

Milton Family Community Center

Early Childhood Program



August 2024 – September 2025

PARENT HANDBOOK

* Revised December 2024

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

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Who We Are at Milton Family Community Center

The Milton Family Community Center (MFCC) is intentionally diverse and dedicated to building a stronger, more caring community through its family-centered approach. We are the local Family Resource Center for Northern Chittenden County, and a Vermont state-designated member of the **Vermont Parent Child Center Network**. As a state designated Parent Child Center, MFCC provides 8 core services for families with young children, including: Parent Education, Family Support, Home Visits, Community Play Groups, Early Childhood Programs, Concrete Supports (food, emergency assistance, etc.), resource information and referral, and Community Development.

Our History

MFCC was established in 1985 as a non-profit organization, designed to serve as a community-based hub of services and support for families with young children living in and around the Milton area.

Our Values

We believe all families need respect and support to thrive and succeed. We promote the Strengthening Families framework and we maintain a family-centered philosophy in all our programs. Across our organization, we focus on these 5 core values:

- Community
- Compassion
- Adaptability
- Resilience
- Empowerment

Our Mission

We build strong communities by empowering individuals and families with quality, innovative services.

Our Goals

To strengthen families;
To create easier access to services;
To promote a sense of community belonging;
To promote positive parent and child interactions.



Early Childhood Program Philosophy:

The MFCC Early Education Program's mission is to promote and expand each child's learning experience within a classroom environment that is fun, safe, nurturing, and developmentally age-appropriate.

- Our program provides for a play-based curriculum where our teachers plan and create interactive learning activities based on their observations of each child's abilities and interests. The children's natural learning and interests are then expanded upon to foster individual growth, learning, and ongoing natural curiosity.
- Our program promotes healthy and safe relationships for children, creates opportunities that build positive self-esteem, and encourages the development of self-respect and respect for others.
- Our play-based programs encourage and support healthy growth for children in all domains: approaches to learning; social and emotional; language, literacy and communication; mathematics; science; social studies; creative expression; and physical development and health.
- Our experienced and nurturing teachers are committed to ongoing professional development so they are well prepared to provide for ongoing learning and play activities that are developmentally appropriate, structured, and safely supervised.
- Our teachers understand that transitions can be challenging. They are willing and able to help support children and their families in making the school/home transition as smooth as possible. Any information families can share with teachers regarding their family values and child-rearing practices are welcome and encouraged throughout the year.



Milton Family Community Center's Early Education Programs adheres to **Vermont Child Development Division State Licensing** regulations. Vermont State Licensing ensures that our programs are in compliance with all of Vermont laws regarding health, safety, and the welfare of the children in our care. These regulations can be viewed in each classroom or at: <http://www.dcf.state.vt.us/cdd/licensing/index.html>.



The Vermont Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS) indicates that this childcare center has gone above and beyond Vermont's basic regulatory standards. MFCC's Early Childhood Program proudly rates as a **Five-Star Program** with the Vermont Child Development Division (CDD). This is based on our compliance history, staff qualifications and training, family and community relationships, program assessment, and administration. www.STARSstepahead.org

Early Childhood Programs at MFCC

Infants (6weeks –12 months.)

The Young Explorers classroom is designed specifically for infants. This classroom provides for a child development focused learning space, with nurturing and responsive adults, a consistent daily routine, and lots of opportunities for young children to explore and learn. The ratios for this classroom are 1:3 (teacher: child).

We provide a separate napping area for the children in this classroom. They have their own individual crib/cot to sleep in/on. When in the napping room we have a video camera set-up in the room to continue to monitor sleeping children. We also have a window to look in and monitor the children every 15 minutes while they are napping. The window can also be open so we can listen for them too. There is also a chair in the napping room. When the children move to the cots a staff member is always in the napping room with the children to supervise them. We also have updated and added a camera to the napping room and can monitor the tablet through all the naps.

In the classroom, staff have a magic number board. On this board the staff keep an updated number of how many children are in their classroom at any given time.

Young Toddler (12 months - 2 years.)

The Travelers Classroom is designed specifically for toddlers under three years old. This classroom provides for a child development focused learning space that promotes the natural curiosity, exploration, and emergent learning of toddlers. The teachers carefully plan and provide activities for the children, including group circle and story time, which helps promote both learning and a smooth transition later on to preschool. The ratio for this classroom is 1:4 (teacher: child).

The toddler classroom has a set nap time that starts at 12:30pm and continues until at least 2:30pm, or when the child awakes. Children are supervised by a staff member at all times when they are napping.

In the classroom, staff have a magic number board. On this board the staff keep an updated number of how many children are in their classroom at any given time.

Emerging Preschoolers (2 yrs-3.5 years)

The Travelers Classroom is designed specifically for toddlers to preschoolers are ready for extra curriculum activities while still focusing on social and emotional skills. This classroom provides for a child development focused learning space that promotes the natural curiosity, exploration, and emergent learning of toddlers and preschoolers. The teachers carefully plan and provide activities for the children, including group circle and story time, which helps promote both learning and a smooth transition later on to our older preschool classroom. The ratio for this classroom is 1:5 (teacher: child).

This classroom has a set nap time that starts at 12:30pm and continues until at least 2:30pm, or when the child awakes. Children are supervised by a staff member at all times when they are napping.

In the classroom, staff have a magic number board. On this board the staff keep an updated number of how many children are in their classroom at any given time.

Pathfinders Classroom (3.5 yrs - 5 yrs)

The teachers in this classroom work together to provide a comprehensive preschool program, including both structured pre-kindergarten readiness activities and emergent play-based curriculum themes and activities. This classroom offers curriculum and activities align with Vermont's educational goals and objectives for prekindergarten education. The universal Pre-Kindergarten component within our weekly classroom schedule is for a minimum of 10 hours a week, for 35 weeks during the local school calendar year. The teacher to child ratio in this classroom is 1:10.

The preschool classroom is set up for The children in this classroom to lay on their mats quietly for at least 20 minutes. If they choose not to fall asleep, a quiet choice is then given and the child can choose to do the quiet choice on their mat or at a back table in the classroom.

Children in the preschool classroom are never allowed to leave the classroom without a teacher, this ensures that the children are always kept safe and accounted for.

?MFCC's Play-Based Curriculum

MFCC's Early Childhood Education Programs are based on the Vermont Early Learning Standards, which states that play is the best way young children learn. We offer a variety of choices to explore Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Language, Literacy and Communication, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Creative Expression, and Physical Health and Development. MFCC's is also committed to celebrating diversity, and promoting equity and inclusion in our curriculum. Our play-based model gives us flexibility to adapt, modify and change learning experiences to reflect our families' values, beliefs, and experiences in their home life. Our activities includes the following types of activities daily:

Individual and Small Group Exploration- Our classroom routine and curricula are designed to offer daily opportunities for children to explore and engage in a variety of learning activities, both independently and in small groups. In each classroom, the children have access to multiple learning areas. The curriculum offers guidance on how to individualize based on children's interests, strengths, and needs. Individualization is a process of planning and implementing learning experiences that are responsive to each child's interests, strengths, and needs. Teachers reflect on their observations of each child and then plan the most effective ways to support each child's learning and development. When learning experiences are tailored to children's interests, they are more engaging and meaningful to children.

Large Group Activities- Our Teachers intentionally plan and provide for daily opportunities for the children to participate in large group play-based activities. The activities will vary depending on the classroom, weather, developmental needs of the children, and the current emergent play theme. Examples of the daily large group activities include: circle time, sing-a-longs, storytelling, walks, lawn games, cooperative

games, etc.

Open Activities- Open play and exploration time is included in the daily routine for all our classrooms. This is intentional, as it allows for each child to pick and choose from a variety of materials to explore and investigate, based on their own individual levels of interest and development. These open activities promote increased learning, imagination, and creativity. The materials offered during open activities may include paints, musical instruments, science examination, sensory exploration, fine motor manipulative, and literacy activities etc.

Gross Motor- Young children need creative outlets to use their whole body. Our programs support the gross motor development of the children with both indoor and outdoor activities that get their bodies moving. Inside gross motor activities often include riding scooters or bikes in the hallway, dancing, jumping on trampolines, tumbling on mats, kid yoga, and more.

Outdoor time- We do venture outside with the children on a daily basis (weather permitting). Our playground space is fenced in, and is divided into a preschool area and an infant/toddler area. There are playground structures in each area for developmental ages of each group, including swings, climbing structures, sandboxes, riding toys, play houses, etc. In addition to the playground structures, the teachers also plan lots of additional outdoor activities for the children, such as obstacle courses, parachutes, painting, balls, bubbles, and water play.

Assessment & Screening Information

Purpose of Assessments & Screenings

The MFCC Early Childhood Education Program conducts program-based and child-based assessments. Assessment is a term we use to describe the method in which we collect and report data regarding current abilities. The assessment tools that are used by our program have local and/or national recognition within the early childhood education profession. Assessments help us evaluate our program, and based on the results of the assessments, to make necessary adaptations to our curriculum or classroom environment that will ensure our programs are meeting quality standards. Assessments also help our teaching teams in their ability to monitor developmental progress of each child, and to know when referrals may be needed for additional early intervention support.

The assessments are conducted twice a year. These are shared with families during a conference time or when it is convenient for the family. When we conduct these assessments we are mindful to have a teacher from that child's classroom do the assessments so the child is comfortable and familiar with the person. We start the assessments at a group and then move to individual time so we can thoughtfully assess the child. We typically conduct the assessment over a few days, being careful to not overwhelm the child.

Program Performance Surveys

Overall program quality is extremely important to the Milton Family Community Center. As a participant, you will be asked to complete several surveys over the course of the year to help us assess our performance and make any necessary changes that will assure we are able to meet our program performance goals. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete these surveys. Participant feedback is encouraged and welcomed, whether via anonymous survey or any other form of regular communication.



The MFCC Early Childhood Program uses the *Teaching Strategies GOLD* system for assessing and monitoring the developmental growth of each child in our program. This system is able to be used by our staff starting as early as 6 weeks of age, and on up until the children leave our program to enter kindergarten. As part of this system, our teaching staff use classroom observations, anecdotal records, and photo records collected to measure and document each child's individual growth. We choose to use this system, as it is recommended by the Vermont Agency of Education and by Head Start, for all early childhood education programs. It is also a research-based tool that is aligned with Vermont's Common Core State Standards, Vermont's Early Learning guidelines, and the Head Start Child Development & Early Learning Framework. These help teachers focus on what matters most for children's success. *Teaching Strategies GOLD* can be used to support all types of learners, including children with special needs and children with advanced knowledge and skills.

Ages & Stages Developmental Screening

We believe the use of a developmental screening is an important tool for supporting the collaboration between our teaching staff and families in ensuring every child in our care gets the best possible start and the most of the opportunities available. Every child enrolled in our program will receive a developmental screening, using the Ages & Stages Questionnaire, at least twice per year. This screening tool looks at development in the following areas: communication (language skills), gross motor (large muscle use), fine motor (hand and finger movement and control), problem solving (how they play), and personal-social (self-help skills and interactions with others). Once the screening is completed, results of the screening will be shared with the child's family twice a year. If there is a possible concern regarding a child's development, our staff will let the family know right away and discuss next steps, up to and including referrals to a specialized provider for a more formal and comprehensive evaluation.

MFCC Child Nutrition Program

MFCC is committed to meeting the nutritional needs of all children enrolled in our child care programs. To ensure MFCC is able to provide this program to all enrolled children, all families are required to complete the food program paperwork included with their annual enrollment packet.

The Child Adult Care Food Program and MFCC take discrimination very seriously. If there is ever a time you feel your family has been mistreated or not accommodated to, please follow this link below to reach out to the appropriate contacts to file a formal complaint if you don't feel comfortable or not heard by MFCC.

[MFCC-CACFP-civil-rights-complaint-procedure](#)

The goal of our Child Nutrition Program is to ensure all children in our care have access to quality, nutritious food choices in order to:

- Promote maximum developmental potential for every child
- Set the foundation for healthy eating

We try to meet these goals by:

- Adhering to nutrition guidelines set by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Vermont Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).
- Respecting children's individual food preferences while exposing them to a wide variety of fresh foods and minimally processed foods.
- Promoting positive connections to healthy foods through socialization during family-style shared mealtimes in each of our classrooms.

Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

MFCC's childcare programs participate in the Agency of Education's Child & Adult

Care Food Program. Through this program, we provide a free breakfast, lunch, and snack daily to all children enrolled in our Early Childhood Education Program. All meals served meet USDA nutritional requirements. Menus are provided in advance (monthly or weekly) to families. We ask that all families complete the food program paperwork included in their enrollment packet, regardless of family size or income. This paperwork determines the reimbursement rate from the Child Care Food Program to MFCC to help cover a portion of the costs of providing food for all our children. Any additional expenses not covered by the reimbursement is absorbed by MFCC so that all families can receive this support at no cost to them. Cooperation from families in completing and returning the required paperwork is essential to the success of this food program.

Meal Times:

Each classroom has a designated time for breakfast, snack, and lunch meals. Children must be present during times of food service to be served that day. We are unable to prepare meals outside of the designated meal time, unless there is a special circumstance communicated to the classroom teachers in advance by the child's parent/guardian. Parents/Guardians should check-in with the classroom teacher for more information on the meal schedule

Meal Accommodations for Special Health Needs or Food Allergies:

Meal accommodations will be made for children with a special health need, such as a food allergy, as long as we are provided a note from the child's doctor.

Food from Home:

The MFCC Early Childhood Food Program provides a good balance of familiar well-liked foods and new menu items. There is always enough to eat. No child will go hungry- if he/she doesn't like one particular menu item, there are other choices available, and there is a planned time to eat at least once every three hours. However, families may choose to provide their own food for daily meals and snacks. **For families who do choose to send in their own food, we do require that the food choices be healthy food choices and avoid junk food with excess salt and sugar- like chips and donuts.** MFCC staff reserve the right to restrict unhealthy food choices from being served during program hours. Healthy foods are crucial to brain development and learning. Please ask a teacher for more information.

Nursing/Pumping for Breastfeeding Mothers:

MFCC offers a quiet space in our infant nap room for children to be nursed or parents to pump if needed.

Food for Special Occasions:

Food is often used to celebrate special occasions, such as birthdays. Due to several food allergies and strict sanitization regulations, we are not able to accept home-baked goods in the classrooms. However, store bought, unopened packages may be acceptable. Please talk to one of your child's teachers if there is a special occasion that you would like to share with your child's classroom.

MFCC TUITION RATES & PAYMENT POLICY
SEPTEMBER 2024-August 2025 TUITION RATES*

Infants- \$471/week
Toddlers- \$443/week
Preschool- \$439/week

The MFCC Child Care Core Day is 8:30-3:30. We have limited availability to offer extended care. Contracted child care slots ensure that MFCC programs are always staffed to meet the teacher:child ratios as outlined in the Vermont State Licensing Regulations. Children are placed in a classroom according to age, readiness, and availability of slots.

If changes to your contracted hours are needed, we require a minimum of a two-week notice for any requested changes to your child care contract, including temporary adjustments. We cannot guarantee that we can accommodate all requests. **Please also note that there are fees associated with late pick-ups and early drop-offs.**

The above listed price is the total cost of weekly tuition for your child. This amount does not include any deductions for discounts, credits, tuition assistance programs, or scholarships. By signing this agreement you acknowledge that you understand you are responsible for the full tuition cost and that should you no longer be eligible for any of the listed discounts, credits, tuition assistance, or scholarships, you will pay MFCC the full balance due. All discounts, credits, tuition assistance, or scholarships received and credited to your account will be documented in your monthly statement.

This Contract Agreement serves as your invoice for services. Your weekly tuition payment is due on Monday for that week, including weeks where MFCC is closed for any reason, including in observance of holidays, in-service training, or emergency closures. Your contract is for the entire period as listed above, and full payment is required for every week, regardless of missed attendance. You will receive a monthly statement of all payments or credits received and any outstanding unpaid balance. Please contact our Associate Director, Melanie Dulude, with any questions regarding your statements and payment options. We STRONGLY PREFER Payments be made through the Bright Wheels app. If absolutely necessary, we can accept payment via check, automated bank transfers, and PayPal. Any payments past due are subject to collections and have the potential to result in termination. It may also restrict future participation in MFCC programs.

If you are struggling to make payments, or are experiencing a special financial need, please let us know immediately. We try to work with all families to create a mutually agreeable payment plan when necessary.

EXTENDED HOURS and EARLY DROP-OFF/LATE PICK-UP POLICIES

It is important that all families drop off and pick up their children at their contracted time. Consult with the Program Director immediately if accommodations are being requested for a one-time or emergency request for an early or late pickup/drop off. If your child is picked-up after their contracted time, you will be charged a fee of \$5 for the first 5 minutes late and \$1/minute after that. This payment is expected to be made the following day. If you are late for pick-up more than 3 times, you will be required to have a conference with the program director to discuss the support you need and/or plans to be on-time moving forward.

CHILD CARE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SUBSIDY) is an accepted form of payment. MFCC must receive notice from the subsidy specialist of the eligibility of the family for the state subsidy program. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians wishing to use subsidy to cover a portion of tuition to contact their subsidy specialist and provide to their specialist any required documentation or paperwork to maintain eligibility. Parents are required to make sure their child's tuition is fully paid, therefore if the subsidy payment is not approved at 100% and does not cover the tuition in full, the parent will be required to pay the difference. Tuition not paid in full, even with subsidy payments, are subject to collections. It is also important to note that the state of Vermont subsidy program expects consistent attendance, and may reduce the amount they pay on behalf of a family if the family does not have their child attend the program as scheduled. **In the event that MFCC does not receive full subsidy payment from the state of Vermont on behalf of a family for any reason, including lack of attendance, the family will automatically be responsible for the difference.** The copayment is due every Monday. It is the responsibility of the family to stay current with the subsidy award and keep MFCC informed of changes.

Subsidy is reviewed on a monthly or yearly basis. You will be notified from Child Care Resources with ample time for action that you need to update your documentation when it is up for review. If the certificate lapses, you will be required to pay out of pocket for your child's attendance starting from the day after the expiration. Here are some steps you can take to avoid this situation:

Contacting Childcare Resource (CCR): To initiate the renewal process, please reach out to CCR at the following phone number: 802-863-3367. You can also find the contact information of your specific subsidy worker on the copy of your certificates that you receive from CCR. Email is the preferred method of communication with them. If you don't have a copy of your certificate, we can provide you with the information from our records in CDDIS.

Processing Time: Please be aware that it may take 30-60 days from the date

CCR receives the required paperwork and documentation for your certificate to be approved and added to the CDDIS system. This processing time may be longer during peak periods, such as the beginning of the school year and summer.

Family Support Home Visitor: Should you require assistance with the renewal process, our dedicated family support home visiting team is available to help you. Please ask to be connected to these individuals.

Payment and Forfeiture: After two weeks of non-payment from the state or the parent, there is a risk of forfeiting the childcare spot. We want to avoid any interruptions in care, so please ensure that you follow the renewal process diligently.

Reimbursement: If you make any payments during the renewal process that get covered by the state with backdated billing, we will reimburse you accordingly.

Confidentiality Policy

All information regarding children or families of the MFCC is considered confidential. Therefore, information is not shared outside our trained staff team without parents' or guardians' written consent. Each family has a Brightwheel account containing their application and any other pertinent forms. It may also contain goals, plans, and information about any referrals that we may have recommended.

MFCC staff members are bound to maintain and respect confidentiality of all program participants served by our programs. We expect all families participating in our programs to also respect and maintain confidentiality of others in our programs. If you as a parent/family member has a concern regarding another family or staff member, it is expected that you will discreetly inform the Director immediately.

MFCC staff office spaces are considered confidential. We request that program participants and volunteers do not wander into private work spaces unless it is for a planned meeting or conference. There is a designated reception area for program participants to wait should they arrive early before a program begins or ends. The front office staff can assist visitors and or waiting program participants in notifying them when the program staff are ready to meet with them. This includes parents who arrive early for drop off of their child, before their contracted time slot or before the classroom operating hours have begun for the day.

Guidance and Discipline Policy

It is expected that all parents will read and sign the **MFCC Child Care Program Procedures for Addressing Challenging Behavior**, which is included with this handbook.

The MFCC Early Childhood Program's mission ensures a safe and positive learning environment for every child. We promote and practice positive discipline methods only, and have no tolerance for any level of physical, emotional or verbal abuse at MFCC. Our belief is that children learn behaviors through adult and peer modeling. Our expectation is any adult at MFCC working with or around children, will always model and practice kindness, empathy, caring, and respect for every child and adult. In our Early Childhood Education Program classrooms, our staff use developmentally appropriate approaches to guide and redirect children's behavior in a manner that assures the child's needs are recognized and addressed, as well as the needs of others in that same space. The MFCC early childhood and family support outreach staff are knowledgeable and trained in understanding typical child behavior and how to handle situations where a child may act out. In addition, Our staff seek out and obtain additional training and resources to increase MFCC's shared knowledge of adverse childhood experiences, trauma, and other stressors that impact children's social emotional development.

Some of the methods we use in our classrooms to foster positive interactions include:

- Arrangement of the physical space to assure the space arrangement and materials are developmentally appropriate, safe, and able to maintain the interest of young children;
- careful observation of how children react to the physical space (sounds, colors, light intensity, textures, materials etc.), adjusting as needed to assure the space and materials are not creating sensory overload or excess stimulation that could cause distress or negative reactions to a child who may be more sensitive to certain sensory stimulation than others;
- provide consistent and predictable daily routines for the children;
- model appropriate and positive social skills;
- encourage age-appropriate problem-solving skills;
- avoid potential conflicts by providing adequate space and duplicate toys.

Should a situation occur where a child becomes unable to control inappropriate behavior, MFCC staff will move the child away from the other children and into a safe area. The staff person will stay close by to the child as that child is given some space and time to regain control of their emotions. Once the child is visibly less agitated, the staff person will encourage the child to express their feelings (to the level that is within the child's developmental ability) in an appropriate manner, offering possible positive

alternatives for the child to resolve the issues at hand. Our staff will treat all parties involved with understanding and respect while setting age-appropriate limits.

a child's behavior escalates, is repetitive in nature, or is cause for immediate harm/danger to self or others, our staff may not be able to successfully prevent or redirect the inappropriate behavior to more age-appropriate limits without additional resources and direct classroom support. In this situation, the following procedure for addressing challenging behavior will be implemented:

1. The family will be contacted by the MFCC teacher or Child Care Program Director to notify them of the situation, and the child may need to leave the program for the remainder of the day.
2. The family, teacher, and child care director will need to set-up a meeting to discuss next steps for a smooth transition back into the classroom before the child returns, typically the next day. During that meeting the family and teacher will co-create a plan on what will happen when the child acts out again while in care and when at home so both parties are on the same page. When Needed, MFCC will pull in our family support worker into the framework to discuss more details of the plan and help support MFCC and the family with the challenging behaviors.

The intent of this process is to assure the program is safe and supportive of all children. If the immediate needs of the child are unable to be met with the existing staff and MFCC resources, the child may be suspended until additional external resources are able to be secured and in place within the child's classroom. The MFCC Child Care Director and classroom teachers will work in collaboration with the child's family to seek the necessary additional external assistance and resources when relevant.

What to bring to child care:

IMPORTANT: Our play-based curriculum activities are planned for both indoors and outside, for all kinds of weather. Please be sure to dress your child in weather appropriate clothing and provide at least one change of clothing every day.

Parent/Guardians of children enrolled in our Early Childhood Programs are required to provide the following for their child:

- Diapers & wipes (as needed)
- Extra changes of clothing
- Extra pair of indoor shoes (outdoor shoes should be worn to the Center by the child. The teachers will assist the children in removing their outdoor shoes when they come inside.)
- Seasonal outdoor gear (ie. Winter/rain boots, coats, hats, mittens, sun hats, snow pants, etc.)
- Sunscreen
- Diaper cream (as needed)

promotes daily outdoor play!

Please have your child prepared to play outside every day. Having the appropriate outdoor wear will make your child's experience fun. Please ask one of the MFCC teachers if you are unsure as to what is needed for outdoor wear. During particularly muddy or wet seasons, more than one extra change of clothing is also highly recommended.

REMINDER! Our play-based curriculum activities are planned for both indoors and outside. Please dress your child in weather appropriate clothing and provide a change of clothing every day!

Drop-off/Pick-up Procedure

MFCC's Early Childhood Education Program is onsite at MFCC, co-located with several other community-based programs and outreach services, including our local food shelf. Due to the public nature of access to the MFCC building, it is always important to closely supervise your children as you enter and exit the building. Be sure to visually and verbally check in with the Teachers to let them know your child has arrived or is being picked up every day. **All children need to be escorted to and from the classroom by an approved adult.**

MFCC has instilled a learning schedule that starts promptly at 9:30am daily.

This is when food will begin to be served, circle time will follow, along with projects and transitioning to the playground. Please make every effort to drop-off before 9:30, and let us know as soon as possible if you expect to arrive after this time. If you arrive after 9:30am for any reason, we ask that you hand-off your child to an administrative staff person at the main door. They will escort your child to their classroom so they can be there to support the transition and not interrupt the teacher/child interactions taking

place. If there is something you need to relay to the teacher that morning it is best to tell the admin staff or send the teacher a message.

It is best practice to allow for five minutes or more with your child to transition in and out of the program. This will ensure a smoother drop-off/pick-up for your child.

Safe Identity Policy

Our agency has a secured entry-way. All visitors must enter through the main door. Only authorized adults have access to the child care programs. All parents should be prepared to provide an ID to the Front Office Staff the first few times they meet. Eventually, staff will recognize parents and buzz you through without stopping. For families using visitation and custody agreements to clarify parents' roles, our program MUST have a copy of the most current court order on-site in the child's file; MFCC will release a child to either birth parent upon request unless there is a specific court order stating otherwise on file.

Under no circumstances will we release a child to someone other than a parent without parent/guardian prior written consent. If an adult picking up a child has not yet met MFCC staff, the adult will need to have a photo ID ready. We realize these procedures can be inconvenient, and appreciate your help in letting staff know in-writing of any friends or family that have permission to pick up your child. For example, in the event of an emergency, or if you are running late from work, you may need someone else to be pre-approved to pick-up your child. We ask that you also inform your friends and family members on your pick-up approval list that staff will be asking for a photo ID upon arrival.

Unwelcome Visitors

MFCC reserves the right to ask any person to leave the building and the property if he/she is a disturbance or threat to any client or staff member, under the influence of any substance, or otherwise preventing services from being safely provided. We will contact the appropriate authorities as necessary.

Communication

We believe it is essential for parents/guardians and caregivers to work together to provide the best care for the child. We are aware that there will be times when you have questions or concerns relating to your child, and encourage regular communication. **To respect all parties, we do ask that an appropriate time be chosen to discuss any concerns and that children not be present during these discussions.** Parents are welcome to speak with teachers at the beginning and end of each day, through phone calls, the BrightWheel app, or to make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher. All programs provide families with daily, written information regarding your child's day. We will offer parent/guardian conferences at least twice a year. Parents/Guardians may also request a conference at any time with your MFCC childcare staff.

Parent Concerns

Your concerns or questions are very important to us as we strive to meet family and individual needs and to keep quality programs. To ensure that your concerns or questions are heard please speak first with your child's teacher or Program Coordinator. We will make every effort to make sure that your concern is met with respect and a satisfactory resolution. Should you still have questions or concerns after speaking with your child's teacher, you may communicate with the Child Care Director, who will then help to facilitate the concern within the program. **We believe direct communication is most often the best way to resolve problems.** However, if after speaking with the Child Care Director, you still feel your concern remains, you may bring your concern to the Executive Director.

**If you are still unsatisfied after completing the above steps, this phone number is available to you through the Vermont Child Development Division: Child Care Consumer Concern Line: 1-800-540-7942.*

Health and Safety

MFCC Property is SMOKE-FREE, and provides service to children and adults with special health needs. NO Smoking, NO Vaping and NO Idling Vehicles are permitted on our property.

MFCC follows state licensing guidelines to ensure the health and safety of each child and employee. **Prior to enrollment, your child's teacher must be given current immunization records, documentation of the last "well-child" checkup, current insurance information and medical/dental contact information, two local emergency contacts, and updated details on any special health needs. Your child may not attend school without any of the above.** Parents are expected to communicate any medical updates, concerns, or changes as needed.

MFCC uses anatomically correct names for body parts for your child's protection. Your child's teacher will explain to you in greater detail Vermont licensing requirements and MFCC policies around: diaper changes, potty training, SIDS, classroom sanitization policies, and extra clothing.

All parents, staff, volunteers, and children **must wash hands** upon entry, before eating, after touching body fluids or changing diapers, moving between classrooms, and after certain transitions.

MFCC Staff are certified in Adult/Child/Infant CPR, Blood Borne Pathogens, and First Aid, and are trained to react thoroughly and professionally in the event of an emergency. MFCC practices fire drills at least once a month with children. Parents will be informed of fire drills for home discussion. MFCC staff practice emergency drills at least once a year, and are prepared to handle a lock-down, in-house shelter, or

emergency evacuation, if needed. Emergency supplies are stored on-site and updated yearly. To see a copy of **MFCC's Emergency Response and Recovery Plan**, please ask the childcare director.

Safety/Injury Reports

In the event your child is injured while in our care, a written report will be provided to the parent, and a copy will be kept in our files. We will not release the name of the other child involved (i.e. in a case of biting) to protect that child's confidentiality. If the injury requires medical attention, the child will be taken to seek immediate care following contact with parent/guardian or emergency contact. Parents will need to sign a release permitting MFCC to do so. Please contact us with any questions or concerns regarding an injury or the procedures administered. In addition, please let us know if your child has any substantial injuries which may require additional care. Parents must share with teachers any injuries sustained outside of childcare so that we may prevent further aggravation to the injured area.

Medication

For children to be administered a prescription medication, a written permission form needs to be signed by the parent/guardian regarding the reason, dosage, and schedule. Medication must be provided in the original prescription bottle clearly labeled with the child's name, medication, dosage, schedule, and date.

A general permission slip may be signed by the parent/guardian for topically applied non-prescription medications, such as Bacitracin, etc. Tylenol or other fever reducers will not be administered for fever control throughout the day without written permission from a doctor stating that the child has no contagious illness. We also ask that Tylenol, etc. not be stored at the center. For safety reasons, we need to limit the amount of medications that are stored at the center. All medication is stored locked out of children's reach. Refrigeration is available.

IMPORTANT: Please inform your child's teacher if your child is on any medication (including Tylenol and any over-the-counter remedies, such as cough and cold products) while in our care! This information is necessary in the event of a health emergency.

MFCC Illness Exclusion Policy

The health of all of our students and staff is a top priority for MFCC. We need your help to protect them from contagious illness. MFCC follows the illness exclusion criteria established in the reference manual *MANAGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN CHILD CARE AND SCHOOLS* by the American Academy of Pediatrics. *Aronson, S. S., T. R. Shope, eds. 2013. Managing infectious diseases in child care and schools: A quick reference guide. 3rd ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics.* A copy of this manual is available in your child's classroom for viewing.

Children are typically excluded from care when an a) an illness prevents them from participating in normal classroom activities; b) their illness requires care from a staff member which may compromise the health and safety of the other children; c) an illness identified in the below list of symptoms related to sickness protocol which states exclusion is required; or d) an unidentified rash or illness will be excluded until a doctor has been seen.

We reserve the right to deny service pending doctor's approval for illness in order to maintain the general health of the classroom. Staff must follow the same guidelines as the children.

It is expected that parents will pick up ill children from the program within forty-five minutes of the phone call from MFCC. If a parent/guardian is unable to pick-up, the parent/guardian will make arrangements with another adult to pick-up the child within the forty-five minute period. Parents must keep their emergency contact information current.

Sickness PROTOCOL

- The short answer is that if a child has symptoms, they must stay home.
- These symptoms include:
 - Fever of >100.4
 - Dry cough
 - Aches/pains that impede their ability to engage
 - Sore throat
 - Diarrhea
 - Conjunctivitis
 - Headache
 - Loss of taste/smell
 - Rash on skin or discoloration of finger or toes
 - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - Chest pain or pressure

See the licensing handbook for more information on illnesses. [Administrative Procedures – Proposed Filing \(vermont.gov\)](#) Appendix A starts on page 113.

- **If there's been NO known close contact with a Covid patient**, children should continue to stay home for fever, vomiting, etc. until they have tested negative AND are symptom free for 24 hours without medications.
- **If there has been a close contact with a Covid patient**, children should stay home and get tested if they are ill. They may not return until symptoms are gone for 24 hours, and 5 days have passed since they became ill.

Home Visits

Parents may receive home visits on an as-needed basis. If you feel you want to set up a meeting with our home visitor staff member, parents can fill out a request form and the staff will direct the request to our onsite family support worker. Goals for each child will be individualized and integrated into the home visits and the child's program.

Parent Involvement & Volunteer Opportunities

Our program enjoys having parents join us during the day, on field trips, and during special events. Please join us when you are able- our doors are always open.

Additionally, volunteer support is essential to the successful operation of our center! There will be multiple opportunities throughout the year for parents to donate time, resources, and ideas. We really appreciate having the support of our enrolled families, and our organization depends on it. We also highly encourage and value parent input on our programming design, implementation, etc. If you are interested in being regularly involved, please also ask about joining our Jr. PTA.

Termination of Enrollment

Parents are expected to notify staff two weeks before a child's last day. Please notify us of your intent to withdraw *in writing* and include the date of the child's last day. It is the parent's responsibility to satisfy all financial obligations prior to termination.

If an MFCC childcare program appears to be not meeting a child's needs, a conference with the Child Care Director and parents/guardian will be scheduled to develop an action plan. This action plan will be tried for two weeks, and then revisited. We feel that direct communication is often the best way to resolve a conflict, and are ready and willing to listen to your perspective.

Calendar of School Year 2024-2025

A calendar is attached to this handbook for specific dates related to closings and special events. Parents are expected to be prepared for planned closings and in-service days.

- In-Service Days:

MFCC Early Childhood Programs will close on key, predetermined dates throughout the year for all-day training and professional development. The specific dates are listed on the calendar, and will be posted in the classroom at least two weeks ahead of time.

- Holidays

MFCC follows the state holiday schedule: Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Memorial, Juneteenth and Independence Day are paid days off or floating holidays. Please see your child's teacher and the attached calendar for more information.

Weather/Emergency Related Closings

MFCC has a separate listing- tune into basic broadcast stations such as Channel 3 or Channel 5 or 95.5 or 98.9 FM- to let families know if MFCC will be closed due to weather or other emergency. Typically, we follow the lead of the Milton School District, but not always. It will also be posted on Brightwheel.

Because staff and parents often have long commutes, we ask all to be aware of poor weather driving conditions, and to plan accordingly. The MFCC Leadership Team may decide to close early if we think that an approaching storm will be putting staff or families in danger. You will have a local emergency contact for this reason.

Please note as detailed in the payment policy section, families will not be reimbursed for days we close or close early due to weather or other emergency circumstances.

Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

The MFCC is required by the State of Vermont to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Staff members are mandated to report all suspicions immediately to their direct supervisor prior to calling the Department for Children and Families (DCF) to file the report. **It is always our intention to be supportive and helpful to children and their families especially during potentially stressful times.** A written record of all contact to the DCF will be submitted to the Child Care Director and Executive Director.

Important numbers for suspected child abuse or neglect:

Department for Children and Families, Child Development Division 1-802-241-3110
Central Intake, DCF 1-802-649-5285
Child Welfare and Youth Justice 1-802-241-2131

Non Discrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax:
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email:
Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

In accordance with the laws and regulations cited below, MFCC provides services to families of any race, religion, color, national origin, disability, age or gender regarding all rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to children enrolled in the MFCC programs. Our educational policies, food service, or tuition costs in all MFCC programs will not discriminate in any way.

- * Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 USC 2000d et seq); C.F.R part 80
- * Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, (29 USC; 45 CFR)
- * Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 USC 6101 et. Seq) 45 CFR Part 91
- * Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 USC 1681) 45 CFR Part 86

The purpose of the Milton Family Community Center Handbook is to provide all enrolled families with information regarding our Policies and Procedures in the Early Childhood Programs. Each program may have a supplement regarding classroom schedules, special events, rules and regulations.

By signing below, you are confirming to MFCC your receipt of the Guidebook and understanding of the contained Policies and Procedures here within.

Thanks again for choosing MFCC!

I have read and understand the MFCC Early Childhood Program Handbook.

Parent/Guardian signature: _____ date: _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____ date: _____

Both parents or guardians should sign when applicable.

Please also let us know if we can add you to our general MFCC mailing list to share more information about other Milton Family Community Center programs. Programs range from playgroups and parent cafe events to our food shelf, and we'd love to keep you in the loop.

_____ Yes! Add me to the newsletter.

Email: _____

Additional Email to add: _____