



Nature's Way of Learning

Parent Handbook

This handbook is a guide to our policies and procedures. This handbook should be read in its entirety. Failure to read this handbook may result in failure to understand our policies and not having the proper information about the care at Nature's Way.

33 Baboosic Lake Road

Merrimack, NH 03054

603-423-0267

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WE DO NOT ALLOW TOYS FROM HOME, IF A TOY IS SENT FROM HOME IT WILL REMAIN IN THE OFFICE UNTIL PICK UP. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ON THIS POLICY, YOU ARE TO TALK TO THE DIRECTOR.

The only item allowed from home is ONE stuffed animal that will only be used at rest time and during show and share in PS/PK.

OUR PROMISE TO YOU!

Welcome to the NWL family. We feel that we are an extension of your family. We feel that we provide great care with safety as our top priority. During your child's time with us, they will learn what love, caring, and sharing is all about. Your child will develop and learn that it is okay to be unique and different and that it is okay to develop at their own pace without pressure. Teachers will work with children on age-appropriate skills to challenge their thinking and to make strides in improving the many skills needed in their development.

SERVICES PROVIDED and MISSION STATEMENT

Nature's Way of Learning programs offer care for children 6 weeks to 4th grade. We are a nature-based and hands on learning childcare center that allows children to grow in a clean, fun, and loving environment where both social and emotional skills are as important as our ABC's and 123's. We are open Monday-Friday 6:30am to 6:00pm excluding some holidays.

INTAKE PROCEDURE for ENROLLEM

Parents are required to tour the facility in person or via video call and meet with the director to tour the program and ask any questions the parents have. Parents must review the parent handbook, emergency handbook and health handbook before enrolling to ensure they understand the rules and regulations of the center.

If a parent would like to enroll, they are asked to send an email to NaturesWayNH@gmail.com to inform the center of enrollment. Parents will receive an email back with a few questions and where to find the proper paperwork needed. Once the parents respond, the child and family will be added into Brightwheel, and a deposit can be made. Please note, spots are only held once a deposit is paid in full. Deposits must be made within 24 hours for the spot to be held.

You will also need to provide us with a copy of your child's current physical (cannot be over one year), immunizations, as well as a school clearance form from your child's medical provider. All forms should be ready to be handed in on your child's starting day. Failure to provide these forms will result in us being unable to take the child until the forms are submitted in full. All students MUST be fully vaccinated according to the CDC requirements.

Nature's Way of Learning uses a rolling admission process, whereas open slots are filled as they arise. Parents must pay a one-week tuition, non-refundable deposit. When placing a deposit, you will also need to sign a contract with Nature's Way of Learning. This contract is and will be strictly enforced. Each child is encouraged to visit the classroom and to meet teachers prior to starting.

Students must have the following paperwork on file the day they start. This paperwork must be updated yearly. Medical forms must be submitted when they are done and always kept up to date.

- Enrollment Contract
- Emergency Information and Medical info sheet
- Registration Agreement
- Family Questionnaire
- Consent forms
 - CPR and First Aid
 - Hospital Transport

- Assumption of risk
- Termination of care
- Review of termination
- Parent Handbook
- Medical Handbook
- Emergency Handbook
- Emergency Evacuations
- Tuition Policy
- Nap ratios
- Sunscreen
- Bug Repellent
- Diaper Rash ointment
- Photo consent
- Walking field trip
- Lawn Permission
- Video Permission
- Movie Permission
- NH Health Assistant form
- Transportation (if school age)
- Medical paperwork
 - Immunizations (must be up to date)
 - Physical (within one year)
 - School/Sports clearance form
 - Asthma action plan (if applicable)
 - Allergy action plan (if applicable)
 - Medication consent plan (if applicable)

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY FOR STUDENTS

Nature's Way of Learning admits children of any race to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to all children and families at Nature's Way of Learning. Nature's Way of Learning does not discriminate based on race in administration of its educational policies, athletics, and other childcare administered projects. Nature's Way of Learning policies are to provide enrollment opportunities to all people regardless of religion, race, gender, marital status, disability, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, and/or sexual orientation. Toilet Training is **NOT** an eligibility requirement for enrollment for children under the Pre-K age. Students in Pre-K and School Age must be potty trained.

Some students may struggle in a childcare center setting. Parents are encouraged to speak with the director to ensure that the child will be successful in a childcare setting. Children who would require a one-on-one teacher are asked to have parents provide the staff member and pay for the staff member. Children should be able to participate in all activities and be able to follow a set schedule with teacher assistance. Accommodation can be arranged in some cases. Please have an open and honest conversation with the director

PARENT COMMUNICATION

It is the policy of Nature's Way of Learning to work closely with our parents to ensure maximum satisfaction from our clientele. We always ask for open and honest communication. Should you have any issues please contact the program director.

Parent Conferences

Nature's Way of Learning makes staff available for individual conferences with parents at their request during the staff members' scheduled work hours. It is the practice of Nature's Way of Learning to accommodate parents as quickly as possible.

Progress Reports

As needed and for children with developmental delays, we will be evaluated using the Ages and Stages Assessment tool. Nature's Way of Learning teachers will meet with parents to discuss their child's activities and participation in the program only at the parents' request. If the school requests a meeting, we ask that parents help to make themselves available either in person, phone, or zoom. In preparation for this meeting, Nature's Way of Learning may prepare a written evaluation for each child and provides a copy to each parent upon request. A copy of the report is also kept on file. Your child's progress report and evaluations will address their development and growth, including but not limited to the developmental domains of Cognitive, Social/Emotional, Language and Fine and Gross Motor and Life Skills.

Program staff will bring special problems or significant developmental issues to a parent's attention as soon as they arise. An ASQ may be used to help in pointing out special problems.

Children may get a referral to an outside program if the evaluation suggests services are needed. We strongly suggest that parents follow the suggestions of the center by speaking with the child's medical professional or having an evaluation completed.

Parent Input

Nature's Way of Learning values parent input and open communication. Parents are encouraged to visit the program and meet with the staff. All parents shall receive reports of their children's progress. Nature's Way of Learning has an open-door policy for all parents and staff. We welcome all comments and concerns. If any parent feels that they need to speak with the Director or the child's teacher for an extended length of time, they are encouraged to call to set up a meeting. All attempts will be made to assure every parent is a happy parent. We ask that parents be open to feedback and understand that we mean well and are very transparent!

Parent Visits

Nature's Way of Learning requires that you visit the center before enrolling your child. We also encourage parents to come in with their child on the first day to observe the classroom and to ask any questions they may have. Nature's Way of Learning welcomes all parents to come and visit us any time during their child's day. We do ask that parents please be mindful of the schedule. We try not to interrupt such activities as circle time, naptime, and bathroom/ diapering times. Parents who wish to spend an extended time in their child's classroom, please request to do so in writing. We must respect children and the confidential aspects of each child. Children may also have a hard time with parents visiting. If we find that your visit causes a disruption to your child or the other child, we do ask that you please no longer visit.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP

Nature's Way of Learning is open Monday – Friday 6:30am– 6:00pm. Nature's Way of Learning makes every effort to have convenient hours of operations. However, we will strongly enforce our late policy. Children must be here by 9:00am to attend care. The only exception to this is for medical appointments. If your child has a medical appointment, they must be here by 11:00am to attend. We will need proof of the medical appointment. If you book your child an appointment in the morning, they may not return after 11:00am. They must also return having had lunch and ready for nap time. Any children picked up after 12:00pm for a medical appointment may not return.

If you do not plan on having your child at Nature's Way of Learning by 9:00am we ask that you, please message us on Brightwheels by 8:30am. If we do not receive a message your child's spot may be forfeited for the day. Nature's Way of Learning does not provide compensation for parents' delay. We ask that you be mindful of drop-off and pick-up times, as these are the busiest times in the center with many parents coming in and out. We ask that drop-offs and pick-ups be no longer than 5 minutes. We ask that if you have a private matter to discuss please speak with the director. Due to confidentiality and the health and safety of our students, we ask that only one parent be in a room at a time. We would like everyone to have the same respect when it comes to confidentiality.

Parents must provide us with a scheduled drop off and pick up time. We use these times to schedule our staff. Parents can adjust their child's time with a 1-week written notice and if there is space available. We do understand emergencies and meetings come up. Please keep open communication with us and we are willing to help as we can.

Nature's Way of Learning cares about the wellbeing and safety of your child, if your child is going to be picked up by anyone other than yourself and the persons listed on your emergency contact sheet/Brightwheels, you will need to give written consent via Brightwheels. The person must bring a valid driver license or state I.D. to be able to pick up your child. Only people over 18, or siblings over 16 may dismiss your child from care. We will not release any child to someone who does not have consent to pick up.

If there are specific people who you do not wish to pick up, or visit your child, we ask that you please provide us with a list of these names so that we can be prepared to carry out your wishes. If the person is a legal guardian or parent of the child, we are required to receive court documentation.

Attendance

It is very important for a child to have a consistent schedule. Parents must pick a schedule of when you would like their child to attend. Please note you can adjust your child's schedule if it is only for a day or two with at least 24 hours' notice. Students who arrive before their scheduled time without notice may risk being unable to drop off due to lack of staffing. Students who are picked up after their scheduled time without notice are subject to a \$3.00 per minute late fee after 15 minutes. Again, these policies are to ensure we are providing your child with the safest setting around and are not meant to cause a disruption in your routine or schedule.

Children can attend 2, 3, 4, and 5 days. We do not offer ½ day options. We ask that students not be picked up at naptime as this could cause friends to wake up.

Picking up after hours

If any child is picked up after 6:00pm there will be a charge of \$5.00 a minute (charge will NOT apply to unusually heavy traffic documented by news media). If we do not receive a phone call by 6:00pm to notify us of your late pick up, we will first try to call you and then everyone on your child's emergency card. If we are unable to get ahold of anyone on that sheet, we will be forced to call the local authorities to inform them that your child has not been picked up. Children will then be transported to the police department after 6:30pm if we have been unable to contact anyone on the emergency contact sheet.

If any child is picked up after 6:00pm more than once a week there will be a \$25.00 late fee that will be applied to your weekly bill. You will still be charged the \$5.00 a minute fee. (The \$25.00 fee will be waived for unusually heavy traffic documented by news coverage or family emergencies.) Late fees will apply in inclement weather. We ask that you please leave enough time to travel safely.

Payments and Fees

Payment is due every week by closing Friday for the upcoming week (unless approval of a different pay schedule is made). We have several options for payment: Credit card or bank info through Brightwheels. If you are delinquent on their payment, you will be charged a **\$25.00 late fee**, and your child may not attend the upcoming week until this balance is paid. A child may return once payment is made. If your child does not attend for 2 or more weeks without notice your child's spot may be forfeited. If your child does not attend due to vacation or sickness a full payment is still due. If you choose to withdraw your child from Nature's Way of Learning, you must give us 2 weeks' notice in writing. Tuition is subject to be adjusted yearly. However, it may be adjusted sooner should the market dictate that.

We offer the following discounts to full-time (5 days a week) students: 10% off for first responders. (EMS, Fire, Police and ER workers with proof) as well as current and former members of the military. Siblings who attend 5-days per week, will receive \$10.00 off tuition. You cannot combine discounts.

Teachers who choose not to send their children during school vacation weeks will receive 25% off the week. School age children will only be charged the vacation rate during the school vacation week if they attend.

Fees

- Late tuition Fee \$ 25.00
- Bounced check \$ 50.00.
- After closing fee: \$5.00 per min per child
- Forgotten lunch fee: \$ 5.00.
- Forgotten wipes: \$2.00 per day.
- Forgotten diapers: \$ 7.00 per day.

BEHAVIORS AND REFERRALS

Behavior Expectations

Nature's Way of Learning believes that all children grow and develop at their own levels. Every child will meet their milestones when they are ready, and some may need help from others to reach these milestones.

Allowing children to grow and develop at their own pace is so important to their physical and mental wellbeing. We believe that not all children thrive well in a group childcare setting. Every child is special and unique! Some children thrive in a slower paced environment with more one on one attention, and some children even thrive in a small home setting. Here at Nature's Way of Learning, we want children to thrive in their right environment. With open and honest communication from you, the parent, we can work together and talk about if a group childcare setting is the best fit for your child and your family.

If your child has any behavioral or educational needs, we ask that you be open and honest about this. Having students enroll in a setting that may cause them more hardships is not fair to them. So, it is very important that you communicate with us. If we feel that our center is unable to give your child the best experience and to help them thrive, we will be very honest in that communication.

Behavior Modification Plan

If we feel we can't meet the needs of the student, even with behavioral or educational needs, we will come up with a plan to ensure the child is successful. This plan will include a meeting with you, the parent, any outside providers, as well as the child's medical team. We will always do our best to accommodate students who are able to thrive in a group setting. We are, however, unable to provide 1 on 1 services and some behavioral management techniques.

It is the policy of Nature's Way of Learning to address behavior management issues in a manner that is reasonable, age appropriate, and will foster growth and development. Children displaying dangerous or disruptive behavior will be redirected and positive behavior will be reinforced. At times, it may be necessary to remove a child from a dangerous situation.

Students who are causing a disruption in the classroom, cannot be redirected, or who become physical with teacher/students will be removed from the classroom and sent home, in some cases even suspended or expelled from care.

Teachers may not punish children for their behavior. Teachers may not place their hands on a child unless it is to keep them safe from hurting themselves or others. Children will always be spoken to in a calm manner. Corporal punishment, severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, or neglect is strictly prohibited. Children are never deprived of snacks or meals, nor are they ever force-fed. A child is never scolded or disciplined for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet, nor are they forced to remain in soiled clothing or forced to remain on the toilet. Children are simply changed when wet or soiled and teachers try to remind the children frequently to use the "potty." Praise is used to reinforce positive behavior.

Children are never physically restrained for any reason unless they are in an unsafe situation. Children are redirected to a "safe area" if we find that they are being harmful to themselves, teachers, or other students. Children will be asked to sit at the table with a quiet activity should they need a break. The teachers are encouraged to first escort a child from one learning center area to another by taking the child's hand. The

teachers speak calmly and explain to the child why they are being removed from an area, then state the expectations for returning to the desired learning center area.

Children's teachers remind the children of the classroom rules and remind children who are disruptive in the classroom what the rules are. Some examples of these rules are no running inside, no hitting, kicking, or hurting another person, use inside voices in the classroom, and please take turns when there is only one toy of that kind. If a child is displaying difficulty in following the rules, a teacher will speak to the child and offer to re-direct the child to another area of the classroom. The teacher will follow through with removing the child from the situation if it is potentially harmful to the child, the other children, or the staff.

If your child has aggressive tendencies/behaviors, we encourage you to please speak with the director before enrollment. Some behaviors may affect enrollment if we feel we are unable to accommodate. It will only help us to better understand your child when parents are open and honest about their child.

If aggressive behavior becomes consistent and harmful to others or your child, there will be a meeting or phone conversation to discuss other options, including possible termination. Other options may include referring your child to a center more suitable. Nature's Way of Learning is a childcare center. We are not able to provide one on one services or therapeutic services. Children who have aggressive behaviors may require a smaller program, one on one services or outside services. Nature's Way of Learning may ask any family to depart the program based on behaviors we are unable to handle due to safety. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, biting, hitting, kicking, throwing, or breaking of object and disruptive behavior (yelling, screaming).

Children with Disabilities

The center will make reasonable accommodations to accept children into care to welcome and serve or continue to care for any child with a disability.

To determine reasonable accommodations the center will refer to the ADA act.

If applicable, a parental release of information from professionals providing services to the child may be required to ensure the best possible outcome of care.

Biting

We want to work with every parent and child to assure the center stays safe for everyone. Here at Nature's Way of Learning we feel that aggressive biting is a behavior that puts staff and other children in an unsafe environment. We do understand that in most cases, biting is a normal part of development. However, aggressive biting is a behavior we must watch closely to keep everyone safe.

Children 6 weeks-2.5 years: If your child has more than three aggressive biting incidences a day, they will be sent home.

Children 2.5 years – 5 years: If your child has more than two aggressive biting incidents a day, they will be sent home. Children biting more than 3-times in a 2-week period may be asked to leave the center to ensure the safety of students and staff are safe.

If biting is ongoing, we will have a conversation (phone, Brightwheels, in-person) to discuss the issue. We do understand that some biting is a normal part of development. We will evaluate each biting incident and decide the best way to handle the incident.

Referral Services

Whenever a staff member is concerned about your child's development or behavior and feels that further evaluation should be done, they are asked to fill out an observation report. During the observation the date, time and the behavior/ concern will be written in a log that is kept in the classroom. After one week of observation the teacher is to report what they have noticed to the Director. Should the staff at Nature's Way of Learning feel that professional services might be helpful to your child, a referral may be made. Parents are expected to follow through on a referral for all behavior issues. Should a parent deny the referral, a meeting will be held to determine if the child is able to safely remain in our care.

Nature's Way of Learning maintains a list of current referral resources in the community for children in need of social, mental health, educational or medical services. This list shall include the contact person for Early Intervention Program referrals.

Referral Meeting with Parents

Should the staff of Nature's Way of Learning feel that a referral is appropriate, the Director will schedule a meeting with you to notify you of the center's concerns and we will prepare a current list of possible referral resources.

In our meeting, we will provide you with a written statement including our reasons for recommending a referral for additional services, a summary of our observations related to the referral and any efforts that our center may have made to accommodate your child's needs. Nature's Way of Learning will offer any assistance that you might require in following through with a referral. With written permission from you, we can contact the referral agency on your behalf. If your child is under 3 years of age, the Director shall inform you of availability of services provided by Early Intervention programs should such services be required.

Follow-up on the Referral

The Director will, with your permission, contact the agency or service provider who evaluated your child for consultation and assistance in meeting your child's needs at the center. If it is determined that your child is not in need of services, or is ineligible to receive services, the center shall review your child's progress at the center every three months to determine if another referral is necessary. The Director will maintain a written record of any referrals, including parent conference and results. A referral checklist will be kept in your child's records.

Terminating services after referral recommendations

In the occasion that it is determined that Nature's Way of Learning is unable to meet a child's needs, services may be terminated and a referral to a more appropriate facility will be offered. Nature's Way of Learning shall use the following procedures for such a termination:

Your child may be terminated from Nature's Way of Learning under the following circumstances:

- 1) The health and safety of your child and others at the center cannot be assured.
- 2) Your child's developmental needs are not being met at the center due to a delay in development.
- 3) Your child has behaviors we are unable to accommodate by redirection.

- 4) Your student leaves the classroom consistently and poses a safety risk to themselves.

You will be notified in writing, and at a face-to-face meeting whenever possible, about the circumstances including the reasons for termination. A copy of this letter will be kept in your child's records.

When any child is terminated from the center whether initiated by the center or by parent(s), the teacher will prepare the child for termination from the center in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand. For older toddlers-school age, the teacher will talk with the student leaving and other children about the departing child and give simple reasons for the child's departure:

- 1) "He will be going to a new school which will help him more."
- 2) "She needs a different school to help her learn."
- 3) "He is not leaving because he is bad, he needs a different kind of school, and we will help his parents adjust to a new location."

Other suggested activities that might be appropriate include:

The children can give the departing child drawing and/or stories about the center. The class may make a book about the center with drawings or photos and stories about the center. The departing children can write (dictate) a story about the center. A photo of the center may be taken while involved in his or her favorite activity. The class may participate in a "good-bye" party.

TERMINATION/ SUSPENSION OF CARE

Nature's Way of Learning will work with families to prevent the termination of students when possible. If your child risks being suspended or terminated the Director will call for a conference if possible with the parents and a plan will be made to try and avoid suspension or termination at all costs. Please note that some behaviors may require a suspension or termination without meeting and without prior notice. At this meeting we will come up with a written plan to avoid suspension or termination that will be followed by the student, parents, and teacher. We may ask that you help us at home with the issue at hand.

Parents will be notified via Brightwheels, e-mails, or calls when your child has a behavior that causes harm to themselves and others. Parents will also be notified of behaviors on an ongoing basis should the child cause a disruption to the classroom or should the child have behavioral concerns.

The program may take the following steps to help maintain the child in care (some or all may apply):

- Parent communication
- Written documentation of findings
- Written warnings of termination
- Developmental assessments
- Referrals
- Written documentation of a behavior plan
- Ongoing communication with outside services
- Letter of termination should that be required.

Nature's Way of Learning has the responsibility to ensure all students are cared for in a safe manner. Should any child cause an ongoing safety issue, the center may require termination once all other options are exhausted. If your child is causing ongoing harm to others or themselves, care will need to be terminated right

away depending on the behavior. Suspension and or termination may be precipitated by deliberate vandalism by the parents, the child threatens to cause harm to another child in a non-playing matter, consistent safety concerns, deliberate misconduct, and violation on the parent handbook. Below is a list of other reasons why a child will be suspended or terminated.

Some other examples of why a child may have to leave the center:

- 1) Payment not received will result in your child being suspended until you have paid in full.
- 2) Late payments of more than two weeks will result in your child being terminated. You will still need to pay your bill in full.
- 3) Not following the rules and regulation of this handbook and the rules of Nature's Way of Learning may result in termination or suspension.
- 4) Not following the rules and regulations of the state of NH Childcare licensing unit guidelines will result in termination or suspension.
- 5) Failure to abide by the State Rules and Regulation requirements such as having your child properly immunized, screened for lead poisoning, or taking your child for an annual physical exam, may result in suspension until such requirement is fulfilled.
- 6) Your child may be suspended after two notices of delinquency in keeping his or her health records up to date.
- 7) If your child has not had a physical exam in over a year, the Director will notify you in writing. If the parent fails to schedule an appointment with the doctor, a second notice will be sent.
- 8) If you fail to respond, the Director may choose to suspend the child until the physical exam is completed and the record is brought to the Nature's Way of Learning office.
- 9) Behavioral concerns that case a safety issue to your child or other students
- 10) Not following through on a referral with behavior concerns and or developmental concerns that cause us to be unable to properly care for the child.

This same policy applies for certain delinquent immunization and lead screenings. The Director may suspend a child immediately in some cases where the child may be a health risk to others or to himself.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Children may be suspended or terminated from care due to their parents' actions. Such actions include, but are not limited to:

- Giving out confidential information about staff and or other students.
- Posting or sharing photos of your child with other students on social media, with family or with friends. Please only share photos of your child.
- Failure to provide your child with the required belongings as well as not providing clean objects such as clothing, sheets, bottles, cups, blankets etc.
- Providing false information about your child regarding their health and safety.
- Failure to provide medical information such as: physical, mental health issues, and immunizations.
- Failure to pay or have continuously missed payments.
- Excessive late pickups after provided 10 hours or after 6:00pm.
- Disrespectful behavior to staff and admin such as: aggressive and threatening messages, threatening to harm staff or students.

- Failure to work with all members of management and staff.
- Ongoing rude and disrespectful behavior.
- Harassing staff or families.
- Causing physical or mental harm to staff or families.
- Failure to comply with state or local law enforcement should an investigation occur.
- Spreading/posting false or misleading information about the center, staff, or another family.

Members of the administration team will give a written warning if warranted. However, some behaviors may require immediate termination of care. We would hope all parents and family members would act appropriately. We have an open-door policy and love to hear from parents in a respectful and caring manner.

OUR CLASSROOMS

Infant

Ratio 1 teacher to 4 students, with a max of 12 infants. Ages 6 weeks to 10/12 months

Our infant program is one that allows our students to explore the world around them. In our infant classroom, we follow the schedule the parents have set up for the child. This includes feeding and napping. Children are always changed at a minimum every 2 hours, or as soon as needed.

Students in this classroom often learn how to: self-feed, roll over, crawl, and sometimes walk. Students are encouraged to spend their day free from restraining objects like swings and chairs. We use these items sparingly and suggest parents support this at home.

Infants must always be placed on their back to sleep and must always sleep in a crib. It is very important that before having your child start, that you help with this transition and please have your infant sleep in a crib/ bassinet at home prior and during enrollment.

Feeding is a very important subject when it comes to enrollment. Students who are solely breast feed and never introduced to a bottle at home, tend to have a very hard transition into childcare. We ask that you introduce the bottle 1 to 2 months before enrollment and use this method at least once or twice a day before enrollment.

Brightwheels will be updated on demand or as close to on demand as possible to ensure everything is logged properly. Please remember that our infant room can and does get busy. From time-to-time items may be logged later and occasionally a diaper or bottle will not be logged. We do apologize for this in advance. Communication with teachers should be done via Brightwheels during school hours.

Waddlers

Ratio 1 teacher to 5 students, with a max of 8 students. Ages 10/12 months to 18/20 months

This is one of the funniest classrooms in the school. Students are becoming more independent and sillier. Their little personalities are really bopping! In this classroom, our students are introduced to a more structured schedule. The schedule is adjusted based on the needs of the students from day to day. For example, all though lunch is scheduled for 11:30, students may become hungry sooner so we may move lunch up earlier to accommodate their needs.

Students in this classroom should be independent eaters. They will use to learn a spoon and fork to feed themselves. Students learn how to share with friends and take turns. They learn and build upon their language

skills with circle time and free play. We also introduce some basic educational concepts as counting, color and shape recognition, and are introduced to sensory exploration.

Students in this classroom should be able to take one nap a day, feed themselves (with hands), and be ready to have lots of fun! We ask that students in this room by the age of 1, start to transition into a sippy cup.

Behavior modification is used in this classroom to keep kiddos as safe as possible. Students are redirected and asked to have nice hands and kind words. Biting can happen and is a natural part of development. To keep students safe and to help the bitter if they are having a hard day, children who bite more than 3 times in a day are sent home. Children at this age are also learning to be steady on their feet. They may have a few bumps and bruises. We will be sure to notify you should an injury occur.

Brightwheels will be updated by naptime. This room is also often a busy one and we try to get everything logged properly. You will also notice that we give you a summary of what we worked on in this classroom. From time-to-time items may be logged later and occasionally something may not be logged. We do apologize for this in advance. Communication with teachers should be done via Brightwheels during school hours.

Young Toddlers

Raito 1 teacher to 5 students, with a max of 5 students. Ages 15/18 months to 24+ months

Not all our students will get to spend time in this classroom. This is a classroom developed for those kiddos who fall between an older one year old and 2-year-old. This is what we call a transitions classroom. This classroom allows students to work on skills with kiddos their own age and not be forced to stay in a younger group or be pushed to keep up with an older group.

Students in this classroom have the same schedule daily. They are learning about math, science, literacy, and the world around them with hands on sensory and art exploration. We build a lot on social and emotional development and how to be kind to friends with sharing and caring. Students will spend a large part of their time outside. We also work on self-help skills and independence!

A lot of behavior modification is used in this classroom to keep kiddos as safe as possible. Students are redirected and asked to have nice hands and kind words. Biting can happen and is a natural part of development. To keep students safe and to help the bitter if they are having a hard day, children who bite more than 3 times in a day are sent home. Children at this age are also learning to be steady on their feet. They may have a few bumps and bruises. We will be sure to notify you should an injury occur.

Students in this classroom should know how to feed themselves, take one nap, be ready for a routine, and be able to start to communicate wants and needs by talking or pointing to objects.

Brightwheels is updated at naptime and when the teachers have a chance. Diaper changes, meals, naptime, and daily activities. Communication with teachers should be done via Brightwheels during normal business hours.

Older Toddlers

Raito 1 teacher to 6 students, with a max of 9 students. This is our 2's classroom.

Welcome to our wonderful 2-year-old classroom. This classroom meets better than state required ratios, much like our waddler classroom. Students in this classroom are on the go, go, go. Our toddler classroom follows a daily schedule and spends most of their day outside. When not outside we are so busy learning about the world around us.

Students have a routine of hands-on learning. This includes self-help, arts, circle time, music, and movement, counting and SO much more. This room is non-stop, with keeping them as busy as possible. Busy toddlers thrive in all aspects of life. We will also introduce students to potty training at 2.5 years of age in this classroom. Most students are not ready to be potty trained until the age of 3, so we will take the child's lead on this.

A lot of behavior modification is used in this classroom to keep kiddos as safe as possible. Students are redirected and asked to have nice hands and kind words. Biting can happen and is a natural part of development. To keep students safe and to help the biter if they are having a hard day, children who bite more than 3 times in a day are sent home. Children often use their hands and bodies to communicate. Students who are overly aggressive and nature will require a meeting with families to ensure a group setting is the best fit.

Brightwheels is updated at naptime and when the teachers have a chance. Diaper changes, meals, naptime, and daily activities. Communication with teachers should be done via Brightwheels during normal business hours.

Preschool and Pre-K

Pre-School ratio 1 teacher to 8 students, with a max of 14 students. This is our 3's classroom.

Pre-K ratio 1 teacher to 12 students, with a max of 12 students. This is our 4's classroom.

Let's jump into education and social emotional development. These 2 classrooms share a big room with their own sides. We place these rooms together to allow students to develop at their own rate. If you have a 3-year-old more advance, they can join into PK on a lesson. If you have a 4-year-old who is struggling, they can pop over to PS for some additional help.

This classroom is so much fun. We spend our day with hands on learning about ourselves, our friends, and our world. Our curriculum is all about mindfulness, and nature. We will learn about self-soothing techniques, self-help skills, kindness, respect, and educational subjects. Students will grow leaps and bounds in these two rooms.

Pre-School students will not need to be potty trained to attend.

Once children reach PK, they will gain the skills needed to be Kindergarten ready! Students in PK must be potty trained.

School-Age

Ratio 1 teacher to 13 students, with a max of 19 students K-4th grade.

We have a before an after-school program open during the school year. When school is not in session, we offer vacation and summer camps. Transportation is included from JMES and Reeds Ferry (must have 5 or more students enrolled from Reeds)

For more information about our school age program, like their schedule please visit us at www.natureswaynh.com.

Transitioning to another classroom

Throughout your child's time at Nature's Way of Learning they will move from one classroom to another when they hit the appropriate age and developmental level. A letter or notice on Brightwheels will be given prior to your child's transition to inform you of what new items you may need to bring, who your child's teacher is

going to be, information about the classroom and activities done throughout the day. Your child's former teacher will meet with your child's new teacher to talk about your child's needs and behaviors.

Children will have a chance to visit their new classroom prior to the transition. Visits will start off slowly if needed. However, some children enjoy staying in their new room and may transition without a longer introduction period. The Director will meet with the new classroom teacher(s) to see how the child is doing with transition. If the child is doing well, we will continue with the transition as scheduled. If the child is having a hard time, we will assess the issue and come up with a plan that is better for the child and will better assist them in their move to their new classroom. Please note, we will not move children who are not ready to be moved even with a parent's request. We will also not keep a child in a classroom at the parent's request if we feel the child is developmentally able to move up. We truly feel we must do what is best for the child and their needs.

EMERGENCY/ACCIDENT/ILLNESS

Administration of Medication

A certified medication administrator will only dispense medication. All prescriptions and topical medication used when there is open skin will require a doctor's note and a parent consent form.

All over the counter oral and topical medications not being used on open skin will require parental consent. All medication will be given as directed by your child's physician and must remain in its original box/containers. All medications must have a proper label with your child's name, date the medication was filled and dosage amounts. All over the counter medications will require a medical consent form (please find it on our website). All over the counter medications will be followed as directed on the bottle. Over the counter fever reducers will not be given to avoid a child getting a fever.

All medications will be kept out of the reach of children. All medication will be locked in the Nature's Way of Learning office. Nature's Way of Learning will maintain a record of all medications administered to your child. Medication records will be maintained in your child's file. All leftover medication and medication bottles will be given back to you so that you may discard them properly.

Nature's Way of Learning will notify you and the department of state licensing unit if a medication error occurs. Such errors include wrong medication, medication was not given on time (too early or too late) and allergic reaction. Your child's first two doses of medication may NOT be given at school. If your child's medication was given too early or too late, we will ask that you call your child's doctor to fax over a note stating that this is or is not a problem. If your child's doctor states that we can give your child their medication after the scheduled time we will also need this in writing. A log will be kept of the time all children received their medication.

Sunscreen will be placed on children when the UV is over 3 or higher outside.

Allergies

Students with allergies MUST always have the proper medication on hand. Students without their medications will not be able to attend. Students with allergies must also have an allergy action plan from their medical provider to attend. All members of the staff will be informed of the child and the child's allergies.

Injury/ Accident Report

After any accident and or incident Nature's Way of Learning is required by the department of NH State licensing to notify the parents and or fill out an Accident/ Incident report. Teachers will notify families of the incident via Brightwheels and will ask if you would like a report. Parents can deny receiving a report. The Director will review and sign the report as well as the parents. A copy will be made and placed in your child's folder. The original report is yours to keep for your records.

There will be a phone call and/or message on Brightwheels placed to inform you of the incident.

Emergency Care

In the event of an emergency, it is the parent's obligation to cover all expenses incurred due to an accident or emergency involving their children. Should an injury be caused by a staff member, or damaged equipment, Nature's Way of Learning will cover the cost of the co-payment of medical services.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

Emergency drills will be done monthly to ensure that the staff and the students have a clear understanding of what could happen in the case of an emergency. For a full explanation please ask the director to receive a full copy of our emergency plan.

Emergency Evacuating plan:

- 1) Follow the Emergency Exit Plan that is posted next to all doorways.
- 2) Take the Emergency Bag with you whenever you leave the classroom. This bag contains:
 - a) First Aid Kit
 - b) Children's emergency contact sheet
 - c) Cell phone to call parents or 911.
 - d) Children's attendance
- 3) If you are in the infant room, place all infants in the emergency crib and evacuate the building.
 - a) Make sure to grab children's bottles out of the fridge.

These procedures have been made to assist Nature's Way of Learning in the case of a fire, natural disaster, loss of power, loss of heat and loss of water.

- 1) In the case of a fire:
 - a) Staff will evacuate children according to the evacuation procedure.
 - b) Staff and students will meet on the playground and if the Merrimack Police and/or Fire dept tell us to evacuate the premises we will go to the location they have deemed safe.
 - c) If we need to go to the JMES Upper, parents will be called to pick up their children.
- 2) In case of a natural disaster:
 - a) Staff and students are to remain in the building the local authorities will be called.
 - b) We will then follow all local law enforcement rules and regulations.
 - c) We will carry all emergency contact sheets (via Brightwheel) so that we may contact families of our whereabouts.
 - d) Local Law enforcement may recommend that the children not be picked up.
- 3) Loss of Power, Heat and or Water:
 - a) If power is not restored within an hour, parents will be called to pick up their children.
 - b) That night all parents will receive a phone call or e-mail to inform them as to whether school will be held the following day.

If we need to evacuate Merrimack for any reason, we will be gathering at the office buildings. The exception to

this would be if the Merrimack Police and Fire Department designated an alternative meeting space.

If your child, for any reason, must stay at Nature's Way of Learning appropriate arrangements will be made for your child to remain either at the school or another appropriate site until you are able to be contacted.

Please review the emergency handbook located on our website to see the full outline of our emergency procedures and evacuation protocol.

Medical Transport in an Emergency

In a medical emergency, one staff member will call an ambulance by dialing 911. Your child will be transported to the nearest hospital. A staff member will accompany your child to the hospital. You will be contacted as soon as possible. The staff member who is asked to go with your child will take a copy of the authorization and consent form to the hospital. If you cannot be reached, the emergency contacts you identify on your child's first aid and emergency medical care consent form will be contacted, if we are unable to reach any of the contacts the Director will take appropriate action as recommended by the hospital, police, E.M.T., or consulting medical staff.

Health and Safety

Emergency Policies (Fire, Tornado, Storms, Floods, Serious Injury, Missing Child)

Please review our emergency handbook on our website or located in any classroom/office of the center.

Health Care and Immunizations

Your child must be immunized against Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, and Hib and Hepatitis B to attend childcare. Nature's Way of Learning does not except religious exceptions or parent exceptions. If your child has asthma or is immune suppressed, he or she should receive an influenza vaccine every year. One dose of varicella vaccine, or a physician- certified reliable history of chicken pox, will be required to attend Nature's Way of Learning.

Infant Sleep and SIDS/ Nap Time

We will require that you sign a form stating that you understand the SIDS regulations. Infants may use a swaddle up until they are 3-months old or up until the infant is rolling over. Infants may use an unweighted, unrestricted sleep sack after 3-months or after rolling if their arms are free.

1. Infants will be placed on their backs for sleeping unless the child's healthcare professional orders otherwise in writing.
2. All infants will nap in an individual crib; if two children share a crib each child will have their own side of the crib mattress.
3. We have ensured that cribs have firm, properly fitted mattresses with clean coverings, and do not contain any potential head entrapment areas.
4. We have ensured that slats on cribs are no more than 2- 3/8 inches apart.
5. We will ensure that cribs, port cribs, and or playpens used for sleeping infants under the age of 12 months do not contain pillows, comforters, stuffed animals, or other soft, padded materials.

Waddlers-PreK aged children will be provided a napping period on a consistent schedule. This period will be provided during a standard six to eight-hour day with a minimum of 30 minutes of appropriate rest time

included on appropriate mats. If your child does not nap after one hour, they will be given a quiet activity to do while the other children rest. Parents MUST provide their children with a blanket and a crib size sheet to be used during rest time.

Infants can take a nap when needed or when parents have a set schedule.

Illness at School

If a child gets ill or has an injury in our care, we may have to send your child home. If you are called to pick up your child, you have one hour to pick them up. If after one hour you do not arrive, you will be charged a late fee of \$25.00 per ½ hour until you arrive.

Please go to our website to view the Health and Illness Handbook. Here you will also find our policies on illnesses. We ask that you follow these protocols closely as we will ensure the safety of all our students. Please remember we will be strongly enforcing our Health Care and Sick Policy.

Contagious illnesses of any kind, which may result in a child being too ill to participate in daily activities, are asked to stay home. Please note, this is according to state licensing.

If you at any time are unable to be contacted by our center due to your child's illness or an emergency, we will then contact the next person on your emergency contact form. We will continue to make phone calls until someone is contacted. If you would like any other information on our Health Care Policy, please contact the Director.

MALTREATMENT OF MINORS

Reporting

Nature's Way of Learning protects children from abuse and neglect while in the program's care. Abuse and neglect of any kind will not be tolerated and is strictly prohibited. Any abuse and neglect will be subject to investigation by the director and appropriate authorities. Nature's Way of Learning and all its educators must operate the program in a way that protects children from abuse and neglect. All staff members are mandated reporters and shall report suspected child abuse or neglect. The Director will train the staff in a workshop, teaching them how to recognize the signs of abuse and neglect and how to document any concerns. The staff shall report to the Director who will file a 51A report with the Department of Social Services. The Director will notify Childcare Licensing. If there is an accusation or someone has witnessed alleging abuse or neglect from a staff member, Nature's Way of Learning will file a 51A report. Nature's Way of Learning will immediately suspend any staff member suspected of abuse or neglect until a complete investigation has been conducted. The staff member will not be allowed to work directly with children until the Department of Social Services investigation is completed and the DCF office notifies the Director that the staff member may return to work. Please note, we have video cameras on all classrooms, hallways and on the playground.

Notification

Parents will not be notified if we feel the child has been abused at home and we are reporting to DHHS. Parents will be notified in writing, on the phone and in person should suspected abuse happened at the center. Our state licensing department will be notified of both.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Nut-Free Policy

Peanuts and tree-nuts are not allowed in the center should we have a child with an allergy. Should your child eat items with peanuts and or tree nuts before school, we ask that you change their clothing and wash their hands and face very well. We have students who have allergies to these items. Almonds and almond milk are allowed.

Sending Meals/Snacks from Home

Nature's Way of Learning requires that you pack a lunch with 2 snacks, a PM snack and bring a water bottle for your child each day that they attend. We ask that if you plan on dropping off your child after 8:30am that you please feed your child breakfast before attending. We will provide a healthy morning snack. Parents must provide their child water, breast milk/formula. We ask that you do not send juice into school.

If your child is trying a food for the first time, this food must be given at home for the first 2 times. We will not allow any new foods to be introduced to your child while they are in school due to the possibility of an allergic reaction.

For lunch box idea, foods allowed in care, bottle policy, please go to www.NaturesWayNH.com go to the forms tap and read the toddler feeding and infant feeding policies. Please note, children's food MUST be cut by the parents.

PROGRAM SPECIFICS

Babysitting/Out of School Care

If a parent would like to ask a teacher to watch their child outside of business hours, please note, we are not responsible for their actions while they are not working for the school. Teachers who have issues while watching a student understand that their job may be at risk should the behavior cause injury to the child or destruction to the family's home.

Any parent who would like a current or former staff member (within one year old leaving) to babysit must request this through the office. A form will be filled out stating you do not hold the center and its counterparts liable for all actions of the employee/ former employee.

Any staff member former (within one year of employment) or current that is sought out to nanny or to watch a child during operation hours are subject to legal action, including paying tuition for the child up to one year. This includes if you, the parent solicits a staff member to leave their position to provide care. Should this happen, you, the parents, would be liable to pay for childcare up to one year and face a fee to find, train and hire a new staff member.

Calendar

Please review our yearly calendar for holidays and closings on our website, under forms.

Child Files

All staff members are to respect and abide by all New Hampshire Child Care Licensing rules and regulations. No one at Nature's Way of Learning is allowed to share any information with other parents, outside parties or anyone who is not directly working with your child in the center.

Parents are entitled to have access to their child's record at reasonable times on request. Parents will have access to the record within two (2) business days of their request unless there is consent to a longer period. Parents must be allowed to view their child's entire record, even if it is maintained in more than one location.

Parents have the right to add information, comments, and relevant material to their child's records. Should you feel that there is information that should be deleted from your child's record a request can be made to the center administration. In such a case, the administration would meet with you to discuss that matter further and render a mutual agreement as to whether to delete or amend any questionable material in your child's records.

As part of enrollment, Nature's Way of Learning will ask you to fill out and return a packet of forms that will help us to better serve your child. The following are the required authorizations:

- To give permission for Nature's Way of Learning to perform CPR and First aid.
- Permission to transport your child to the closest hospital.
- Termination/expulsion of care policy
- You have read and understand the parent handbook.
- You have read and understood the emergency handbook.
- You have read and understood the medical handbook.
- Registration and tuition agreement
- Reduce nap time staff.
- Sunscreen and bug spray policy
- Diaper rash cream/ pacifier use
- Permission for photos
- Permission for videos/ movies

Diapering and Toileting

Parents must supply their child with diapers and wipes as well as a **2-3 change** of weather appropriate clothing. If the child needs to borrow a diaper or wipes from another student, parents will need to replace those items. If parents do not bring diapers for more than two days, they will be charged \$7.00 per day. After one week of no diapers and/or wipes, parents will be called during the day to bring these items to Nature's Way of Learning for Young Learners. Teachers are asked to keep a record of all diapers borrowed. Teachers will also record all diaper changes and toilet usages on the Brightwheels. Diapers will be checked every 2 hours. Your child will be changed earlier if we notice they have soiled their diaper.

Children who are being toilet trained must bring at least four changes of clothing. We ask that parents please discuss all toilet training needs and procedures with their child's teacher. We will bring all the children to the restroom every two hours. Additional trips to the restroom will be taken if the child asks. Potty training will not be started with children in our care until they reach 2.5 years of age based on developmental research.

If a child has an accident, the child will be cleaned immediately. The child will be changed into clean clothing. The child's clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and then placed in the child's cubby. The spot where the child had their accident will be cleared of students and then cleaned. If a child has an accident on their blanket, it will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home for cleaning. If a child does not have a change of clothing, you will be called to pick your child up or to bring your child a change of clothing.

If a child is toilet trained, they will be brought to the bathroom many times during the hours they attend. If the child asks to use the toilet, they will always be allowed to use the restroom. No child will be denied access to the restroom. Children must be 2.6 years to start potty training at school.

Field Trips

While Nature's Way of Learning does not take off site field trips for students other than in School age. School Age Camps and Summer Camp students may take field trips. All field trips will require a parent signature, and a car seat provided by the parent based on height and weight and local laws.

Holidays/Vacation/Time Off

Nature's Way of Learning observes the following holidays.

- Closed Memorial Day
- Closed the first week of July
- Closed Labor Day
- Closing at 12:00pm Thanksgiving Eve
- Closed Thanksgiving
- Closed day after Thanksgiving
- Closed for one week during the Christmas Holiday
- Closing at 12:00pm on New Year's Eve
- Closed New Year's Day

If any of the holidays fall on a Saturday, we will be closed the Friday before. If any of the Holidays fall on a Sunday, we will be closed on the following Monday.

Outdoor Play

Where we are a nature-based and hands on learning program, we spend a large amount of our time outside. In the months of April to October, most of our learning is done on our playground or in our gardens. Children must bring and wear proper clothing. We do go outside in the warm rain, and snow and use the DHHS weather guide to determine if it is safe or not to go outside.

During summer, please provide **lotion sunscreen** (SPF 30+), **pump** bug spray, sunhats, or baseball caps. We also provide lotion sunscreen should you not want to provide your own. All students will have sunscreen placed on them unless we have a medical note for a UV of higher than 3. Children arriving after 8:00am will need sunscreen applied to them. Sunscreen will be applied every 2 hours that the classroom is outside.

During winter months we ask that you dress your child come in layers and provide the appropriate clothing such as snow pants, mitten, hat, and boots. All items must be labeled with your child's name or initials.

Failure to provide proper clothing and shoes for the outside will require a phone call and the parent to bring in these items. Children who are unable to participate in outside activities due to parent request or medical request, must stay home. Please note, this is part of the state childcare licensing regulations.

Personal Belongings

Everything that comes to school from home MUST be labelled with your child's initials or name. Should items not be labelled the teacher may label them. Failure to label items may lead to items being lost or sent home with the wrong family, this will be the responsibility of the parent. The school cannot be held liable for non-labeled items.

Pets/Animals

Nature's Way of Learning has many animals. This includes a dog, bunnies, chickens, pigs and goats. The children will always have access to the dog. Older children will have access to all other animals. No child will have access to the chickens without their parent accompanying them.

Rosie, the dog is a licensed service dog. She has licenses to work with children and has been in the childcare field since she was 13 weeks.

School Cancellation Policy

Nature's Way of Learning follows the Merrimack Public school closings for inclement weather. Nature's Way of Learning may delay opening due to bad weather and to allow the roads to be cleared. If any time during the day the Owner feels that the school needs to be closed due to bad weather, you will be notified by phone, Brightwheels and text message and you will be asked to pick up your child. Payment is still required for closed days or unattended days.

Supply List

Please visit our website under forms for a copy of our supply list. This list is broken down per classroom.

Transportation

Transportation is the responsibility of parents. Children must be escorted by an authorized adult to/from his/her classroom at the beginning of each day and the end of each day. (School age students do not apply)

If your child is being transported before and after school, parents must sign a consent form and provide us the proper car seat. Student must be here by 8:00am to be transported to school.

OTHER POLICIES

Birthday Parties

You may hold your child's birthday here on the weekends. If you are inviting a child from the class to a birthday party, we ask that you please not make it public as it may hurt the feelings of friends who were not invited. You may also do a birthday celebration for PM snack in your child's classroom.

Children's Makeup/Jewelry

Children may not wear necklaces of any kind. This is due to not being able to wear them at nap time. Children should not wear jewelry of any value or importance as it may get lost during play. Students under the age of 2 years, must have screw back earring to help prevent them from falling out and being swallowed or chocked on by another child or even your child.

Cloth Diapers

Are not permitted. We will only use disposable diapers.

Pacifiers

Must be labeled with the child's name. We may not have anything attached to the pacifier.

Social Media

Parents should not friend request teachers. Teachers have been informed that their actions on social media can cause them to lose their job should they post items of concern.

Social media is not an outlet for passive aggressive behavior or anger about the center. Should you have concerns about the center or do not like something that has happened at the center, you should speak with the owners.

Should you post on social media or have outside communication that is considered defamation and causes harm to the school will be prosecuted.

TV/ Screen Time

Screen time is limited to all students. From time-to-time teachers may use short videos to assist in teaching a new fun skill or to play a fun game. Teachers may also play a movie from time to time to reward children for working so hard or to show during a special holiday/event. Movies

will always be age appropriate. During the time a movie is playing, children will be free to go to another area of the classroom to play. No child is forced to sit and watch a movie. Staff will supervise students during all files, videos, and movies. Teachers will notify parents when a movie will be shown, what the movie is and the movie rating.

Parents may request that their child not watch a movie. We ask that you please inform us via Brightwheels. Your child will have the option to attend another classroom during this time should there be room.

Photos

Teachers love taking photos of students. Photos can be used for Facebook, our website, marketing, in the building and on Brightwheels. Parents have the option on the enrollment forms to state their photo preference. Parents can deny having students photo taken for any reason.