

Milton Family Community Center

Early Childcare Program



August 2026 – September 2027
PARENT HANDBOOK

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EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

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We want to wish you a warm welcome to the Milton Family Community Center's Early Childcare Program! This handbook will provide all the information that will help you feel ready for the new school year. It also serves as a reference you can use throughout the year. If you have any questions about the handbook, please don't hesitate to ask! You can reach out to your child's teachers, or our ECP Director - Molly D.

Who We Are

Our Story

MFCC was founded in 1985 to improve access to services in an area that, at the time, was lacking in resources and public transportation. Throughout the years, MFCC has adapted to the growing and shifting needs of its community and will remain nimble and flexible to provide quality services as these needs evolve. The MFCC is a not-for-profit, and one of fifteen Vermont state parent-child centers. Our organization is assigned to serve children and families in Northern Chittenden County and is open to all interested clients. All member organizations of the Vermont Parent Child Center Network (VPCCN) facilitate programs that cover eight core services: home visiting, early childhood services, parent education, parent support groups, concrete supports, play groups, information and referral, and community development. In addition to these 8 services, we also run the Milton Farmer's Market and provide Milton Afterschool Kids (MASK), a before and after-school and vacation program for children 5 to 12 years of age, held at Milton Elementary School.

MFCC Core Values

At MFCC, each day we strive to incorporate the following values into our interactions with our community, our families, and each other.

- Community – A group of people connected by shared purpose, values, or belonging.
- Compassion – The ability to recognize hardship in others and respond with kindness and care.
- Adaptability – The capacity to adjust effectively to new conditions or challenges.
- Resilience – The strength to recover and grow through adversity or stress.

- Empowerment – The process of gaining confidence, skills, and authority to take meaningful action.

MFCC 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 Childcare Program Vision Statement

Childhood is a magical and formative time of rapid discovery and growth. At the Milton Family Community Center's Early Childhood Program children will feel safe, respected, and nurtured while learning about themselves and the world around them. High-quality education and care should be accessible to all families in our community regardless of financial restraints.

Early Childcare Program Mission Statement

The mission of Milton Family Community Center's Early Childcare Program is to provide a safe, supportive and nurturing learning environment that guides children to reach their fullest potential. We focus on educating the whole child through social-emotional and play-based learning. Our state's natural resources play a key role in enriching the children's learning, fueling their innate desire for exploration, and building respect for themselves and the world around them. We are committed to supporting the

community we serve - made up of diverse racial, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Our staff, families and neighbors work together to build this community.

- We provide a play-based curriculum where teachers create thoughtful lessons and interactive learning opportunities based on the observations of each child's interests, curiosities and abilities - with growth and learning at the forefront.
- We take a student-centered approach to education that views children as capable, inquisitive individuals who are full of potential.
- Children are guided to treat each other and adults with kindness, respect, compassion and self control.
- We are committed to each student's success within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal, meaningful bond with each person in the MFCC community.
- Our program encourages and supports 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 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.

Regulatory and Accreditation Information



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

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

MFCC follows the Ten Standards for High Quality Experiences as presented by NAEYC

1. Promotes positive relationships for all children and adults to encourage each child's sense of individual worth.
2. Implement a curriculum that fosters all areas of child development: cognitive, emotional, language, physical and social (emotional).
3. Use developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate effective teaching approaches.
4. Provide on-going assessment of a child's learning and development and communicate the child's progress to family.
5. Promote the nutrition and health of children and protect children and staff from injury and illness.
6. Employ a teaching staff that has the educational qualifications, knowledge and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development, and to support families' diverse needs and interests.
7. Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with each child's family.
8. Establish relationships with and use the resources of the community to support the achievement of program goals.
9. Provide a safe and healthy physical environment.
10. Implement strong personnel, fiscal, and program management policies so that all children, families and staff have high-quality experiences.

Required Paperwork

We have a number of required forms to be completed for your child's file **prior** to their first day of school. **Please complete and submit all forms by August 15th.** These forms will be shared on the BrightWheels platform, which you will receive an invitation to via email. Forms can also be printed upon request.

These forms are:

- ECP Enrollment Form (BrightWheel)
- ECP Child & Family Questionnaire (BrightWheel)
- ECP Parent Handbook (BrightWheel)
- ECP Walking Field Trip Permission (BrightWheel)
- Social Media Consent/Refusal (BrightWheel)
- CCFAP Eligibility & Enrollment Forms (BrightWheel)
- General Health Examination Form (signed by pediatrician)
- Recent Immunization Records (from your child's pediatrician)
- *We encourage all families to apply for Child Care Financial Assistance Plan (CCFAP) - (cddfammy.my.vermont.gov/s/eligibility-screener)

Early Childhood Program Overviews

Infants (6 weeks – 18 months) - 8 Students

The infant classroom is designed specifically for children aged six weeks to eighteen months old. This classroom provides 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 1:4 (teacher : child), but we strive to have three teachers in the classroom as this is what is best for child safety, engagement and support.

We provide a separate napping area for the children in the infant classroom. Teachers create a nap schedule based on age, development and families "normal schedule" while not in school in order to give each student the rest time they need. Children have their own individual crib/cot to sleep in/on with sheets provided by MFCC. The nap room has multiple options for teachers to monitor sleeping children - teachers can observe through a window between the classroom and nap room, or through the video monitor that is connected to a tablet in the classroom. Teachers enter the nap room to do a "breath check" on sleeping children every 15 minutes to ensure safe rest time in accordance with state licensing regulations. When the child/ren is ready to transition into a cot (in preparation for moving into the toddler classroom) teachers will remove the crib and replace it with a cot for the child to rest on. The teacher will sit with the child until they are comfortable and fall asleep. We have a rocking chair in both the classroom and the nap room to help children fall asleep, or for mothers who are

breastfeeding.

As a best practice there is a magic number board in the classroom where teachers keep an updated number of how many children there are at any given time. Children are **never** allowed to leave the classroom without a teacher or adult per state licensing regulations. This ensures that the children are always kept safe and accounted for.

Young Toddler (18 months - 2.5 years) - 8 Students

The Young Toddlers Classroom is designed for children ages 18 months to 3.5 years old. The classroom promotes the natural curiosity, exploration, and emergent learning of toddlers. The teachers carefully plan lessons and activities for the children such as circle time, story time, sensory play, farm to school lessons, art, open play and social-emotional lessons which helps promote learning and a smooth transition into the Older Toddler classroom. The ratio for this classroom is 1:4 (teacher : child).

We have a consistent daily schedule which includes morning free play, circle time, meals, nap time, outdoor time and guided play. Nap time generally occurs between 12:45pm to 2:30pm, or when the child awakes. Students sleep on a small cot and use sheets and a blanket provided by MFCC. Children are supervised by a teacher or staff member at all times when they are napping. During this time children are *not* required to fall asleep, although this age group typically does. For non-nappers or if a child awakes before the end of rest time the child/ren will have a choice to do a quiet activity at their mat such as reading or listening to an audio book, enjoying a quiet toy like a sand timer, a quiet fidget toy or a calming bottle, or listening to the music playing in the classroom.

As a best practice there is a magic number board in the classroom where teachers keep an updated number of how many children there are at any given time. Children are **never** allowed to leave the classroom without a teacher or adult per state licensing regulations. This ensures that the children are always kept safe and accounted for.

Older Toddler (2.5 years - 3.5 years) - 8 Students

The Older Toddlers Classroom is designed for children ages 2.5 years old to 3.5 years old. The classroom promotes the natural curiosity, exploration, and emergent learning of toddlers. The teachers carefully plan lessons and activities for the children such as circle time, story time, sensory play, farm to school lessons, art, open play and social-emotional lessons which helps promote learning and a smooth transition into the Preschool Classroom. The ratio for this classroom is 1:6 (teacher : child).

We have a consistent daily schedule which includes morning free play, circle time,

meals, nap time, outdoor time and guided play. Nap time generally occurs between 12:45pm to 2:30pm, or when the child awakes. Students sleep on a small cot and use sheets and a blanket provided by MFCC. Children are supervised by a teacher or staff member at all times when they are napping. During this time children are *not* required to fall asleep, although this age group typically does. For non-nappers or if a child awakes before the end of rest time the child/ren will have a choice to do a quiet activity at their mat such as reading or listening to an audio book, enjoying a quiet toy like a sand timer, a quiet fidget toy or a calming bottle, or listening to the music playing in the classroom.

As a best practice there is a magic number board in the classroom where teachers keep an updated number of how many children there are at any given time. Children are ***never*** allowed to leave the classroom without a teacher or adult per state licensing regulations. This ensures that the children are always kept safe and accounted for.

Preschool (3 years - 5 years) - 10 Students

The teachers in the preschool classroom work together to provide a comprehensive educational program, including both structured pre-kindergarten readiness activities, emergent play-based curriculum themes and activities, nature based education and Reggio Emilia-inspired art exploration. This classroom offers curriculum and activities aligned with Vermont's educational goals and objectives for prekindergarten education. The daily schedule includes free-play, meals, circle time, guided play, rest time and outdoor time. The ratio in this classroom is 1:10 (teacher : child) but as a best practice we limit class size to 12 students for the benefit of children and teachers alike.

Unique to the preschool classroom, students and teachers have one a day per week as "nature day" where most of the day is spent learning outdoors. This can take place in our outdoor learning space, a local park, or other locations around the neighborhood. If the class leaves MFCC campus the teachers always inform the ECP Director, bring the emergency backpack, any medications, and their phones for communication with staff/parents.

Nap time in the preschool classroom is from 12:45-2:30. Students rest/relax on a small cot or mat from using sheets and a blanket provided by MFCC. Children are supervised by a teacher or staff member at all times when they are resting. During this time children are *not* required to fall asleep. For non-nappers or if a child awakes before the end of rest time the child/ren will have a choice to do a quiet activity at their mat such as reading or listening to an audio book, enjoying a quiet toy like a sand timer, a quiet fidget toy or a calming bottle, or listening to the music playing in the classroom.

As a best practice there is a magic number board in the classroom where teachers keep an updated number of how many children there are at any given time. Children are

never allowed to leave the classroom without a teacher or adult per state licensing regulations. This ensures that the children are always kept safe and accounted for.

Curriculum & Learning

“Children need the freedom to appreciate the infinite resources of their hands, their eyes, and their ears, the resources of forms, materials, sounds and colors.”

Loris Malaguzzi, found of the Reggio Emilia approach to Early Childhood Education

“Play is the work of the child.”

Maria Montessori, founder of the Montessori Method of Early Childhood Education

At the Milton Family Community Center we provide a rich learning environment with curriculum that is developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible daily routine that allows children to learn, explore and advance at their own pace. We create opportunities for students to engage with and explore: literacy and language, math, science, practical life and social/emotional learning. MFCC is committed to celebrating diversity, and promoting equity and inclusion in our curriculum. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, the ability to work and play with others, compromising when necessary and taking turns with friends. MFCC’s ECP uses a combination of education approaches we are inspired by for our daily lessons and activities - Play-based learning, Reggio Emilia, and Nature-Based Learning.

Free Play

Describes play that is child-directed, voluntary and flexible. It often, but not always, involves pretend play where children adopt roles and enact sociodramatic scenes. Teachers and researchers alike view the value of this type of play to be social, emotional, and developmental; children gain skills by negotiating relationships and conflicts with peers and by role-playing novel situations.

Guided Play

Teachers take a more active role in this style of play. There are four types of guided play that are used at MFCC:

1. **Inquiry play** is initiated by children according to their own interests. Teachers ask probing questions and introduce resources to further children’s exploration and investigation. For example, noticing that children have created a pretend flower shop a teacher could provide soil and seeds; encourage students to consider the difference between plants; using flowers and vegetables teachers can help children learn about colors, shapes and patterns.

2. **Collaboratively designed play** distributes control evenly between teachers and the students. Together, they determine the context, themes and resources of the play. For example, teachers and students could decide whether a particular area in the classroom should be a flower shop, veterinary office, bakery or part of the neighborhood, and together they would brainstorm what is needed to create that space. Play within this context is child-led, but as with inquiry play, the teacher interjects to advance learning.
3. **Playful learning** is useful in situations where specific academic skills are not naturally learned in other types of play. In this mostly teacher-directed approach, educators can build a playful context around skills practice. For example, students practice writing their numbers and letters by filling out an order form for their flower shop or bakery.
4. **Learning through games** engages children in academic learning using games with predetermined rules. This play is largely teacher-directed, as teachers select games that target specific skills development. A teacher might introduce Go Fish or a dice game to practice number recognition and counting practice, or picture-to-word matching games for language practice.

Individual and Small Group Exploration

Our classroom routine and curriculum 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 teacher-created curriculum offers lessons and activities based on children's interests, strengths, and needs. Some curriculum topics can include the seasons, nature exploration, our senses/the human body, the ocean and its animals, space and planets, and much more! Individualization is the process of planning and implementing learning experiences that are responsive to each child's interests, strengths, and needs. Teachers document the children's learning/activities, reflect on their observations, and then plan the most effective ways to support each child's learning and development. When educational experiences are tailored to children's interests, they are more engaging and meaningful to students. This is called the "follow the child" approach to education.

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, story time, walks, lawn games, cooperative games, and more.

Open Play/Exploration

Open play and exploration time is included in the daily routine for all 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 gross motor activities include climbing, running, jumping, playing sports/games, and dancing.

Outdoor Time

Outdoor exploration and play takes place 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 the appropriate developmental ages and stages 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.

Reggio Emilia Inspired

The Reggio Emilia approach does not use a pre-packaged curriculum. Instead, it focuses on emergent, project-based curriculum driven by the children's interest, questions and natural curiosities. Teachers act as co-learners (researchers) who observe students and design "provocations" (materials and activities) to guide deeper exploration. The classroom environment acts as the third teacher. Students are encouraged to explore and communicate their understanding of the world using multiple symbolic languages such as painting, sculpting, drama, writing, photography, dance and music. There is a dedicated *atelier* (art room) where all students explore and engage with many different mediums including but not limited to clay, paint, mark making, shadows and light, movement and photography. Reggio Emilia is about the *approach to education*, it views the child as capable, able, competent and invites the child to research and discover alongside their peers. Teachers continuously observe the children during their work cycle and **document** their activities through photographs, audio and visual recordings, note taking and conversations with students. This helps make the children's learning visible, captures the children's thinking and ideas, tracks developmental progress and helps inspire future projects. Reggio Emilia encourages projects over time (*progettazione*), creating narratives surrounding the project and

revisiting past activities to discover new opportunities for learning.

Nature-Based Education

Using the natural world as the central setting for learning helps children develop curiosity, compassion, exploration and respect for nature. Integrating nature and using hands-on learning allows children to:

- Practice sensorial differentiation
- Color and shape exploration
- Life cycles
- Seasons
- Ecosystems
- Language/letter practice
- Counting
- Problem solving
- Self regulation
- Physical abilities/limitations

Research shows that learning in nature has key benefits for children including cognitive and executive functioning, social-emotional growth, physical health and environmental stewardship. Through the combination of these approaches to education, our self-created and self-guided curriculum is designed to foster student's development in:

- Creativity
- Self-expression
- Decision making
- Problem solving
- Responsibility
- Independence
- Reasoning

Risky Play vs Hazardous Play & Active Supervision

"One of our most basic instincts is to protect our children - from all harm, pain, and any conceivable discomfort. However, if children never experience challenges that they must overcome themselves, how will they ever learn how to deal with daily life experiences when they are older?"

- Angela Hanscom, Author of Balanced and Barefoot

Risky play refers to play that involves thrilling, exciting, physically challenging activities like climbing, jumping, balancing, or hide and go seek. These activities provide a sense of fun, enjoyment and exhilaration. From a child's perspective, risky play is really just play and part of the natural progression in their learning as they try new things, challenge themselves and extend their skills by moving out of their comfort zone to push the limits of their current capabilities. The risk part is really more about how adults feel about it and their (often over-protective) desire to keep children safe. There are

many benefits to risky play, including:

- Developing self-confidence and feeling more in control of their actions and environment.
- Building resilience and persistence.
- Reinforces emotional regulation and how to confront potentially negative emotions, such as fear and anger.
- Learning to set goals instead of looking for adults to tell the child what to do.
- Strengthens balance, coordination, and endurance.
- Creates an awareness of capabilities/limits of the body.
- Gives children the ability to assess and make proper judgment about risk.
- Allows for an understanding of the consequences of certain actions.
- Strengthens self-esteem, physical development, emotional regulation.
- Children who participate in risky play are less likely to become injured because they have learned how to make good decisions.

Teachers ensure that risky play does not cross over into **hazardous play** - times when there is a potential for harm, there is a lack of control or ability to make choices, or when children lack basic knowledge or awareness of a situation. Teachers will insert themselves into risky play that crosses into hazardous play if

- There is a level of risk that could lead to a serious injury
- A child demonstrates emotional distress or fear
- The structure or environment is hazardous (ice on a play surface, broken materials, fallen branches hanging after a wind storm).

Teachers are actively supervising students at all times whether in the classroom, on the playground, on a walking field trip, or when making transitions from inside to outside. When teachers are supervising a whole group of children we use the "lifeguard" method - constantly scanning the area where children are to ensure all students are making safe, kind choices. When doing "lifeguard" supervision, teachers take a tally of the number of students to ensure no student is unsupervised or in an unsafe situation. This is called the "Magic Number" and ensures that all children are supervised and accounted for at all times. If a student/s is engaging in "risky play" a teacher will move closer to the child/ren to give them support, encouragement and a helping hand when/if necessary. This allows the children to explore their own limits while also being safe with an adult nearby.

Messy Play

Children will be involved in "messy play" on a regular basis - this could be a cooking project, art exploration, water and mud play, gardening, or a science experiment. Because of this it is recommended that you do not dress your child in any clothing that should not get dirty, stained or well loved. Please keep nice clothing for special occasions such as photo day.

Assessment & Screening Information

Purpose of Observations, Assessments & Screenings

The MFCC Early Childhood Education Program conducts program-based and child-based observations and assessments. Observation occurs when the teacher takes intentional time to watch students play and engage with the materials, classmates and other teachers. Educators will note what they see and use it in their assessment report. 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.

Observations and assessments are conducted continuously throughout the year. The findings/results are shared with families during parent/teacher conferences, or when it is convenient for the family. Your child's classroom teachers conduct the assessments so the child is comfortable and familiar with the person.

Program Performance Surveys

Overall program quality is imperative to the success of the Early Childcare Program at 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 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 used by all our teachers for all students 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 photos collected to measure and document each child's individual growth. We picked this system as it is a research-based tool that is aligned with Vermont's Common Core State Standards, Vermont's Early Learning guidelines, and is recommended by the Vermont Agency of Education for all early childhood education programs. This assessment tool helps teachers focus on what matters most for children's success. *Teaching Strategies GOLD* is used to support all types of learners, including children with special needs, children with advanced knowledge or skills, and students whose home language is different from English.

Screenings

If you or your child's teachers have concerns about the health or development of your child/ren, we partner with Children's Integrated Services (CIS) so families who want additional support in development or family support can access it. We also have a Strong Families Vermont home visitor (through CIS) on-site who can observe your child in the classroom or at home if you need additional support. For more information about CIS you can visit their website - <https://dcf.vermont.gov/services/cis>

MFCC Child Nutrition Program

MFCC is committed to meeting the nutritional needs of all children enrolled in our child care programs 6 months of age and older. 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 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 **free** breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack daily to all children enrolled in our Early Childhood Program. All meals served meet USDA nutritional requirements. Menus are provided at the beginning of each month to families for review. 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.

For families of infant children - MFCC will provide formula and fresh or premade purees for children under 6 months old at no cost to you. We are parent/child led when it comes to providing infants with foods, while staying within the CACFP guidelines. Breast milk can be brought in by parents daily to be warmed and served to the children for meals. We can also store frozen breast milk in the classroom freezer for use as needed. All breast milk must be labeled with the child's name, date and amount of milk.

MFCC follows all state licensing regulations for all age groups for meal service and safe eating practices.

Meal Times

Each classroom has a designated time for breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack. 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 meal schedules.

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. Please provide a note from the child's doctor stating their allergy and steps to take, along with medications needed, in case of an exposure/emergency situation.

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. 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 require that the food choices be healthy foods and avoid junk food with excess salt and sugar such as chips, donuts, cookies, candy, sodas, and juices.

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 your child's 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 food allergies and strict sanitization regulations, we are not able to accept home-baked goods in the classrooms. However, store bought, unopened packages of treats may be acceptable. We try to keep special occasion treats as healthy as possible - some ideas for this could be popsicles made with real fruit, granola bars, muffins, fruit and yogurt parfait, or smoothies. Please talk with your child's teachers if there is a special occasion that you would like to share with your child's classroom.

MFCC TUITION RATES, CONTRACTED HOURS & PAYMENT POLICY

September 2026-August 2027

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

TUITION RATES

All families are strongly encouraged to apply for Vermont State Subsidy, CCFAP. If you do not qualify for subsidy and are a private pay family, you qualify for a 18% discount on the above posted rates. This breaks down to the following:

Infants- \$389/week
Toddlers- \$365/week

Preschool- \$362/week

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 the ECP Director with any questions regarding your statements and payment options. Payments are made through the Bright Wheels app. If absolutely necessary, we can accept payment via check, automated bank transfers, and PayPal on an as-needed basis. 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.

CONTRACTED HOURS

The MFCC Child Care Program hours are 7:30-5:00, Monday-Friday. Children are assigned a classroom according to age, readiness, and availability of openings. We work hard to meet the needs of all our families, however we have limited availability to offer extended before or after care. Due to licensing requirements we must stagger dropoff and pickup times based on teacher to child ratios and the age of the child. We do this through contracted child care hours. This ensures the MFCC programs are always staffed to meet the ratios as outlined in the Vermont State Licensing Regulations and the criteria for the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Your contracted hours will be approved by and sent to you by the ECP Director. If the time slot you are seeking is not available, or if you have any other questions, please contact the ECP Director and we will do our best to accommodate your families needs.

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.

Contracted Times

Dropoff Time	Pickup Time
7:30	4:00

8:30 ----- 5:00

Please note there is a \$5 charge for the first 5 minutes past your contracted dropoff/pickup times, and \$5 for every subsequent minute thereafter. Excessive tardiness for dropoff/pickup may result in termination from our program.

The costs listed above are the total 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.

Childcare Financial Assistance Program - CCFAP (Subsidy)

Childcare financial assistance programs are 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 subsidies 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/Guardians 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/guardian 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.

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 in the Early Childcare Program 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 ECP 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 & Procedures

It is expected that all parents will read and sign the *MFCC ECP Guidance and Discipline Policy*, which is included with this handbook. Our mission is to ensure a safe and positive learning environment for every student.

We promote and practice positive discipline/redirection methods only, and have a zero tolerance policy for any level of physical, emotional or verbal abuse of children in our care.

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 the 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 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 engaging and intriguing lessons and materials.

Should a situation occur where a child becomes unable to control inappropriate behavior or reach dysregulation, MFCC staff will help the child move away from the other children and into a safe space such as a cozy corner (a space with pillows and a soft bedding area). The staff person will remain in close proximity to the child as they are given space and time to come back to regulation. Once the child comes back to regulation, 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.

If 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 ECP 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 ECP Director will schedule a meeting to discuss next steps for a smooth transition back into the classroom before the child returns, typically the following school day. During the meeting the family, teacher and director will co-create a plan on what will happen if the child acts out again while in care and at home so all parties are on the same page. Using consistent language, boundaries and consequences between school and home help the child learn self-control limits and expectations. When needed, MFCC will include our family support worker to discuss more details of the plan and help support all parties 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 ECP 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 School

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 full change of clothing. It is a best practice to check the weather forecast before bringing your child to school so they are prepared for all activities.

All clothing items should be labeled with your child's name before coming to school. This ensures clothes are not sent home with another child.

Preschool Students

Layers of clothing in the winter are crucial, especially for the outdoor "nature day" which occurs once a week.

- 1. Base Layer (The Moisture Manager)** - This layer sits next to the skin and keeps a child dry by pulling sweat away, which is critical since damp clothing drastically increases heat loss. Materials such as Merino Wool or synthetics such as polyester or nylon are good choices.
- 2. Mid Layer (The Insulator)** - This layer traps body heat to keep a child warm. Fleece, down or synthetic insulators are top choices as they keep the child warm even in cold or wet weather.
- 3. Outer Shell (The Shield)** - This protective layer blocks external elements like wind, rain and snow. Look for Hard or soft shells that protect children from the elements.

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

- **Diapers, wipes & diaper cream** - As needed, your child's teacher will inform you when these items need to be replenished. Please label with your child's name before bringing items to school so they do not get mistaken for another student's.
- **Change of clothes** - Please bring at least 2 full changes of clothing to be stored in the plastic bin in your child's cubby. This includes pants/shorts, shirt/t-shirt, underwear (if necessary), socks and a sweater or sweatshirt to always keep at school and is seasonably appropriate. **Please label all clothing items that come to school with your child's name.**
- **Indoor shoes/grippy socks (for infants)** - Please assist your child in removing their outdoor shoes when they come inside, placing them in their cubby. Indoor shoes should have non-skid soles to avoid slipping and tripping in the classroom. Indoor shoes can remain at school in your child's cubby if the family would like.
- **Seasonal outdoor gear/Layers** - Winter/rain boots, coats, hats, mittens, sun hats, snow pants. See the Preschool Students layering section above for materials and items that are helpful in colder months.
- **Sunscreen** - Labeled with your child's name.

Indoor/outdoor shoe policy

The first thing your child will do upon arrival is change from outdoor to indoor shoes (if age appropriate), which helps children transition into “school mode” and teaches them that it is time for learning & indoor activities. This also helps our classrooms stay clean, and healthy for all children. Outdoor shoes may be left in their cubby at the start of the day, and put back on when the class goes outside or at pickup time. The child’s indoor shoes may stay in their cubby year-round for easy transitions.

Daily outdoor play

Please have your child prepared to play outside every day. Our play-based curriculum activities are planned for both indoors and outside. Please dress your child in weather appropriate clothing and be sure there are at least two changes of clothing in your child’s cubby every day! Please ask your child’s teachers if you are unsure what is needed for outdoor wear. During particularly muddy or wet seasons, more than one extra change of clothing is also highly recommended.

Tick Policy

Vermont has one of the highest incidence rates of Lyme disease in the country, and children in Vermont are at highest risk for contracting a tickborne disease. According to Vtlyme.org, “Over 50% of ticks in Vermont are infected with *B. burgdorferi*, the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. Ticks may also be infected with other pathogens that cause illness.” Teachers will do regular tick checks on the students after being outside, but parents should make tick checks part of their daily routines - this is best done at bathing times. Places to be sure to check are in and around the hair, in and around the ears, under the arms, inside the belly button, around the waistline, between the legs and behind the knees. If a teacher/staff member sees a tick **crawling** on a student they will safely remove the tick from the child. **If a tick has bitten or embedded itself on a student** the staff will:

- Send a picture of the tick and a note to the parents/guardians on BrightWheel immediately noting when they noticed it and where the child was.
- The ECP Director will call the parents/guardians immediately to have the child picked up to have the tick removed by a medical professional and remain at home for supervision by their parent/guardian for the remainder of the day. Students must be picked up within one hour of a phone call from the Director.
- **Teachers will not remove an embedded tick from a student.** This is for the safety and protection of the child to ensure all parts of the tick are removed and the tick can be tested for burgdorferi and other pathogens.

For more information on ticks, preventative measures and recommendations please visit the State of Vermont website, Prevent Tick Bites & Tick Bite Illness. The ECP Director will also have tick information available to families upon request.

Attendance

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian/caregiver to check students in and out of the classroom at dropoff and pickup on the BrightWheel app. This ensures the most accurate attendance records for your child. Each classroom has a QR code posted outside the classroom, parents scan the code in the app and enter their 4-digit code (which you receive once you sign-up for the app) to mark their child in attendance in the morning or out of attendance at the end of the day. There is also a QR code posted on the gate of the playground for outdoor dropoff/pickups.

If your child has an appointment that interferes with the normal daily routine (midmorning/midday), we kindly ask that you please keep your child home for the remainder of the day. Changes to normal routines can throw a child's schedule and emotions off for the remainder of their day. They may also miss or interrupt important times such as meals or nap time. If you are unsure if an appointment will interfere with the daily schedule please speak to your child's teachers or the ECP Director.

Drop-off/Pick-up Procedure

*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.*

MFCC's Early Childhood Education Program is onsite, co-located with several other community-based programs and outreach services, including our local food shelf. Some days morning drop-off coincides with the dropoff and stocking of the food shelf, with lots of volunteers and staff moving heavy boxes or pushing heavy carts of food. Due to the public nature of access to the MFCC building, it is important to **always closely supervise your children as you enter and exit the building**. Your child's classroom dropoff and pickup routines are posted outside the classroom. Please follow the routines to keep these busy times running smoothly for everyone. 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.**

The Early Childcare Program's schedule begins promptly at 9:00am daily. This is when classroom routines begin. Please make every effort to drop-off at their contracted time, and let the teachers know as soon as possible if you expect to arrive after this time via a message on BrightWheel. If there is something you need to relay to the teacher that morning it's best to tell the teacher at dropoff or send a message on BrightWheels.

Safe Identity Policy

Our agency has a secured entry-way. All families, volunteers, staff and visitors must enter through the main door. Only authorized adults have access to the child care

programs. All adults 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 & Parent Concerns

We believe it is essential for parents/guardians and caregivers to work together to provide the best care for the child/ren. We are aware that there will be times when you have questions or concerns relating to your child, and encourage regular communication between families, teachers and the ECP Director.

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 families receive daily updates, photos and information via the BrightWheel app. We will offer parent/guardian-teacher conferences at least twice a year. Parents/Guardians may also request a conference at any time.

Your concerns and/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 to your child's teacher first. We will make every effort to ensure your concern is met with respect and a satisfactory resolution for all parties involved. Should you still have questions or concerns after speaking with your child's teacher, you may communicate with the ECP Director, who will then help to resolve the problem/concern. **We believe direct communication is most often the best way to resolve problems.** However, if after speaking with the ECP 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 Information

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.

Our Early Childcare Program follows state licensing guidelines to ensure the health and safety of each child and employee. **Prior to enrollment, we must receive 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 can 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. Parents and children will also have the option to use hand sanitizer located outside the classroom before they enter the room.

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. We practice fire drills monthly with all staff and students in accordance with state licensing regulation. All 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 ECP Director.

Safety/Injury Reports

In the event your child is injured while in our care, the teacher will send an ouchie note on Brightwheels. A written report will be given to the parents/guardians at pickup for their signature acknowledging they are aware of the ouchie/injury. Families have the choice to bring a photo copy of the form home. The ECP Director puts the original copy in your child's file. 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, parents or an emergency contact will be informed immediately and the child will be taken to seek care. Parents will need to sign a release permitting MFCC to do so - included in the enrollment paperwork. 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 disclose to teachers any injuries sustained outside of childcare so that we may prevent further aggravation to the injured area. Teachers will document any injuries a student arrives with from outside of school.

Medication Administration Information

For children to be administered a prescription medication, a written permission form needs to be signed by the parent/guardian including the reason, dosage, and schedule. This form is provided to you by your child's teacher upon request. 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. 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. Tylenol may be used for cases of teething in order to help the child feel more comfortable at school, but it is a best practice to administer a dose before coming to the center. For safety reasons, we limit the amount of medications that are stored at the center and may request medication be taken home daily. All medications are stored in a locked cabinet out of children's reach and refrigeration is available upon request.

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.

Illness Policy & Sickness Protocol

The health of all of our students and staff is a top priority at the Milton Family Community Center. We need your help to protect our community 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 for viewing, please as the ECP Director if you wish to read it. We also follow the State of Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations - Appendix A, Signs and Symptoms of Illness Chart.

Most contagious illnesses begin as a mild fever and lethargia. If you notice your child begins to show signs or symptoms of illness or a contagious disease, or if they feel too ill to participate in a group care setting **please keep them home**. This helps prevent the spread of illness to other students, teachers, staff and volunteers at MFCC. If your child will be absent, please notify their teacher via BrightWheels or by calling the front desk.

Please let us know as soon as possible if your child has a communicable illness or infection. This will allow us to notify other families in the program and prevent the spread of illness. Children with communicable conditions may not return to care without a note from their physician. We reserve the right to exclude children from care and 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.

Children are typically excluded from care when:

- 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;
- D. There is an unidentified rash or illness will be excluded until a doctor has been seen.

It is expected that parents will pick up ill children from the program within one hour of notice from the ECP Director. 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 one hour period. Parents must keep their emergency contact information current.

Sickness Exclusions

If a child has the following symptoms, they **must** stay home.

- o Fever of >100.4
- o Dry cough
- o Aches/pains that impede their ability to engage in normal, everyday activities
- o Sore throat
- o Diarrhea
- o Conjunctivitis
- o Coxsackie
- o Headache
- o Loss of taste/smell
- o Rash on skin or discoloration of finger or toes
- o Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- o Chest pain or pressure
- o Positive COVID test

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

Returning to School

A child or staff member diagnosed as having any contagious diseases or infections may return to care :

- WHEN symptoms have resolved
- AND have been fever free for 24 hours without the aid of fever reducing medication
- OR they have been on antibiotics for 24 hours
- WITH a doctor's note indicates that it is safe for them to return

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 encourages parent involvement during the day, on field trips, and other special events. Children love to see their parents and family members in the classroom working alongside their friends and teachers. Sometimes an emerging project in the class will require materials that we may ask parents to help us find. Some ideas for families are: helping to teach a specific skill, talent or project to students; helping to find loose parts for emergent curriculum (corks, old keyboards, ribbons, stones, tree

stumps, etc.); volunteering for family gatherings/celebrations (baking, set-up, grilling); chaperone a field trip; donate wood, masonry or labor for playground renovations; play an instrument or read a story in class. 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 Junior 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 your child's needs, a conference can be scheduled with the ECP Director and parents/guardian to develop an action plan. This action plan will be implemented for two weeks, and then revisited. We feel that direct communication is often the best way to resolve a conflict. We are ready and willing to work together for the best interest of the child/ren.

Calendar of School Year 2026-2027

Our school calendar is available at any time for your reference. Included on our calendar are 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 have half days or full closure days on predetermined dates throughout the year for important all-day training and professional development for all teachers. The specific dates are listed on the calendar, and will be posted in the classroom at least one week ahead of time.

Holidays

MFCC follows the state & federal holiday schedule: Labor Day, Indigenous Peoples' Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Memorial, Juneteenth and Independence Day are paid days off or floating holidays. Please see the calendar for more information or speak to the ECP Director if you have any questions.

Weather/Emergency Related Closings

MFCC school closures can be found on local broadcast stations such as Channel 3 or Channel 5 (as well as their websites), or 95.5 FM or 98.9 FM. Typically, we follow the lead of the Milton Town School District, but not always. Closures will also be communicated via Brightwheel as soon as possible to allow families time to plan for sudden changes to schedule.

Many MFCC staff members and parents have long commutes and because of this we ask everyone to be aware of poor driving conditions due to weather and to plan accordingly. The MFCC Leadership Team may decide to close early if we think that an approaching storm could pose a danger to our staff or families.

Please note per the payment policy section in the handbook, 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 Milton Family Community Center 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, audiotope, 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

Handbook Acknowledgement Signature

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 Handbook 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. We'd love to keep you in the loop!

_____ Yes! Add me to the newsletter.

Email: _____

Additional Email to add: _____