If you have extra time, make an effort to clean up and straighten. Staff is expected to put away any equipment that their classroom takes out.
- Transition the children back into the building/classroom with a verbal warning: "We have 5 minutes before we are going back." After the warning, expect that the children will follow. Chasing does not work.
- Upon returning, Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School Age staff must use the Face to Name system to account for all the children in your care.

While on the Playground or Large Motor Room

- Never leave one teacher alone on the playground or gym. In an emergency, let the other teacher know you need to go into the building so that she can quickly gather the children and follow you inside.
- The playground should be viewed as an extension of the classroom. To ensure all children are safe, supervision needs to be as intense--if not more intense--as it would be inside the building.
- Never take children to the playground if it is dusk or dark or if there is a wind advisory in effect.
- To ensure safety, teachers need to be positioned accordingly.

Guidance Procedures and Policies

We believe that all individuals deserve love and respect. Our discipline policy is positive, consistent, and emphasizes the teaching of new skills to reduce and/or replace unwanted behavior through a variety of techniques including; preventive strategies, choices, redirection, and natural & logical consequences. We will follow PBIS (Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports) in all of our classrooms.

When necessary, a supervised “break” away from the group will be used when a child needs to regain control of their emotions or unsafe behavior. The amount of time will depend on the individual child’s ability to calm him/her down and regain control. We will discuss with you any significant behavior problems experienced at the center. If you have questions about your child’s behavior, please contact the Principal in charge of Early Childhood. Also, please refer to the Guidance and Discipline Handout that you receive from your child’s teacher at the center open house in the fall.

We positively guide children's behavior by creating a supportive environment that:

- Focuses on children's strengths
- Encourages adults to form positive, authentic relationships with children
- Makes a commitment to supporting children's play
- Offers plenty of opportunity for children to make meaningful choices
- Uses redirection as a guidance technique
- At times ignores inappropriate behavior
- Has a consistent, yet flexible daily routine

- Provides for both active and quiet times
- Uses positive key phrases to guide children's behavior
- Offers respectful reminders
- Acknowledges each child's individual needs
- Is aware of each child's developmental stage
- Adopts a problem-solving approach to conflict
- Facilitates age appropriate expectations
- Positive Behavior Support Strategies are to be utilized. These strategies offer a holistic approach that considers all of the factors that impact on a child and the child's behavior. They can be used to address problem behaviors that may range from aggression, tantrums, and property destruction to withdrawing or repetitive behaviors.

PBIS Pyramid Model

The College Community School District uses a support pyramid model to understand and respond to behavior. There are three key things to understand about the model:

1. *Behavior is communication.* Children and youth use behavior to tell us what is going on and what they are feeling.
2. *Behavior is tied to relationships and the environment.* Unsafe behavior often occurs because the child is feeling disconnected from other people, is overwhelmed by something that is happening in the environment, or does not have the skills needed to be successful in the activity or interaction.
3. *Behavior is an opportunity.* Behavior is a glimpse into a child's experience and is an opportunity for ECC personnel to teach skills and help children connect in positive ways.

Levels of support: Using a pyramid helps us think about how to build a strong foundation and basis for positive behavior. All children and youth need positive relationships and a supportive environment in order to be successful in a group setting. Targeted supports are built upon the foundation to teach skills children need to communicate and connect with others. The intensive level of the pyramid is where programs develop individualized behavior support strategies.

1. Ethical Responsibilities & Protection from Harm

Prairie Early Learning holds an absolute ethical responsibility to protect children from harm, preserve their dignity, and prevent exclusionary discipline practices. Staff are strictly prohibited from engaging in any form of child abuse, neglect, or coercion.

Mandatory Definitions and Prohibited Practices:

- **Physical Abuse:** Any non-accidental physical force inflicted upon a child. *Examples include hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, pinching, biting, pushing, or pulling a child.* Under Iowa Code [Section 109.7(2)], corporal punishment is strictly illegal.
- **Psychological Abuse:** Any verbal or emotional action that diminishes a child's self-worth, creates chronic fear, or humiliates them. *Examples include screaming, threatening a child or their family, making derogatory remarks, shaming, or using isolation as a punishment.*
- **Coercion:** The use of force, intimidation, or manipulation to compel a child to act against their will or to exploit them. *Examples include withholding food, liquids, or rest as a threat, forcing a child to eat, or using threats of punishment related to a child's progress or lack of progress in toilet training.*

2. Standard Positive Behavior Support Strategies

Our goal is to help students navigate conflicts, accept responsibility, and develop healthy emotional coping techniques. Staff must proactively use the following positive guidance techniques:

- **Active Prevention:** Constantly monitor student interactions to intervene and redirect before negative behaviors occur.
- **Emotional Literacy:** Talk openly with students about both their positive and negative feelings.
- **Modeling:** Role-play positive conflict-resolution scenarios during calm moments.
- **Reflective Discussions:** When negative behaviors occur, safely discuss the incident with all involved children. Guide them to reflect on why they reacted that way and what they could do differently next time (e.g., "use your words," "ask an adult," or "take a calming break").

3. Step-by-Step Response to Disruptive and Unsafe Behavior

When a child demonstrates persistent disruptive, challenging, or unsafe behaviors (including aggression like kicking, hitting, scratching, biting, or running away from the group), Prairie Early Learning will promptly initiate these three steps:

Step A: Assess Why the Behavior is Happening

Staff will not merely punish the behavior; they must investigate its root cause. The teacher will immediately initiate a **Behavior Incident Report (BIR)** to track the data. Administration and teaching staff will review BIR data, classroom environment triggers, and schedules to assess the functional purpose of the behavior (e.g., communication needs, sensory overload, or unmet physical needs).

Step B: Develop an Individualized Plan with Families & Professionals

We do not wait for an arbitrary number of incidents to pass. When a pattern of disruptive behavior is identified, Prairie Early Learning Administration will immediately contact the family to schedule a partnership meeting.

- **Collaborative Team:** Teachers and parents will meet to build an individualized, data-driven behavior support plan tailored to the child's needs.
- **Professional Integration:** If a child has an active IEP, or if a disability has not yet been ruled out, our program will immediately consult with Grant Wood AEA early childhood professionals (and alternative outside experts) to ensure behavioral supports are deployed correctly in the Least Restrictive Environment.

Step C: Implementation of Positive Behavior Supports

The resulting individualized plan will rely exclusively on positive reinforcement strategies, clear environmental modifications, explicit teaching of replacement skills, and customized calming tools. Punitive or isolating discipline is prohibited.

4. Biting and First Aid Protocol

In cases where an injury or bite occurs:

- **First Aid:** For surface bites, apply ice to reduce swelling. If the skin is broken, clean the area immediately with soap and water, apply a bandage, and monitor closely.
- **Parent Communication:** Notify the parents of both children involved as soon as the situation is stable. Staff will draft an Incident Report detailing the event. Parents must review and sign a copy at pick-up, which will be preserved

in the student's permanent file.

5. Exclusionary Discipline, Suspension, & Discharge Policy

In strict compliance with the Iowa Department of Education, Prairie Early Learning views suspension and expulsion as an absolute last resort.

- **Equity and Nondiscrimination:** Disciplinary removals must never disproportionately impact any group of children, including young children with disabilities. We are legally obligated to protect a child's right to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
- **Mandatory Due Process:** Families of children in publicly funded early childhood programming (such as Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program -SWVPP) are constitutionally entitled to a formal notice and an opportunity to be heard before any lengthy removal or expulsion can be considered (See *Goss v. Lopez*, U.S. Supreme Court).
- **Reporting:** All instances of preschool suspension or expulsion must be formally recorded and submitted via Student Reporting in Iowa (SRI).

6. Assistance with Services and Alternative Placement): If the collaborative interventions created with the family and Grant Wood AEA are not successful, or if Prairie Early Learning Administration determines that a child's safety and developmental needs exceed the capabilities of our current program, we will actively assist the family in transitioning rather than simply discharging them.

- **Accessing Services:** Administration will provide the family with direct referrals to alternative community resource agencies, specialized mental health professionals, or medical diagnostic clinics.
- **Alternative Placement:** ECC Administration will schedule a transition meeting with the family to help them research, contact, and apply to alternative local early learning environments, specialized developmental preschool programs, or therapeutic care settings that are better equipped to support the child's unique needs. We will safely transfer all behavioral data, TSG profiles, and intervention logs to the new placement once parent permission is signed.
- **Administrative Termination:** Financial noncompliance (failure to pay fees), noncompliance with operational policies, or unresolvable adult-hostile situations may result in the termination of enrollment. All final decisions regarding program termination or reviews must be authorized directly by Early Learning Administration.

Per the Iowa Department of Education: Early childhood programs must report suspension and expulsion of all children as required by Student Reporting in Iowa (SRI), including all children in Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs and all preschool children with IEPs. This would apply to suspension and expulsion decisions from SWVPP programming made by SWVPP community partners. Early childhood programs must also review their policies and procedures to ensure they have alternatives and prevention strategies and that they use exclusionary discipline appropriately and equitably.

- First, the parents of a child in a publicly funded early childhood program are constitutionally entitled to notice and an opportunity to be heard before any expulsion or lengthy removal (removal of more than ten days, See, e.g., *Goss v. Lopez* (U.S. Supreme Court, 1975). These are the same disciplinary protections that children in grades kindergarten through twelve receive.
- Second, children with disabilities in early childhood programs are entitled to additional protections when they are removed from their educational program for disciplinary reasons. IDEA and Section 504 require these protections.

Infants/Ones/Twos

- One group only – one teacher near the climbing frame and one teacher positioned by other children.
- Two groups – one additional teacher where needed. This is not a social opportunity for staff. Please distribute staff to ensure all students are safe.
- While on the Playground
 - Bikes, trikes, and cars need to stay in designated areas.
 - Toys are not allowed on the climber.
 - Sand needs to stay in the sandbox.
 - Make sure staff have identified any potential choking hazards on the playground and have removed them. This meets NAEYC requirement 9.C.16.

Threes/Fours/Fives

- One group only – one teacher on or near the climbing frame and one teacher near the trike riding area.
- Two groups – the additional teachers move as needed to ensure student safety.
- All teachers must have "eyes in the back of their head", continually scanning and moving in needed areas. The staff members are to be standing and interacting with the children outside.
- Shoes and socks must be kept on unless removing them to empty out sand.
- Children are not allowed to climb on the fence.
- Wrestling is not allowed.
- Keep adult-talk to a minimum.

While Equipment is Being Used:

- Children should not be lifted onto the climbing equipment. They may play on these items only if they are capable of accomplishing the climb on their own.
- Children are to go up the ladder and down the slide feet first.
- Toys and bikes are not taken on the climbing equipment.
- The children should sit on bikes and in wagons.
- Children are not to jump off areas of the climber.
- **Helmets are to be worn when riding trikes, bikes or scooters. Ensure helmets are tight and placed on a child's head correctly.**

Helmets for Large Motor Activities

Adjust the child's helmet to ensure a proper fit. **A poorly adjusted helmet can fall off or move around, greatly reducing the helmet's ability to offer protection during a crash.** Helmets should be placed squarely on top of the head (not tilting forward or back) and remain in place when a child shakes his head.

Prairie Early Learning will provide helmets for shared usage. Parents may provide a helmet for their child, which will be for his/her use only. Parents are asked to size self-purchased helmets to fit their child and label it with their name. Helmets should be removed before allowing children to use playground equipment. Sharing of bike helmets should not significantly contribute to the spread of head lice. Wiping the lining of the helmet with a damp cloth should remove any lice or nits left inside. More vigorous washing of helmets, using sanitizers, cleaning chemicals, and detergents is not recommended because these chemicals may cause the physical structure of the impact absorbing material inside the helmet and the straps used to hold the helmet on the head to deteriorate.

(Source: Caring For Our Children National Health and Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs 2nd Edition pages 227-228.)

Splish Splash/Sprinkler Procedures

- Remember to always use KEY PHRASES.
- Staff members should dress appropriately.
- Children must ask before splashing water on each other. For example, use the phrase, “Ask before you splash.”
- Keep each classroom’s shoes and towels organized, labeled and together.
- Children need to wear shoes on the playground equipment.
- Pools are not allowed.
- Keep sand in the sandbox only.
- Keep water off of climbing equipment
- Rotate areas (sunny, shady and excessively busy areas).
- Limit “teacher talk.”
- If you bring out an activity outside (ex: bubbles) stay with the children while they are engaged and clean it up when they become uninterested.

Tooth Brushing

All full day students (who eat breakfast and lunch at school or a minimum of 2 meals which includes snacks) are required to brush their teeth at least once daily.

- Label the toothbrush and the holder with the child’s name. Store upright and spaced so they do not touch. Bristles need the opportunity to air dry.
- Use fluoride/ADA approved toothpaste
- Toothbrushes are to be replaced every 3 months

Steps

1. Wash hands before and after brushing. Washing before the meal is acceptable if brushing right after eating without leaving the table.
2. Dispense toothpaste on cups or paper towels. Children under two are to receive a rice grain sized amount of toothpaste; children over two a pea sized amount.

3. Watch each child take their own toothbrush from the holder.
4. Have the children scoop their toothpaste onto the brush. Brush teeth for two minutes. Spit excess toothpaste into the cup.
5. Have children rinse their own toothbrush under water. A gloved caregiver may rinse the brushes, but must change gloves after handling each child's brush.
6. Have the children, or gloved care provider, put their brush back in the labeled holder.
7. Discard paper cups. Clean the table with soapy water and sanitize.

ECC Snack Procedure

ECC provides afternoon snacks each day for all children in full day, wrap around, and school age programs.

Staff will pick up snacks for the week each Tuesday. **All items** must be removed from the classrooms assigned cupboard in the Crest kitchenette on Tuesday.

Snacks in the bins and cupboards are inventoried weekly. **DO NOT** remove items from the bins without consulting the ECC office first as this could impact the next week's quantities.

Any unopened snack must be returned to the Crest kitchenette and/or the ECC each Tuesday and placed in the labeled baskets. Extra snacks may not be stored in classrooms due to quality assurance and budgeting purposes.

DHS SECTION: 109.15:

Nutritionally balanced meals or snacks. The center shall serve each child a full, nutritionally balanced meal or snack as defined by the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines and shall ensure that staff provides supervision at the table during snacks and meals. Children remaining at the center two hours or longer shall be offered food at intervals of not less than two hours or more than three hours apart unless the child is asleep.

Menus shall be planned at least one week in advance, made available to parents, and kept on file at the center. The ECC Office must pre approve substitutions in the menu, including substitutions made for infants, shall be noted and kept on file. Foods with a high incident rate of causing choking in young children shall be avoided or modified.

Staff must serve the item listed on the menu. If a change is made due to availability from the vendor the ECC Office will approve the change, communicate the change to the classroom, and instruct classroom staff to update the menu posted in the classroom.

Meal Time Procedures

General Procedures

- Breakfast is served at 8:00 am for all students. (If a child arrives late they will still be offered breakfast payroll.)
- Lunch is served at 11:00 am for infants, 11:30 for all others. **Meal counts for the day must be reported to food service no later than 9:00 AM each morning.**
- Meals will be served family style.
- A staff member must be at each table the entire time the children are seated.

- Children are to serve themselves.
- Adults shall initiate interesting relevant conversations with the students during meal times.
- Adults must eat during meal times; they are required to share the meal provided or bring their own healthy CACFP approved meal.
- Adults must drink water milk or juice at meal times
- A meal sitting on a plate in front of a child constitutes a paid meal.
- Trays should be placed on the carts by 8:30 for breakfast and 12:00 for lunch. **ECC is charged for all carts returned late to the cafeteria.**
- Clean sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day. **Infants who are fed only human milk do not need to be offered water.**
- Liquids and foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach.
- Staff does not offer children younger than 4 years these foods; hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes, nuts; popcorn; raw peas and hard pretzels; spoonfuls of peanut butter; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed.
- Tables may not be washed until all students have completed mealtime and are no longer sitting at the table.

Meals

ECC strives to model healthy eating habits by providing nutritionally balanced meals and snacks. All food served through ECC follows the USDA CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Pattern) school lunch guidelines. The goal of the CACFP school lunch program is to improve the diets of children by providing nutritious meals and to help children develop good eating habits that will last through the years.

Breakfast & Lunch (For children receiving full day services)

College Community School Districts meal services and ECC provides breakfast and lunch each day for children in the extended day programs. Breakfast is served anywhere from 8:00-8:30 a.m. depending on the program, and lunch is typically served around 11:30.

During no school days or Summer Camp program, breakfast and lunch will be provided for school age children.

If families are sending a lunch from home, meals must meet the CACFP guidelines which are the following: meat/meat alternative, fruit, vegetable, grain/bread, milk (100% fruit juice can be used).

Menus

Menus are to be posted in the classroom and are available for families requesting individual copies.

If the menu should change staff are to record what was served on the menu and send families updates in their daily communication.

Dietary Restrictions

If a child requires a special diet and is unable to eat an item(s) on the menu, please discuss it with the Early Childhood

Principal. Families will be provided with an Allergy/Dietary Restrictions form to fill out. Special medical/health diets require written instructions from a doctor, including substitutions. Religious or personal preferences may be made if a parent provides written instructions. **All food provided by parents must meet required nutritional guidelines.** Teachers reserve the right to send foods that do not comply with these guidelines back home.

Food from home (not medically related)

ECC discourages food brought from home or other venues to eliminate disruption in our programs other than meals brought from home that meet the CACFP guidelines. Meal times and menus are to be posted in each classroom.

Classrooms with students who have life threatening allergies may have more specific guidelines.

Staff Purchasing District Meals

Staff may purchase lunch from food service. An Etrition account must be set up in advance for the staff member, and school procedures for ordering the lunch must be followed (this process is separate from ordering student lunches). No charges will be allowed once an account has reached a balance of \$0.00. Once the account balance has reached \$10.00, staff will be notified of their balance verbally at the cash register. Staff members may sign up with the store clerk in their building to receive email notices from Etrition.

Food Purchasing Tips for Child Care

Purchase only inspected meats

- Select pasteurized milk and 100-percent juices
- Do not buy or use food in cans that are leaking or bulging cans of food

Preparation, Serving, and Food Storage Tips for Child Care

- Put away frozen and cold foods promptly after purchasing
- Thoroughly wash fruits and vegetables before use. Even prepackaged, prewashed foods like lettuce, spinach, and carrots still carry harmful bacteria and need to be washed.
- Store foods in covered containers in the refrigerator. Food containers must be labeled with name and date. Opened food items can only be stored for 48 hours.
- Check expiration dates. All expired food items must be discarded immediately. Expired food items can never be served to children.
- Place thermometers in a visible location in refrigerators and freezers, and check the temperature frequently
 - Keep refrigerator temperature between 32 degrees – 40 degrees F.
 - Keep freezer temperature at 0 degrees F or less.
- Clean the refrigerator, freezer, and dry food storage areas weekly
- Store foods and cleaning supplies in separate cupboards
- Store cleaning supplies in a cupboard that is locked
- Food containers can not be stored on the ground

Preparing Meals for Children in Child Care

- Wash your hands often with soap and water during food preparation
- Wash and sanitize work counters and surfaces before and after use
- Wash and sanitize cutting boards and utensils before using and after each use
- Use separate cutting boards and utensils for raw meats than the ones you use for fruits, vegetables, and other foods
- Wash and sanitize can openers after each use
- Put frozen meats into a pan before placing them in the refrigerator to thaw
- Never thaw meats on the kitchen counter
- Cook meats thoroughly, and use a food thermometer to be sure they are fully cooked
- Ground pork, beef, veal, and lamb – 155 degrees F for 15 seconds
- Whole poultry (take measurement in thigh) – 165 degrees F for 15 seconds
- Fin fish – 145 degrees F for 15 seconds
- Steaks and roasts: beef, veal, and lamb – 145 degrees F for 15 seconds
- Hold hot foods at 135°F or higher and cold foods at or below 41°F. Most bacteria grow rapidly in the “temperature danger zone” between 41° and 135° F.
- Only microwave safe containers can be used. Plastic and polystyrene containers, plates, bags, or wraps can not be used when microwaving children’s foods or beverages.
- Do not change diapers in areas where you prepare, store, and serve foods
- Do not allow pets in the kitchen when meals are being prepared and served to children

Mandatory Microwaving Restrictions

- **Total Plastic & Styrofoam Ban:** Staff are strictly prohibited from using plastic or polystyrene (Styrofoam) containers, plates, bags, or wraps when microwaving children's food.
- **Mandatory Food Transfer:** Before microwaving, all children's food must be transferred into **glass, porcelain, or microwave-safe pottery** plates or containers.
- **Beverage Microwaving Ban:** To prevent uneven heating, hot spots, and chemical leaching, children's beverages must never be microwaved. Staff should warm milk or alternative beverages using warm running tap water or a dedicated bottle warmer.

Serving Meals to Children in Child Care

- Serve foods on a plate, napkin or bowl rather than directly on the table
- Discard cracked or chipped plates, cups, and bowls

- Use serving utensils such as large spoons, tongs, or single-use food service gloves
- Teach children not to lick serving utensils. If a utensil is licked, remove it and replace with a clean utensil ●

Give children clean utensils and napkins if these items are dropped during the meal or snack

- Store open, un-served food immediately after the meal. Label with date. Open, un-served food items can only be stored for 48 hours.
- Discard all leftovers on children's plates and in serving dishes that were placed on the table where children ate; do not save them for later
- Discard food waste in a covered garbage can with a liner, and empty the garbage can at the end of the day (or sooner if full)
- Gloves, utensils, or methods other than bare hand contact must be used when handling ready-to-eat foods. If single-use gloves are used, the following guidelines are recommended:
 - Wash hands before putting on gloves.
 - Put gloves on only when you are ready to handle ready-to-eat food.
 - Use gloves for only one task, such as preparing a ready-to-eat food, then discard.
 - If an interruption occurs during food preparation, remove gloves.
 - Use clean gloves when you resume food preparation.
 - Dispose of gloves immediately upon removal.
 - Single-use gloves should not be used around heat or hot fats.
 - Gloves are susceptible to contamination, so discard when soiled or damaged.

Appropriate Dish Washing in a Child Care Setting

- If a dishwasher is used, the rinse temperature should be 180 degrees F to sanitize dishes
- Follow these steps to wash and sanitize dishes without a dishwasher:
 - Rinse or scrape dishes
 - Wash in hot sudsy water
 - Rinse in clear water
 - Sanitize dishes by submerging in a solution of 1 teaspoon bleach per quart of water for one minute or in 170 degree F water for at least 30 seconds
 - Air dry dishes rather than towel-drying them

Infant Meal Time Procedures

All staff in infant classrooms must read and sign the ECC Infant Feeding Policy prior to entering the classroom.

- If the program provides food to infants, then the program staff works with families (who are informed by their child's health care provider) to ensure that the food is based on the infant's individual nutritional needs and developmental stage.
- The program supports breastfeeding by accepting, storing, and serving expressed human milk for feedings.

Breast Milk Handling and Disposal

To preserve the nutritional quality of human milk and protect infants from potential bacterial contamination, staff must strictly adhere to safe storage and disposal protocols.

- **Active Monitoring:** Staff must accurately log the time an infant begins consuming a bottle of breast milk.
 - **The 2-Hour Limit:** Any unfinished breast milk that has been left at room temperature (unrefrigerated) for **more than 2 hours** must be promptly discarded.
 - **No Re-Refrigeration:** Unfinished breast milk that has been warmed or partially consumed cannot be returned to the refrigerator or saved for a later feeding.
-
- Accepting human milk in ready- to- feed sanitary containers labeled with the infant's name and date and storing it in a refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours (or no more than 24 hours if the breast milk was previously frozen) or in a freezer at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below for no longer than three months.
 - Ensuring that staff gently mix, not shake, the milk before feeding to preserve special infection fighting and nutritional components in human milk.
 - Providing a comfortable place for breastfeeding and coordinating feedings with the infant's mother.
 - Except for human milk, staff serves only formula and infant food that comes to the facility in factory-sealed containers (e.g., ready-to-feed powder or concentrate formulas and baby food jars) prepared according to the manufacturer's instructions.
 - Bottle feedings do not contain solid foods unless the child's health care provider supplies written instructions and a medical reason for this practice.
 - Staff discards after one hour any formula that is served but not completely consumed or is not refrigerated. If staff uses warm formula or human milk, the milk is warmed in water at no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit for no more than 5 minutes. No milk, including human milk and no other infant foods are warmed in a microwave oven.
 - Teaching staff does not offer solid foods and fruit juices to infants younger than six months of age, unless that practice is recommended by the child's health care provider and approved by families, sweetened beverages are avoided. If juice (only 100% fruit juice is recommended) is served, the amount is limited to no more than four ounces per child daily.
 - Teaching staff who are familiar with the infant feed him or her whenever the infant seems hungry. Feeding is not in lieu of other forms of comfort.
 - The program does not feed cow's milk to infants younger than 12 months, and it serves only whole milk to children of ages 12 months to 24 months.
 - Cleaning and sanitation of high chairs shall be conducted before and after contact with food.

Bottle Feeding Procedure

Always wash hands before preparing to feed an infant.

- Make sure that the bottles are labeled with the child's name on the bottle itself and on the ring for the nipple.
- If a child is breastfed, make sure that their bottles in the refrigerator are labeled with their initials and the date that the bottle was brought in.
- When feeding a breastfed child you will have to get the bottle out of the refrigerator or the freezer part depending on what the parent has supplied.
- You can either use the bottle warmer to heat the bottle or place it under warm running water.
- Breast milk must be kept refrigerated or frozen and should be labeled with the child's name and date. Freshly expressed or pumped breast milk can be stored in the refrigerator up to 4 days. Thawed, previously frozen breast milk can be stored in the refrigerator for 24 hours. When a feeding is over, what is left in the bottle must be fed within 2 hours after the baby has finished feeding or it should be discarded.
- When feeding a formula fed child you will make the bottle according to what the child is eating.
- When a child is done with the bottle the bottle should be dumped out into the sink. Unfinished bottles of formula, what is left in the bottle must be fed within 2 hours after the baby has finished feeding or it should be discarded.
- At the beginning of the day make sure that all bottles are labeled with the child's full (first and last) name as well as the date the milk was expressed.
- If the parent brings in a formula bottle from home with the child that bottle should be dumped and a new one made for the child here at school.
- If a parent provides breast milk for their child it must be labeled with the infant's FULL name and the date the milk was expressed.

Documentation of Meals for families, to be completed following each meal.

For children of any age with special feeding needs, and for all children under the age of 5, staff must do the following each day:

- Document the type and quantity of food the child consumes on Brightwheel
- Provide this information to the child's family on Brightwheel

Arrival, Departure, and Unusual Transition Circumstances

1. Standard Arrival and Departure Requirements

- **Responsible Escort:** Children must always be escorted to and from their classrooms by a responsible individual who is at least **16 years of age or older** (enrolled siblings are excluded). Parents must make direct verbal contact with a classroom teacher to hand off or retrieve the child.
- **Digital Attendance Tracking (Brightwheel):** Attendance must be tracked exclusively through the **Brightwheel** app. Guardians and family members are required to sign their child in and out using the classroom QR code and the

secure 4-digit code provided to each family.

- **Staff Tracking Restrictions:** Teaching staff are **strictly prohibited from signing students in or out on Brightwheel** for families. If a family forgets, staff must remind them that digital sign-in/out is their direct responsibility. If needed, reach out to administration and we will assist with contacting the parent/guardian to correct the record.
- **Secure Building Access:** To maintain a secure environment, families receive individual, secure keypad access codes. These codes are strictly confidential. Sharing access codes with unauthorized individuals is prohibited. Anyone entering the building without a personal code must ring the front entry buzzer and check in directly at the main office.
- **Identity Verification (ID Checks):** Staff must verify the identity of any unfamiliar pickup person by checking their photo ID against the enrollment release profile. If a named designee does not have photo identification with them, the child will not be released until proper identification is obtained or verified with a parent. Children will never be released to an unauthorized individual.

2. Handling Unusual AM Drop-Off Circumstances (Staff Procedures)

- **Unknown Drop-Off Escort:** If a child is dropped off by an individual unknown to staff (e.g., an unlisted grandparent or neighbor), the teacher must immediately check if the caregivers or family have shared the drop-off with staff on **Brightwheel**. If no note or log exists on the app, the teacher can still accept the child into the classroom, but they must immediately contact the main office. Administration will then follow up to contact and verify the transition with the family while the child remains safely in care.
- **Severe Separation Distress or Illness:** If a child arrives in extreme emotional distress or shows visible signs of an infectious condition, the teacher must physically stop the drop-off. Staff will evaluate the child's wellness and work with the parent to safely settle the child or implement the health exclusion policy.
 - *Operational Definition:* **Severe emotional distress** is defined as persistent, inconsolable crying, extreme panic or terror, intense physical resistance (such as kicking, biting, or running away from the educator), vomiting due to anxiety, or a complete shutdown of behavioral responsiveness that lasts beyond a typical transitional separation period.
 - *Action Plan:* In these unusual instances, the teacher must intervene immediately to ensure safety. The educator will partner with the parent on-the-spot to implement calming strategies (such as sensory tools, transitional comfort objects, or a quiet break area) to co-regulate the child before the parent exits the building.
- **Incorrect Classroom Drop-Offs:** Staff must never allow a parent to drop a child off in an alternate classroom unless explicitly directed by administration to balance emergency ratios.

3. Handling Unusual PM Pickup Crises (Staff Procedures)

- **Custody Disputes:** Staff must strictly follow the legal documentation stored in the student's master file. If a parent involved in a custody dispute attempts an unauthorized pickup, staff will immediately move the child to a secure back room, refuse to release the child, and notify the Early Childhood Director. If the individual becomes aggressive, staff must immediately dial 911.
- **Intoxicated Parent Policy:** If an obviously intoxicated parent or authorized individual comes to the center to retrieve a child, center staff will encourage the parent to find someone else to pick up the child and offer to help contact another authorized emergency contact for a safe ride. If the individual insists on retrieving the child and leaves with the child in the car, the police will be called immediately and given the vehicle's license plate number. The staff member will then immediately notify the Director in charge of Early Childhood or the Assistant Director and make a formal report to the **Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS)**.
- **Unauthorized Pickup Attempts:** If an individual provides identification but is not listed on the release list, staff will hold the child in the classroom and call the parents immediately. The child will not be released until the family profile is officially updated on **Brightwheel** by a parent.

4. Late Pickups and Unnotified Absences

- **Late Fee Policy:** Late pickups will be documented on a late form and billed to the family's tuition account at a rate of **\$10.00 plus \$2.00 per minute per child**. This fee must be paid within 24 hours. A maximum of **3 late pickups** per school year will result in a termination of services.
- **Emergency Late Protocols:** If a child remains at the center for **30 minutes or more** past closing and staff are entirely unsuccessful in contacting the parents or listed emergency designees, administration will contact the **Cedar Rapids Police Department** and the **Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS)** for emergency protective assistance.
- **Attendance Tracking Mandate:** Families must notify the center immediately of any absences, detailing if it is due to a communicable illness. If a child misses **10 consecutive days** without notification, the program will assume services are no longer needed and fill the spot from the waitlist.

Naptime Procedures

Naptime occurs every day.

This meets NAEYC requirements 3.C.02, 3.C.03 and 3.C.04. Staff must supervise infants and toddlers/twos by sight and sound at all times; this includes rest time. Staff is aware of, and positioned so they can hear and see any sleeping children for whom they are responsible, especially when they are actively engaged with children who are awake. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check frequently on children who are out of sight (e.g. Children who are using the bathroom independently).

Infants

- Infants younger than 12 months must be placed on their backs to sleep without the use of infant sleep positioners, unless ordered by a physician.
- If infants arrive to the program asleep, or fall asleep, in equipment not specifically designed for infant sleep, the infant is removed and placed in appropriate infant safe sleep equipment. (Crib or cot)
- Soft items (blankets, pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, soft toys) are not allowed in cribs or on cots for infants younger than 12 months. ECC provides/approves of the following safe sleep equipment: Cribs, cots

Regulations

Regulations state that we must offer a place for each child to rest during this time. However, the children do not have to sleep. (You cannot mandate that all children sleep at this time. Do not force a child to lie on their cot. Blankets cannot be wrapped tightly or placed over a child's head.)

Lead teachers in each classroom will work with their classroom team to create a specific policy in regards to nap time procedure. Children who do not nap may be allowed to get up and participate in quiet activities while other children are sleeping. Here are some quiet activity ideas:

- Coloring
- Puzzles
- Painting
- File Folder Games
- Quiet Manipulatives (stringing beads, peg boards, etc.)

- Play-Dough

Please be sure that you establish and type up a naptime procedure for your classroom and include it in your Substitute Binder. This procedure, along with all other procedures established in your classroom, need to be reviewed periodically with your classroom team to ensure that everyone is aware of and carrying out the procedures appropriately.

Pets

Prior to bringing in an animal to the childcare classroom, approval must be obtained from the EC Principal. Animals brought on site should be in good health with no evidence of disease. The pets shall not pose a safety threat to children and shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary manner. All families must be notified of the pets and will be removed if any child shows an allergy reaction. Documentation of current vaccinations shall be available for all animals that visit the classrooms.

No ferrets, reptiles (including turtles), or birds of the parrot family are allowed on site. Pets are not permissible in PreK classrooms per district policy. See Elementary Handbook for additional information.

Pets are not allowed in kitchen or food preparation areas.

All children, staff, and volunteers should wash their hands before AND after touching the animal and after cleaning cages.

Shoeless Infant Room

Infant Room Shoe Policy

To maintain sanitation in the infant room, we require all staff to adhere to the following guidelines:

- No Shoes in the Infant Room:
 - The floor is the workspace for infants; therefore, street shoes are not allowed inside the infant room.
- Shoes Off or Covered:
 - Before entering the infant room, please remove your shoes or cover them with the provided shoe covers.
- Alternative Footwear:
 - Staff may wear socks or slippers in place of shoes while inside the infant classroom.
- Street Shoes Outside the Infant Room:
 - Upon leaving the infant classroom, staff must put on their street shoes.
- Shoe Rack Usage:
 - There is a shoe rack located outside the infant classroom. Place your shoes on this rack to avoid creating a tripping hazard.

By following these guidelines, we can ensure a clean and safe environment for our infants. Thank you for your cooperation!

Diapering Procedures and Nap Routine for all Children

To ensure optimal hygiene and prevent diaper dermatitis (diaper rash) caused by prolonged skin contact with moisture and waste, staff must follow strict diapering intervals.

- Routine Frequency: Staff must check children's diapers at least every two hours while awake, and immediately upon noticing a child is wet or soiled.
- Mandatory Post-Nap Checks: Staff must check every child's diaper immediately when they wake up from a nap.
- Prompt Changing: Any child found with a wet or soiled diaper during the post-nap check must be changed immediately following the standard sanitary diapering steps posted at the changing station.
- Documentation: All diaper checks and changes—including the mandatory post-nap check—must be logged immediately in Brightwheel.

When changing a diaper:

- Prepare the area by gathering all necessary supplies and wipes before starting the diapering process.
- Put on clean rubber gloves (change gloves for each child).
- Open up diaper/training pants.
- Clean the child's bottom, place used wipes inside the diaper
- Take the diaper/training pants off the child.
- Diaper the child.
- Fold the diaper/training pants up, using the sticky tabs to close.
- Place soiled diapers in diaper/training pants pail. Remove and properly dispose of gloves.
- Squirt changing pad with bleach water solution. Let stand for two minutes then wipe dry with a paper towel after each child.
- Wash the child's hands with soap and water
- Wash your hands with soap and water (after each child).

A hand must be on the child at all times while on the changing table.

NEVER LEAVE THE CHILD UNATTENDED AT ANYTIME.

DO NOT use hand washing sinks for bathing children or removing fecal material.

Diapering Procedures Poster:

<https://hhs.iowa.gov/media/2848/download?inline=>

Diapering Procedure



**Step 1:
Get Organized**

Before you bring the child to the diaper changing area, wash your hands, gather and bring what you will need to the diaper changing table:

- ✓ Non-absorbent paper liner large enough to cover the changing surface from the child's shoulders to beyond the child's feet
- ✓ Fresh diaper and clean clothes - as needed
- ✓ Wipes for cleaning the child's genitalia and buttocks removed from the container – so you do not touch the container during diaper changing
- ✓ Wipes for cleaning child and provider hands (see Step 4)
- ✓ A plastic bag for soiled clothes
- ✓ Disposable gloves. (put gloves on before handling soiled clothing or diapers)
- ✓ Diaper cream (when needed/appropriate) remove from the container onto facial or toilet tissue ready to apply to child's skin



**Step 2:
Carry the child to the changing table**

Keep soiled child clothing away from you and any surfaces you cannot easily clean and disinfect after the diaper change.

- ✓ Always keep a hand on the child
- ✓ If a child's feet cannot be kept out of the diaper or from contact with soiled skin during the changing process, remove the child's shoes and socks so the child does not contaminate these surfaces with stool or urine during the diaper changing
- ✓ Put soiled clothes in a plastic bag and securely tie the plastic bag to send the soiled clothes home



**Step 3:
Clean the child's diaper area**

Place the child on the diaper change surface and unfasten the diaper but leave the soiled diaper under the child

- ✓ If safety pins are used, close each pin immediately once it is removed and keep pins out of the child's reach. Never hold the pins in your mouth.
- ✓ Lift the child's legs as needed to use disposable wipes to clean the skin on the child's genitalia and buttocks. Remove stool and urine from front to back and use a fresh wipe each time. Put the soiled wipes into the soiled diaper or directly into a plastic-lined, hands-free covered waste-can



**Step 4:
Remove the soiled diaper**

Remove the soiled diaper without contaminating a surface not already in contact with stool or urine.

- ✓ Fold the soiled surface of the diaper inward
- Put soiled disposable diapers in a covered, plastic-lined, hands-free covered waste-can. If reusable diapers are used, put the soiled cloth diaper contents (without emptying or rinsing) in a plastic bag or into a plastic-lined, hands-free covered container to give to parents or laundry service
- ✓ Remove gloves using the proper technique and put soiled gloves into a plastic-lined, hands-free covered waste-can
- ✓ Use a disposable wipe to clean the caregiver's hands and another disposable wipe to clean the child's hands, discard soiled wipes into the plastic-lined, hands-free covered waste-can
- ✓ Check for spills under the child. If there are any, use a disposable wipe to clean the spill and another disposable wipe to clean the child's hands. Place the paper that extends under the child's feet over the disposable paper so a fresh, unsoiled surface is now under the child's buttocks



**Step 5:
Put on a clean diaper and dress the child**

- ✓ Slide a fresh diaper under the child
- ✓ Use a facial or toilet tissue or wear clean disposable glove to apply any necessary diaper creams, discarding the tissue or glove in a covered, plastic-lined, hands-free covered can
- ✓ Take notice and plan to report any skin problems such as redness, skin cracks or bleeding
- ✓ Fasten the diaper. If pins are used, place your hand between the child and the diaper when inserting the pin



**Step 6:
Wash the child's hands**

and return the child to a supervised area.

- ✓ Use soap and running water, no less than 60 degrees F and no more than 120 degrees F, at a sink to wash the child's hands
- ✓ If a child is too heavy to hold for handwashing or cannot stand at the sink, use the three-towel method for handwashing procedure:
 - Wipe the child's hands with a damp paper towel moistened with a drop of liquid soap
 - Wipe the child's hands with a paper towel wet with clear water
 - Dry the child's hands with a paper towel



**Step 7:
Clean and disinfect the diaper-changing surface**

- ✓ Dispose of the disposable paper liner used on the diaper changing surface in a plastic-lined, hands-free covered waste-can
- ✓ Clean the changing surface with soap and water,
- ✓ Rinse the surface with water
- ✓ Wet the entire changing surface with a disinfectant solution, following manufacturer's instructions for mixing ratio and dwell time
- ✓ Safely store cleaning solution and disinfectant



**Step 8:
Wash your hands**

then record the change in the child's daily log

- ✓ In the daily log, record what was in the diaper, any problems (like loose stool, unusual stool, or blood in the stool or skin irritation). Record any problems or observation as needed




For information about health and safety in child care, contact Healthy Child Care Iowa at 1-800-368-6868 or visit the Web site at www.idph.iowa.gov/healthyschools

Reference: Caring for Our Children, Fourth Edition (2015) American Academy of Pediatrics.

Photos courtesy of Healthy Child Care North Iowa

March 2021

Handwashing Procedures

Mandatory Staff Hand Hygiene Intervals

To prevent the spread of infectious disease, staff and volunteers must wash or sanitize their hands at the following critical times:

- Before and after feeding a child.
- Before and after administering medication.
- After handling garbage.
- After cleaning.
- Upon arrival to the classroom and after returning from outdoor play.
- Before preparing, serving, or eating food.
- After diapering a child, assisting with toileting, or handling any bodily fluids.

Mandatory Children's Hand Hygiene Intervals

Teachers must supervise and instruct children to wash their hands:

- Upon arrival to the classroom and after outdoor play.
- Before and after meals or snacks.
- Before and after playing with shared sensory materials (e.g., finger paint, play dough, water tables).
- After using the toilet, being diapered, or handling animals.

Step-by-Step Handwashing Procedure

When washing hands, staff and children must perform the following actions:

1. **Wet:** Turn on the running water faucet and wet hands. Do not fill or plug the basin.
2. **Lather:** Apply liquid soap (pump twice) or a rinsed bar of soap. Rub hands firmly together until a thick lather covers all skin surfaces, paying close attention to backs of hands, wrists, between fingers, and under fingernails.
3. **Scrub:** Vigorously rub and lather hands for **at least 20 seconds**.
4. **Rinse:** Rinse thoroughly under clean, running water.
5. **Dry & Turn Off:** Dry hands completely with a clean, disposable paper towel. Use that same paper towel to turn off the water faucet before discarding it.



<https://food.unl.edu/resources/HandwashingPosterColor.pdf>

Above is the link for the hand-washing poster. Please display poster in your classroom by all hand washing sinks.

Medication

Sometimes children in our programs need medication during the day. If a child needs medication, the parent **MUST** fill out the Medication Authorization Form (please make sure parents sign it) and provide the medication in its original container. Medication must be stored in a locked container that children do not have access to.

Please label any nonprescription medications with the child's name; prescription medications must have the 'doctor' label on it stating the name of the child and the dosage amount.

If the medication is for emergency purposes such as an Epi-Pen, it shall be located out of reach of children in the room but immediately accessible for all staff to obtain. According to Safety Plans Epi-Pens need to be taken in First Aid bags when children and staff leave the classroom.

Prairie Hawks Preschool Staff see School Nurse for Directions.

Procedures for dispensing medication

Staff cannot accept or administer any medication without a completed **Medication**

Authorization Form on file.

- **Complete Paperwork:** Parents must fill out the Medication Authorization Form completely before any dose can be given.
- **Original Containers:** All medication must arrive in its original container, clearly labeled with the child's first and last name, expiration date, and specific physician instructions.

Dual-Storage Safety Protocols

To protect children while maintaining emergency preparedness, medications are stored using two separate protocols based on their urgency:

- **Routine Medications:** All routine, standard, and daily medications (prescription or over-the-counter) must be stored in a **locked container or locked cabinet** that is entirely inaccessible to children throughout the day. This includes medications requiring refrigeration, which must be kept in a locked lockbox inside the refrigerator.
- **Emergency Medications:** Medications that must be readily available for immediate, life-saving emergency use (such as rescue inhalers, Epinephrine auto-injectors/EpiPens, or emergency seizure medications) **are not required to be locked**. However, they **must be completely inaccessible to children** at all times (e.g., stored on a high shelf or inside an adult-height emergency bag out of child reach) while remaining immediately retrievable by staff.

Daily Administration & Accountability Log

Every single day that a child is present in the program and has an active Medication

Authorization Form in effect, a **medication-certified staff member** must take action and document it:

- **Successful Administration:** The certified staff member will safely distribute the medication following the labeled instructions and completely fill out the appropriate "blanks" on the authorization log (verifying child, dose, time, and route).
- **Non-Administration Protocol:** If the medication is not given on a scheduled day (e.g., the child was absent, the medication is "as needed" and was not required, or the parent requested a skipped dose), the certified staff member **must explicitly write the reason** the medication was not given and initial the form. No blank spaces are permitted on active logs.

Archive Procedures

To maintain permanent health records, all medication documents are archived systematically:

- **Monthly Filing:** At the end of each calendar month, the filled-out, completed medication authorization forms will be pulled from the classroom log and placed directly into the child's permanent master file in the main office.

Points to remember when accepting medications from families:

- Medication requires a physician's written permission, including the date that the physician's permission was given, name of medication, dosage amount, frequency and duration, and a Medication Administration Release completed by parent or legal guardian. This medication must be in the original container and be labeled with the child's name.
- Sunscreen, body and hand lotion, and lip balm require a Medication Administration Release form, which allows staff to administer these products to your child. A parent or guardian must complete this form, which can be obtained from ECC office staff. These products must be in the original container, have a manufacturer's expiration date, and be labeled with the child's name. Please keep in mind aerosol sunscreen is prohibited.

- Destin, A&D Ointment, and Vaseline require a Medication Administration Release. These products must also be in the original container labeled with the child's name and stored out of reach.

Do not allow children to bring or take home any medication in their backpacks

We do not allow parents to come into the school and administer medication (either prescription or non-prescription). We cannot take responsibility in the event that the child might have an adverse reaction to a medication. (This is a DHS requirement)

Specialized Medical Care Accommodations for Children (POLICY 6.04)

In compliance with the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**, our program ensures equitable access for children with complex medical needs.

- **Continuous Trained Coverage:** Program administrators will intentionally schedule staff so that an **appropriately trained team member is always physically present** in the building or on field trips whenever a child requiring specialized medical procedures is in attendance.
- **Scope of Care:** Child-specific training for the school Nurse where preschool children attend will be secured for specialized procedures including, but not limited to: tube feeding, airway suctioning, supplemental oxygen, postural drainage, urine catheterization, blood sugar checks, and injections.
- **Individualized Health Care Plans (IHCP):** Before enrollment, administration will collaborate with families and licensed healthcare professionals to create a written IHCP. This plan defines the required procedures and identifies the specific staff members trained to execute them.

Employee Medications

ECC understands that employees may possess their own personal medications for individual reasons. Employees are expected to ensure that their medications are inaccessible to children at all times. If an employee chooses to store their medication in one of the Center's medication boxes, they are required to follow all Center and DHS policies established for storing medication.

All purses/personal belongings containing medication must be kept out of children's reach.

Health Policies

Immunization Requirements & Outbreak Exclusion

1. Mandatory Enrollment Documentation

No student may start care or attend school without a valid, approved Iowa HHS record on file. Staff must ensure administration collects one of the following before a child's first day:

- **Certificate of Immunization:** Must include the child's name, birth date, and exact vaccine dates. It must be signed by an MD, DO, PA, nurse, or CMA.
- **Provisional Certificate of Immunization:** For children who have started but not completed their vaccines. The child must have at least one dose of each required age-level vaccine to attend.
- **Medical Exemption:** Signed by an MD, DO, PA, or ARNP stating the vaccine is harmful to the child or a household member.
- **Religious Exemption:** Signed by a parent or guardian and must be fully notarized.

2. Monitoring the 60-Day Provisional Window

ECC Office Staff and administration must strictly track children enrolled under a **Provisional Certificate** (including out-of-state transfers):

- The child has a maximum of **60 days** from their last dose to receive and document their next required vaccine dose.
- If the 60-day window expires without updated immunization proof, the child is legally excluded from care and cannot return to the building until an approved record is received.

3. Prompt Family Notification & Outbreak Exclusion

If a vaccine-preventable disease occurs within our program, staff must immediately notify administration to initiate the following safety procedures:

- **Prompt Parent Alert:** The program will promptly notify all families in the affected classrooms regarding the exposure.
- **Immediate Record Audit:** Upon learning of an exposure, administrative and office staff will immediately pull and review all classroom immunization files to cross-reference and identify any children who are under-immunized, provisional, or exempt for that specific disease. **Public Health Consultation: (ADD THIS)** Staff will immediately contact the Linn County Public Health Department (or local health authorities) to

report the exposure, verify the susceptibility of identified children, and seek explicit medical guidance on exclusionary parameters.

- **Public Health Consultation:** Staff will immediately contact the Linn County Public Health Department (or local health authorities) to report the exposure, verify the susceptibility of identified children, and seek explicit medical guidance on exclusionary parameters.
- **Immediate Temporary Exclusion:** All under-immunized children (including those with provisional status, medical exemptions, or religious exemptions) who are susceptible to that specific disease will be immediately excluded from the program.
- **Exclusion Duration:** Excluded children may not return to the building for the entire duration of the disease outbreak.
- **State Emergency Override:** Exemptions do not apply if the Iowa Council of HHS determines and the Director of Iowa HHS declares an emergency or epidemic.

Common Child Illnesses and Exclusion

Criteria for Education and Child Care Settings

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

- Prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
- A need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- An acute change in behavior: lethargy, lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or a quickly spreading rash.
- Fever with behavior change or other signs and symptoms in a child older than 2 months (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea).
- For infants younger than 2 months of age, a fever with or without a behavior change or other signs and symptoms.
- A child with a temperature elevated above normal is not necessarily an indication of a significant health problem. A fever is defined as:
 - For an infant or child older than 2 months, a fever is a temperature that is above 101 degrees F [38.3 degrees C] by any method.
 - For infants younger than 2 months of age a fever is a temperature above 100.4 degrees F [38 degrees C] by any method.
- Temperature readings do not require adjustment for the location where the temperature is taken.

Guidelines Enforced for Contagious Diseases:

Any updated guidance from DHS, CDC, LCPH & IDPH that occurs from the time of publishing this handbook will be followed.

Contagious Disease	Exclude	Return to Care/School
Chicken Pox	Yes	When all blisters are crusted with no oozing (usually 6 days) and resolution of exclusion criteria.
Diarrhea (infectious)	Yes (There are special exclusion rules for E.coli (STEC), Shigellosis, and cryptosporidiosis)	When diarrhea stops and health care providers and public health officials state the child may return.
Diarrhea(non infectious)	Yes, if stool cannot be contained in the diaper, or if the toileted child has 2 or more loose stools in 24 hours, or blood in stool.	When diarrhea stops and resolution of exclusion criteria.
Pink Eye/Conjunctivitis	No. Unless child meets other exclusion criteria.	Child does not need to be excluded unless a health care provider or public health official recommends exclusion. Resolution of all exclusion criteria.
Fifth Disease	No, unless child meets other exclusion criteria.	If excluded due to other presence of other exclusion criteria, resolution of exclusion criteria
Head Lice	No, unless the child meets other exclusion criteria.	Children shall not be excluded immediately or sent home early from childcare because of head lice. Parents of affected children shall be notified and informed that their child must be treated properly before returning to the child care facility the next day. Treatment recommendations can be found here: https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/treatment.html

Hand and Mouth	No, unless child meets other exclusion criteria. Or is excessively drooling with mouth sores.	If excluded due to presence of other exclusion criteria, resolution of exclusion criteria.
Impetigo	Yes, exclude immediately or at the end of the day if blisters can be covered.	After the child has been seen by the doctor, after 24 hours on antibiotics, blisters are covered.
Molluscum Contagiosum	No, unless child meets other exclusion criteria	Skin disease similar to warts. Do not share towels or clothing and use good hand hygiene.
MRSA	No, unless child meets other exclusion criteria	Wounds should be kept covered and gloves worn during bandage changes. Do not share towels or clothing and use good hand hygiene.

Otitis Media (Ear Infections)	No, unless child meets other exclusion criteria	If excluded due to presence of other exclusion criteria, resolution of exclusion criteria.
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Yes	Children may return after 5 days of antibiotics and resolution of exclusion criteria.
Respiratory illness (cough and cold symptoms) includes influenza, COVID-19, and RSV	Yes	When individual is fever free for 24 hours without use of a fever reducing medication AND respiratory symptoms are mild and improving.
Ringworm	No, unless child meets other exclusion criteria	Treatment of ringworm infection may be delayed to the end of the day. Child may be readmitted after treatment has begun. Cover lesion(s) if possible. Do not share bedding, towels or clothing and use good hand hygiene.
Strep Throat	Yes	When resolution of exclusion criteria and after 24 hours of antibiotics.
Vomiting	Yes	When vomiting has resolved and resolution of exclusion criteria.

Due to DHS health and safety requirements, we are not allowed to perform invasive procedures on our children. This includes using nasal aspirators for infants and toddlers. Therefore, if a child's nose is congested and an aspirator is needed more than occasionally, your child may be sent home. This will be up to the discretion of the Principal in charge of Early Childhood or Assistant Director, in collaboration with the classroom staff.

A child that is too sick to go outdoors is considered too sick to be at the center. We will expect all children in attendance to go outdoors if the class is going outdoors. Exceptions, if any, will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the ECC staff.

An illness or condition requiring treatment by a physician will be managed as directed by the physician, after approval by the Early Childhood Principal or Assistant Director.

Oftentimes a physician will state that the child can return to group care contrary to our exclusion policies. In such cases, a written statement signed by the physician is required upon the child's return to the center. However, ECC reserves the right to still exclude the child from care. A written doctor's statement will NEVER override the center's 24 hour, fever free, exclusion policy.

Notification of Communicable Disease/Illness

If your child comes down with a communicable disease/infection or condition, it is important to share this information with ECC. We will notify you if your child may have been exposed to any communicable disease or condition by posting any information in your child's classroom. If the person who is responsible for bringing or picking up a child from school has a contagious disease, and another person is not available, please let the office know so we can get the child from the classroom to keep from spreading contagious diseases.

Head Injury

If a child receives a head injury during the school day, the parent will be informed immediately via phone or email if that is the parent's preferred form of communication. At the discretion of the school nurse or supervisor in charge the parent may be asked to take the child home for observation.

Surgery

If a child has had surgery, a written note from the doctor is required, stating the child is ready to fully participate in our program.

General Staff Exclusion Requirements

Our program depends on healthy educators to protect our group environment. A "staff member" includes any person working or volunteering to perform duties in a Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, School Age, or Pre-K classroom.

Daily Observations: Directors and supervisors are responsible for observing staff members for signs of illness throughout the day.

- **Prompt Reporting:** Staff must immediately report any signs of personal infection or illness to the director or person in charge.

A staff member or staff member means any person working or volunteering to perform duties in a Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, School Age or Pre-K classroom. Directors/supervisors are responsible for observing the staff for signs of illness throughout the day.

Mandatory Exclusion Criteria

Staff members must not report to work, and will be temporarily excluded from the building, if their illness prevents them from comfortably performing their regular duties, or if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- **Fever:** A temperature of **100.4°F or higher** accompanied by a behavioral change.
- **Vomiting:** Vomiting **two or more times** within the previous 24 hours (unless determined to be a documented, non-infectious condition).
- **Diarrhea:** Watery, loose, or unformed stools that occur with illness symptoms, or any diarrhea outbreak linked by public health to *Salmonella*, *Shigellosis*, or *E. coli*.
- **Outbreak Mandate:** Any staff member determined by the local health department to be contributing to the transmission of an active outbreak.

If you are experiencing any excluding symptoms, you must text or call the Program Director or Assistant Director **no earlier than 6:00 AM** on the morning of your shift (or at least **2 hours before** your shift starts) so we can secure coverage for your classroom.

Temporary Exclusion for Staff

A temporary exclusion for staff is recommended when:

- The illness prevents the staff from participating comfortably in activities.
- The staff has any of the following conditions, unless a health professional determines the staff member's condition does not require exclusion: See - *Conditions that do not require staff exclusion below*.
- Any staff member determined by the local health department to be contributing to the transmission of illness during an outbreak.

Following an illness or injury, staff will be readmitted to the program when they no longer have the above symptoms, have begun appropriate treatment, fever-free or symptom-free for a full 24 hours without medication, and/or no longer have significant discomfort and feel well enough to participate.

You must notify parent/guardians of children enrolled at the ECC in writing, either by letter or posting notice in a visible location, when their child/children have been exposed to a communicable disease by staff or children..

Conditions that do not require staff exclusion:

When a staff member becomes ill, but does not require immediate medical help, a determination must be made whether the staff member requires exclusion. Most illnesses do not require exclusion:

- Common Colds, Runny noses (regardless of color or consistency of nasal discharge), and coughs.
- Fever without any signs or symptoms of illness

- Watery eye discharge, yellow or white eye drainage.
- Rash without fever and behavioral changes.
- Ringworm (may delay treatment until the end of the day).
- Thrush (i.e., white spots or patches in the mouth).
- Staff members with chronic infectious conditions that can be accommodated in the program according to the legal requirements of federal law in the American with Disabilities Act (e.g., HIV infection). The act requires that childcare programs and schools make reasonable accommodations for staff with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses, considering each staff member individually.

Sunscreen

Parents will be required to provide non-aerosol sunscreen with an SPF of 15- 50 for their child. Sunscreen should offer protection from UVA and UVB rays and be water resistant. Sunscreen will be applied with written parental permission to all children 6 months and older prior to outdoor activities April–October.

The key message: ‘When the number gets to 3, we protect against UV’

- Limit sun exposure between 10 AM and 4 PM, when UV rays are strongest.
- Apply sunscreen to children 6 months and older following label instructions.
- Written parent permission and documentation by staff of the application is required. If it is not applied, document why.
- **When gloves are not used, hand washing should occur in between each application.** If a child or staff member has open areas (cuts, wounds, etc.) on their skin, gloves should be worn.
- When gloves are used, they should be changed in between each child’s application. Ideally, hands are washed in between each pair of gloves, but this is an extra step that may not be feasible when applying sunscreen to multiple children.
- Children with allergies to sunscreen or prescription sunscreen should have their sunscreen applied first, to avoid any risk of exposing them to another product.
- Do not use aerosol sunscreens. Prairie Early Learning prohibits the usage of aerosol sunscreens and insect repellents.
- Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before outdoor exposure making sure that the last child to get sunscreen applied has 30 full minutes before going outside.

Face to Name Procedures

Please follow these procedures for face to name in Little Hawks, Wrap-Around, and School Age classrooms. • When a student arrives in the a.m., record the time on the classroom face to name sheet. • When the student leaves the room, record the time out on the classroom face to name sheet. • When the classroom leaves, staff must look at each child and record the time each child exits.

						E			
J. Smith	7:57	10:00	Gym	10:03	10:30	Room 101	10:32	1:55	Home

Support Staff or others taking a child from their room would sign them out and insert the name of the place they are taking them to. They would also write when they return with the child.

This tool is used to ensure each child is accounted for during each transition. **It is not a roll call. A classroom staff member must look at the child's name then look at the child prior to writing down the time.**

Field Trips & Guest Speakers

Staff Requests

Staff requesting to go on a field trip or to have a guest speaker must submit approval paperwork (approval form and green bus form-if bussing is required) to the ECC office no later than 15 school days prior to the scheduled event. If paperwork is not submitted in time the event will not be approved. Classes cannot partake in events without ECC Office approval. Unapproved events will not be paid for by ECC/PreK.

Field Trips and Vehicle Usage

All field trips (excluding the obvious extra-curricular activities) must be completed between the hours of 9:00am and 2:15pm.

The minimum amount of time Transportation should receive a request is 7 working days prior to the need.

All requests need to be done in writing using the form provided by the transportation department. The form also MUST include an account for billing.

Field Trip Expectations and Procedures

Pre-Event Considerations

- Teachers will discuss the upcoming study trip with the children. Expectations and information that will help children appreciate the trip will be shared.
- Parents will be notified of dates and times prior to the event.
- A first aid kit will be taken on each trip.
- A person trained in first aid and CPR must accompany the group.
- Emergency information for each child will be taken on each trip.
- All medications will be taken in a locked box. IF medications need to be administered, a staff member with Medication Administration approval must attend.
- The parent must give written permission for his/her child to attend.

- One (1) staff over licensed ratio is required for all trips away from the building
 - Licensing states for any child care center sponsored program activity involving five or more children conducted away from the licensed facility shall provide a minimum of one additional staff over the required staff ratio for the protection of the children.
- Check the weather
 - DHS Guidelines will be followed to determine if it is safe for children to participate.
 - Refer to the Weather Watch chart.
- Before leaving the classroom, a note will be posted on the door of the classroom listing the location of the trip, departure time from the center, and returning time.
- Face to Name procedures must be followed before, during, and after the trip
- Children must stay in the group with staff.
- Children will cross streets in organized groups: partners are recommended.
- Children must be properly dressed to go on study trips.
- While parents/guardians are welcome on study trips, it is policy that siblings of participants may not attend study trips.

Celebrations

College Community Early Learning classrooms will recognize and/or expose children to various holidays. Holidays that will be included will be determined by the classroom surveys parents/caregivers completed at the beginning of the school year.

- Food that comes from home for sharing among the children **must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. All foods must follow CACFP guidelines.** (We discourage cookies, cupcakes, donuts etc.)
- Staff **MUST NOT** offer children younger than 4 years the following foods:
 - Hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds
 - Whole grapes
 - Nuts
 - Popcorn
 - Raw peas
 - Hard pretzels
 - Peanut butter
 - Chunks of raw carrots
 - Meat larger than can be swallowed.

- Classrooms with students who have life threatening allergies may have more specific guidelines.
- Keep the activities open-ended and child generated
- **DO NOT** focus primarily on the holiday; seek out academic/seasonal purposes. This is especially important when considering how to “decorate” your room.
 - *Example: Not a good idea to turn dramatic play into Santa’s workshop and have the room filled with holiday items.*
- Be sensitive to family’s religions and financial situations
 - Treats/snacks/other purchased items can not be a requirement
 - Try not to set expectations that the parents cannot fulfill.
 - Example: Do not talk about getting tons and tons of presents at Christmas.
 - It is important to remember that birthday invitations cannot be distributed at school unless the entire class is invited.

Technology and Media Use in Early Learning Environments

[Technology Informational Letter for Families-Sharable letter](#)

Purpose and Philosophy

Our program believes that technology and interactive media should be used intentionally as tools to support learning, creativity, and social interaction. Technology is never used as a passive time-filler or a substitute for hands-on, real-world experiences. All digital tools are selected carefully to align with children’s developmental stages and our current units of study.

1. Age Restrictions and Screen Time Limits

To ensure healthy physical and cognitive development, screen time and media use are strictly regulated by age:

- **Children Under Age 2:** Digital screen time and electronic media use are completely prohibited.
- **Toddlers (Ages 2 to 3):** Technology and media use are strictly limited and must be included in lesson plans and preapproved. Total screen time may not exceed **20 minutes per day** for children enrolled in half-day programs, and may not exceed **40 minutes per day** for children enrolled in full-day programs.

2. Integration into Play (Preschool and Kindergarten)

For toddlers over the age of two, screen use is strictly limited to ensure plenty of time for physical movement and active play. Any technology use for this age group must be carefully preplanned and shared in advance within our weekly lesson plans. Furthermore, it must directly align with current classroom units of study and is strictly limited to a select, pre-approved program resource list. Digital tools must be intentionally woven into children's active play and existing centers.

- **Sketch and Write Centers:** Short, target video clips must be used to provide visual context for themes. Children should use these videos to research real-world concepts, pause clips to observe details, and use those observations to drive collaborative physical sketching, writing, and early labeling. (See detailed suggestions below.)
- **Block and Dramatic Play Centers:** Tablets or digital cameras may be introduced to allow children to photograph their engineering designs or record peer-to-peer dramatic roleplay.

3. Selection of Collaborative Apps

Educators are required to select apps and digital software that actively promote peer-to-peer collaboration, communication, and shared problem-solving.

- Single-user, passive games or apps that encourage isolation are prohibited.
- Approved tools must support multi-user engagement, where two or more children sit together, share a screen, pass a device, or use physical-digital hybrid pieces to achieve a common goal.

4. Safe Social Media Frameworks and Digital Journaling

- To protect your child's privacy, our staff will never post photos or information about your child on public social media (like personal Facebook or Instagram accounts). Instead, we use Teaching Strategies GOLD Creative Curriculum Resources, a secure, password-protected digital platform. In the classroom, children will work in pairs to take photos of their block structures, record voice notes explaining their projects, and publish their hard work directly to their private family feeds. You will receive an instant update on your app to see and celebrate what your child created! We also use private video tools (like Google Meet) to host live interviews with community helpers and distant family members.

Staff Compliance and Documentation

All teachers are expected to reflect these guidelines in their weekly lesson plans. During NAEYC accreditation site visits and internal self-assessments, administrators will use this handbook policy alongside classroom observations to verify compliance.

****Video Integration in the Sketch & Write Center;** aligns with The Project Approach: Integrating short video segments into standard physical centers transforms abstract concepts into concrete drawing and writing opportunities. Instead of relying on imagination alone, children use real visual evidence to drive their literacy work.

Unit of Study Example: "Our Neighborhood Helpers"

Site	Action by Educator & Peers	Purpose & NAEYC Alignment
Target Video Clip	The teacher loads a high-definition clip of a sanitation truck lifting, dumping, and compacting trash on a small tablet at the center.	Active Observation: Gives children a clear look at mechanical parts, levers, and motion that are hard to capture in standard books.
Collaborative Sketching	Two children pause, rewind, and re-watch the video clip together. They converse about the shapes they see ("Look at the big rectangle arm!"). They collaborate on a large piece of poster board to sketch the vehicle body and wheels.	Peer Dialogue: Promotes vocabulary expansion, spatial reasoning, and cooperative physical art design.
Dictation & Writing	The children label their sketch using inventive spelling (e.g., writing "TRK" for truck). They use a built-in voice recorder app or classroom camera to capture a video clip of themselves pointing to the drawing and explaining how the truck works.	

Movie Policies

ALL movies shown MUST be educational videos and must be pre-approved by ECC Administration.. Movies for the sole purpose of entertaining the children will not be shown.

Best practice as well as DHS guidelines dictate classroom staff shall ensure that children shall view no more than twenty (20) minutes of educational video in a month's time, this includes YouTube, educational videos/song/movement activities.

All videos shall have a rating of "G" and be previewed by the staff in charge of showing the movie. Children should always have the choice to not watch the movie, and other activities are planned for those children.

Legal Note:

Classrooms showing copyrighted movies are bound by the US Copyright Act and required to obtain a low-cost license. The Act applies to centers regardless of whether you own or rent the videocassette or whether or not you charge a fee to show it.

The Motion Picture Licensing Corporation has established a one-stop license service and a discount fee for centers and school-age programs.

For fee information and to obtain a license that allows the showing of home video cassettes for public performance, contact the Motion Picture Licensing Corporation at 1-800-462-8855

Paraprofessional/Asst Teacher Responsibilities:

General Overview

Before School Expectations

Prior to the start of the school day, Paraprofessionals/asst teachers shall report to their classroom immediately for classroom preparations including sanitization and cleaning. A weekly collaboration/planning meeting will be scheduled.

During School Expectations

Paraprofessionals will follow classroom roles and responsibilities documents prepared by the classroom teacher. In addition Paraprofessionals will assist with transporting students from the bus following EC bussing procedures.

After School Expectations

Paraprofessionals shall report to their classroom immediately for classroom preparations including sanitization and cleaning. In addition students riding the bus will be escorted to the bus following EC bus procedures.

Teacher Responsibilities

Morning Greeting

Daily communication with families is essential in creating a positive school/home relationship. Please greet children and families daily. Best practice is to call each child by name when greeting.

Opening Exercises

Routine is essential as it provides structure that influences a child's social, emotional and cognitive development. The daily opening exercise should follow a routine structure and allow for both teacher and student directed opportunities as well as ongoing student participation.

Teacher Responsibilities (Professional Growth)

Professional Development

[Annual Professional Development Plan](#)

The College Community School District provides ample opportunities for professional growth. All teachers are encouraged to be life-long learners and serve as positive role models to our students through continuous learning and growth in our professional areas. At Prairie, we expect teachers to:

- Collaborate with your team on a regular basis
- Share your growth with your colleagues and other educators
- Examine student work and student data to determine goals and instructional plans
- Apply strategies
- Peer coach and demonstrate lessons

We encourage teachers to:

- Join professional organizations
- Review professional articles, books, audio and video programs
- Network with other educators

1. Mandatory Certifications : To ensure a rapid and effective response during health emergencies, all educators and staff members who work directly with children must hold and maintain current, valid certifications in:

- Pediatric Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) (must include infant/child rescue breathing and airway management).
- Pediatric First Aid.
- Universal Precautions & Bloodborne Pathogens.
- Iowa Mandatory Reporter of Child Abuse.

2. Employment and Supervision: All educators must be fully trained and certified in Pediatric CPR and First Aid prior to working alone with children.

- **Volunteers, Student Teachers, College Students completing Field Experience Hours:** are prohibited from being left alone with children under any circumstances. They must be paired with a fully certified team member at all times unless proof of certification and employment is submitted to the main office.
- **Annual Emergency Drills:** In addition to active life-saving certifications, all staff members will participate in

mandatory emergency evacuation procedure training on a semi-annual basis.

WITHIN FIRST YEAR OF EMPLOYMENT	ANNUALLY THEREAFTER
1 hour of universal precautions (within first six months)	1 hour of universal precautions
Training for mandatory reporting of child abuse (within first six months). For all staff including long term subs.	Maintain current certification for mandatory reporting of child abuse.
Certification in American Red Cross or American Heart Association infant, child, and adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) Within the first six months and stay current from that point forward.	Maintain current certification for infant, child, and adult CPR.
Certification in infant, child, and adult first aid that uses a nationally recognized curriculum or is received from a nationally recognized training organization within the first six months and stays current from that point forward.	Maintain current certification for infant, child, and adult first aid.
<p>Ten contact hours of training from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child development ● Guidance and discipline ● Developmentally appropriate practices ● Nutrition ● Health and safety ● Communication skills ● Professionalism, business practices ● Social competence. <p>Training received for CPR, first aid, mandatory reporting, and universal precautions does not count towards the ten hours.</p> <p>Staff must receive at least four hours of the ten contact hours in a sponsored group setting. Six hours may be received in Department-approved self-study.</p>	<p>Staff must receive ten contact hours of training from the topical areas. At least four of the ten contact hours must be in a sponsored group setting.</p> <p>Center directors and on-site supervisors must receive eight contact hours of training annually from the topical areas. At least four of the eight contact hours must be in a sponsored group setting.</p> <p>Emergency Procedure Training will be offered as a component of the staff orientation, and annually thereafter.</p>
<p>School Orientation will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DHS licensing regulations ● Emergency procedure policies ● School policies ● Parent Handbook 	<p>In-Service through CCSD will be offered annually. Areas addressed: child development, assessment, guidance, nap, ethics, nutrition, health, safety, communication skills, professionalism, business practices, and/or social competence.</p>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Head Start Performance Standards/NAEYC Accreditation criteria ● Employee Handbook ● Prevention & Control of infectious disease ● Prevention of SIDS & Shaken Baby Syndrome ● Administration of medication ● Building and Physical premises safety ● Prevention and response to allergic reactions ● Introduction to Teaching Strategies Gold ● Handling and storage of hazardous materials ● Precautions in transporting children | |
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Teacher Responsibilities (Curriculum)

College Community Schools have a curriculum adoption process for core resources supported by district administrators. Still, teachers should preview all resources they are using (including core and supplemental and teacher developed resources) to ensure alignment to Board Policy and Iowa Law. If teachers have questions or concerns about curricular resources, they should reach out to their principal and/or the Director of Curriculum and Assessment prior to using the materials for approval and guidance.

The most important goal: to help children become lifelong learners. This means encouraging children to be self-guided learners who are not afraid to try out their ideas and to think their own thoughts. We're teaching them how to learn, not just in the early childhood years, but also all through their lives. We're allowing them to learn at their own pace and in the ways that are best for them. We're giving them good habits and attitudes, particularly a positive sense of themselves, which will make a difference throughout their lives.

Our curriculum identifies goals in all areas of development:

- Social: To help children feel comfortable in school, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are a part of the group.
- Emotional: To help children experience pride and self- confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude toward life.
- Cognitive: To help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success, and by helping them acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings.
- Physical: To help children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do.

Teacher's Role

Qualified, dedicated teachers are essential to the development of a quality program that promotes the individual development and success of each child. Knowing how children develop is the foundation for every teacher. Building meaningful relationships with children and families is the key to that knowledge. Careful observations and ongoing assessments will further the teachers' knowledge about each child's learning style and present level of development.

Teachers use this information to create an environment that includes a balance of both child initiated and teacher directed learning. As teachers engage with children throughout the day, they are able to determine the degree of their involvement.

Parent's Role:

We acknowledge and value that parents are their child's first teacher. Establishing a partnership with the child's parent/caregiver is imperative to the success of the child. This can be accomplished through ongoing communication as well as frequent participation of parents/caregivers in the child's program.

Iowa Early Learning Standards

The Iowa Early Learning Standards (IELS) are descriptions of the knowledge, behaviors, and skills that children from birth through age five may demonstrate; and they provide a strong developmental foundation that aligns with the Iowa Core (K-12).

https://educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/IowaEarlyLearningStandards-3rdEdition12.20.18_508.pdf

Creative Curriculum

Creative Curriculum is an Iowa Department of Education endorsed early childhood teaching framework. Creative Curriculum is based on the accepted theories of child development and supports our philosophy that children learn best through active learning. Through studies, which are hands-on, project-based investigations, The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool helps teachers build children's confidence, creativity and critical thinking skills, and promote positive outcomes.

Our environment is designed to facilitate maximum learning and includes a wide variety of activities that promote language, literacy, the arts, science, fine motor, cognitive, gross motor, social, and emotional development. Children are able to select activities and materials that interest them and allow them to be actively involved.

Teachers work with the individual child to promote development in all areas. Knowledge of child development, interactions, and observations allow teachers to gather information about each child's temperament, interest, emerging capabilities, and preferred learning style to meet the needs of every child and plan appropriate environments and activities. Weekly plans must be posted on the parent board in each classroom.

Everyday Math

Everyday Mathematics is a comprehensive Pre K through Grade 6 mathematics program engineered for the Common Core State Standards. Developed by The University of Chicago, School of Mathematics Project, the Everyday Mathematics spiral curriculum continually reinforces abstract math concepts through concrete real-world applications.

Second Step

Second Step is designed to promote social competences and reduce social and emotional problems by teaching children skills in the core areas of empathy, emotion management (impulse control, emotional regulation, anger management), and problem solving. The goal is to promote a caring classroom community but also to foster children's lifelong learning to become healthy, responsible, and productive members of society.

Jolly Phonics & Heggerty Phonemic Awareness

Jolly Phonics (Pre K, 3 year olds, Wrap-Around) and Heggerty Phonemic Awareness (3 Year olds and Wrap-Around)

are a fun and child centered approach to teaching literacy through synthetic phonics. With actions for each of the letter sounds, this multi-sensory method is very motivating for children and teachers, who can see their students achieve.