



THE LEARNING GARDEN

Nurturing Young Minds

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Welcome to The Learning Garden Family!

As the owner of The Learning Garden, I want to personally welcome your family to our center. I would also like to take this opportunity to share a little about myself with you.

I started in the field of early childhood in 1989 when my oldest child was an infant and have worked as a teacher with all age groups from infants to school age. I have managed both large and small programs in both Head Start and franchise child care centers here in Minnesota. I became involved in the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) early in my career which allowed me to visit hundreds of programs across the country that were seeking NAEYC accreditation. I have remained a life-long learner, obtaining my Associate of Arts degree, a Bachelor of Science degree in Urban Early Childhood and a Master of Arts degree in Early Childhood. Throughout the years I have remained true to my teaching philosophy, that children learn best when provided with a positive, nurturing, stimulating environment in partnership with parents, who are their child's first teachers.

I want you to know that I am dedicated to providing a high-quality child development program for your child during their most crucial years. My door is always open to you and I invite any comments and welcome any suggestions you may have.

Thank you for allowing us at The Learning Garden to become part of your family.

Sincerely,

Angela Kapp

Angela Kapp
Owner/Director
The Learning Garden
Midwest Child Development, LLC
angela@midwestchilddevelopment.com

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Mission

The mission of The Learning Garden is to provide affordable quality care and education in a safe nurturing environment where each child is provided the opportunity to learn and develop at their own pace.

Educational Philosophy

The Learning Garden believes that children learn best through play and exploration and when provided with a stimulating, nurturing, educational environment.

The Learning Garden's Pillars of Quality

PILLAR 1: RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPECT

We value the relationships we build with the children in our care, the families, each other and the community.

PILLAR 2: POSITIVE CHILD TEACHER INTERACTIONS

We know that how we talk and respond to children plays a significant role in influencing young children's social and emotional development.

PILLAR 3: EDUCATION

We believe that everyone should be life-long learners, always striving to acquire new knowledge, resources and skills.

PILLAR 4: ENVIRONMENT

We strive to keep our buildings, playgrounds and classrooms safe, healthy, and inviting.

PILLAR 5: CURRICULUM

We use a research-based curriculum that provides learning goals and activities in key areas of children's development that reflect support for school readiness goals.

PILLAR 6: AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

We use a natural approach to learning about our children's development, interests and strengths.

PILLAR 7: COMMUNITY

We feel it is important to be involved in the local community, and to create a sense of community within each of our programs and classrooms.

About Our Center

Each Learning Garden location is privately owned and operated by Midwest Child Development, LLC which provides quality child development services to the Twin Cities community. Each center offers full-time care for children ages 16 months to the start of Kindergarten, some of our locations offer infant care and part-time options. We also provide a drop-in care if space is available. Please see the Site Supervisor for details.

Hours of Operation

Each Learning Garden location is open from **6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**, Monday through Friday, 12 months a year.

We are closed for thirteen (13) training days and holidays per year: New Year Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day (staff development), Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, the 4th Friday in April (staff development), the Friday before Labor Day (staff development) and one additional staff professional development day to be determined each year based on the scheduling of our local MNAEYC Conference (usually in Jan. or Feb). There is no reduction in tuition for the week that these days fall on. We may adjust the holiday closing day according to how the holiday falls.

Licensing Information

Our program is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Child Care Licensing Division, PO Box 64242, St. Paul, MN 55164-0242

Phone: (651) 431-6500

Fax: (651) 431-7673

Age Categories

Because each location is unique, class sizes and the number of children for each age group served may vary. The license capacity for each location is posted on the Family Communication Board. We follow the MN Department of Human Services Licensing Rules and therefore our maximum group sizes and ratios are as follows:

Age Group	Age Range	Maximum Group Size	Adult to Child Ratio
Infants	6 weeks to 16 months	8	1:4
Toddlers	16-33 months	14	1:7
Preschool	33 months to Kindergarten	20	1:10

Number of Children Served at Each Learning Garden Location (as of May 2021):

	<u>Hamline</u>	<u>Como</u>	<u>IGH</u>	<u>Maplewood</u>
Infants	0	8	12	4
Toddlers	14	18	5	0
Preschool	<u>48</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Licensed Capacity	62	42	37	4

Enrollment Procedures

Families who wish to enroll their children must meet with a staff member to complete an enrollment package. The enrollment package includes:

- Enrollment Form
- Emergency Contact Form
- Tuition Agreement
- Parental Permissions for any occasion of research, experimental procedures, or public relations activities.
- Health Care Summary (To be completed by a Health Care Source within 30 days of child's start date)
- Immunization Record (Required before the child can start)
- Health Care Plan (if applicable, and before care can begin)
- Medication Administration (If applicable)
- Infant Feeding Information (If applicable)
- Getting to Know Your Family form and Individual Learning Plan (Complete with teaching staff within 10 days of enrollment)
- Orientation Form

A non-refundable registration fee of \$ **100.00** per child is due upon enrollment in the program. To reserve a space in advance or hold your space during an extended absence, a \$100.00 deposit is required. This deposit may be applied to the registration fee. If your family receives Child Care Assistance your space will be reserved as soon as the program receives your Child Care Authorization, and the program will then bill CCA for the registration fee.

The Learning Garden will provide education and childcare services to children without regard to race, creed, religion, or economic level. Any child between the ages of 6 weeks and kindergarten entry is eligible to apply for enrollment. The enrollment process

starts with the completion of the required enrollment forms. The enrollment fee and first week's tuition are due on your child's first day of attendance.

The Emergency Contact Form lists your child's emergency contacts and authorized escorts. Please advise the center of any changes to your address, home telephone number, work telephone numbers, emergency numbers, place of employment and persons authorized to pick up your child. We require at least two working emergency phone numbers at all times. **Changes in authorized escorts can only be made in person.**

Tuition and Fees

Deposit

A non-refundable \$100.00 deposit is required to reserve a space in advance. This deposit will be applied to your account and will be applied towards the registration fee upon enrollment.

Registration Fee

The one-time \$100 registration fee is non-refundable and due at the time of enrollment. If a child has withdrawn from the program and subsequently re-enrolls, a new registration fee is due at that time.

Tuition

Tuition is pre-paid and due by 6:00 p.m. Thursday for the next week. Monthly tuition is due by the last day of the month for the next month. All electronic payments will be processed on Thursday for weekly payments and on the last day of the month for monthly payments. If either of those days are a holiday or a weekend the payments will be processed the business day before. Late tuition will result in a late fee of \$20 per day. Tuition in arrears of more than 2 weeks will result in disenrollment.

The full tuition amount is due even if the child is absent for one or more days due to illness or any other reason. The full tuition is due for the weeks in which the center is closed for the observance of holidays and staff development days (13 days total). Tuition will not be prorated for absences or closures.

Two weeks written notice is required prior to the last day of attendance. If proper notice is not given, you are responsible for any fees or tuition that is due for the final two weeks regardless of your child's attendance.

Tuition rate increases generally take place each October. These increases are needed to adjust for the cost of materials and annual staff increases.

Vacation Policy

Any child enrolled for six consecutive months may take a one-week vacation and waive one week tuition fees for the one-week absence. We ask that you request vacation in writing at least two weeks prior to taking your vacation with the Site Supervisor. Unearned vacations or lengthy absences will require a re-registration fee or could result in losing your space. See the Site Supervisor for more information regarding this policy.

Returned Checks

Returned checks will result in a \$50.00 NSF fee and all future payments may need to be in the form of cash, cashier's check or money order.

Tuition Refunds

Staff assignments are based on enrollment; therefore tuition refunds cannot be given if your child is absent.

Late Pick-Up Fee

A late fee will be charged for each child remaining in our center after closing. Fifteen (\$15) dollars will be charged for every 15-minute increment your child remains in the center after closing. This amount is per child. The late fee must be paid to the staff at the time of pickup. The late fee must be paid before your child can return and tuition will not be adjusted or refunded for any days missed due to non-payment of late fees.

If a parent or emergency contact is not able to be contacted after 30 minutes of the center closing or does not arrive within 30 minutes of last contact, the authorities will be called to take responsibility for the child(ren).

Child Care Assistance

Our center accepts child care assistance subsidies from the surrounding counties. Children may not attend until the center receives a current authorization. Families who receive child care subsidy must pay all required co-pays on time and children cannot attend the center if the child care authorization is not current unless the parent pre-pays the weekly tuition. Co-pay balances are reported to the county bi-weekly. If you wish to have your child attend while there is a break in your authorization you must adhere to

the tuition policies mentioned above. We do not currently charge the difference between what the county pays and our tuition.

Families receiving child care subsidy only receive a certain number of absent days per year. If you receive CCA and your child exceeds the allowed number of absent days, you will be responsible for the tuition for the absent days.

Included in the Tuition

The Learning Garden strives to refrain from charging our parents excessive fees. Included in our tuition are field trips, curriculum activities, diapers, wipes, infant formula, cereal and jar food. We also will provide sunscreen. If you would like to provide an alternate brand to the items provided you may do so, but adjustments will not be made to the tuition if parents choose to do so. Please speak with the Site Supervisor or your child's teacher regarding this.

Health Requirements

Health Care Summary and Immunizations

Your child's immunization record is due by your child's start date. Your child's Health Care Summary is due within 30 days of their start date. Children who do not have a current Health Care Summary or immunization record cannot remain in the center and will be excluded from care. Children in our Infant and Toddler classrooms must have a new Health Summary form completed before they can complete their transition to the next age group.

A copy of your child's physical exam and health records will be kept on file and reviewed periodically. It is your responsibility to notify the center when your child receives new immunizations and to furnish proof of them to the center. A current immunization record must remain on file at the center for continued enrollment. If an immunization is not given in a timely manner or cannot be given, a note from the physician will be required to remain in the program. An immunization schedule is available from the Site Supervisor. All children must be immunized to attend our program and we will exclude any under-immunized child so that other children in the program are not at risk.

Illness

Children who are new to the day care environment may experience more frequent bouts of illness (colds, ear infections, etc.) due to increased exposure to other children who are ill. During the first few weeks your child will be building and strengthening his/her

immune system. We take every precaution to safeguard your child against illness; however, keep in mind that you may need to make alternate arrangements for childcare during this time. In the event of a reported contagious illness or exposure to a contagious illness, we will post information by the sign in computer and/or send information via our messaging system.

If a child becomes sick while at the center, the child must be isolated from other children in care and the parent called immediately. Parents must pick up their child within one hour of being called. A sick child must be supervised at all times. The license holder must exclude a child:

- A. with a reportable illness or condition as specified in part 4605.7040 that the commissioner of health determines to be contagious, and a physician determines has not had sufficient treatment to reduce the health risk to others
- B. with chicken pox until the child is no longer infectious or until the lesions are crusted over
- C. who has vomited two or more times since admission that day
- D. who has had three or more abnormally loose stools since admission that day
- E. who has contagious conjunctivitis or pus draining from the eye
- F. who has a bacterial infection such as streptococcal pharyngitis or impetigo and has not completed 24 hours of antimicrobial therapy
- G. who has unexplained lethargy
- H. who has lice, ringworm, or scabies that is untreated and contagious to others
- I. who has a 100-degree Fahrenheit axillary or higher temperature of undiagnosed origin before fever reducing medication is given
- J. who has an undiagnosed rash or a rash attributable to a contagious illness or condition
- K. who has significant respiratory distress
- L. who is not able to participate in child care program activities with reasonable comfort
- M. who requires more care than the program staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in care.

NOTE: IN THE EVENT OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY OR ACCIDENT, WE WILL CALL 911 AND THEN CONTACT THE PARENT.

Medicine

Our policy is to dispense as little medication as possible so if your child needs medication that you can administer at home, we would prefer it. In order to administer any medicine prescribed by your physician you must sign a medical permission slip. The medication must be in its original container that clearly states the prescribed

dosage, name, date and physician's name. A record of the amount of medicine dispensed will be kept on file. Non-prescribed items such as Tylenol, cough syrups, or ointments which are dosed on a child's weight must be accompanied by a physician's written approval. All medications must be stored out of reach of children so please do not leave medications in your child's backpack or cubby.

Pediatric First Aid Procedures

Staff members will follow appropriate pediatric first-aid procedures for all accidents. Staff members are trained in first aid through a certified first-aid course and during their orientation period.

When an accident occurs at the center the teachers will complete an accident form and attempt to contact you to notify you of the injury. If we feel the accident warrants medical attention, we may require you to pick up your child so that they may be seen by a medical professional.

Insurance

The Learning Garden carries general liability insurance and provides accident insurance for all enrolled children while participating in center activities. The parent's insurance is primary, with Midwest Child Development dba The Learning Garden's insurance being secondary, on a coinsurance basis.

Health Care Plans and Special Diets

If your child has a medical condition such as epilepsy, asthma, is allergic to bee stings or has a food or medication allergy, we require that a Health Care Plan be completed by your physician before they can receive care. This plan will help staff better understand your child's condition in order to care for them properly and to administer the proper medication as required.

If your child has an allergy or health condition that requires a plan, they will not be able to attend until the Health Care Plan is completed by the doctor.

We post a list of children with special diets, allergies or Health Care Plans visibly in the classroom so that teachers are aware of them and can respond accordingly (permission is obtained on the Emergency Contact Form).

Arrival and Departure

Signing Your Child In and Out

The Learning Garden's responsibility begins when you sign your child into the center. Under no circumstances should your child be allowed to find his/her way into the center or to his/her classroom alone.

Our classroom instruction begins at 9:00am (right after breakfast). It is very important for all children to be in the center by 9:30 am so that they can get the full learning experience each day. No child will be admitted after 9:30 am unless a prior arrangement was made with the Site Supervisor.

There are several reasons we are implementing this policy. We are a learning program and when children are not in attendance, they miss an opportunity to participate in community building activities like circle time, the discussion of the daily activities and sign-in for the preschool groups which is a vital part of the day. We also need to know how many children will be in attendance, so we can plan our staffing and meal counts for each day.

Obviously, exceptions will be made for weather and traffic related issues, but we ask that you call us if you are running late. If you know of an appointment or situation in which you will need to bring your child in late, please inform the Site Supervisor at least one day before.

It is important that you sign your child in and out every day as this information is used to monitor attendance, assist with staff ratios and also provides us a list of who is in the building in case of an emergency. Keeping attendance records is required by child care licensing and the Child Care Assistance Program.

Release of Children

We will only release a child to the parent who enrolled the child or an authorized escort. Parents are the only persons authorized to designate an alternative pick-up for their child. An alternative pick-up designee must be on file with the center. Parents who wish to arrange for an alternative pick-up for someone who is not on their Emergency Contact form must sign an authorization form in person. The alternative person must present Photo I.D. and sign for the child's release. **No child will be released to anyone who is not currently listed as an alternative pick-up and does not have proper I.D.** Phone calls to release a child will not be accepted and a release will not be permitted.

If a person suspected of known abuse attempts to pick up the child the staff will follow the instructions given by the authorities or from the agency the abuse was reported to and we will not allow the child to leave with the individual. The parents or authorized pick-ups will be called to pick up the child.

We discourage children to be taken out of the center by a parent or authorized pick-up that appears to be intoxicated or incapacitated. We will call a cab or contact alternate emergency contacts in this situation. As mandated reporters we must make a report to the appropriate authorities when children are taken from the program by someone who is intoxicated or incapacitated.

Visitors

The Learning Garden has an open-door policy. Parents are welcome to visit the center anytime during the hours of operation. Visitors should check in with the Site Supervisor and sign in and out on the Visitor Log.

Building Security and Access

Depending on the center location, there may be a secured entrance. Parents are encouraged not to admit anyone unfamiliar to the building. If you see someone unfamiliar in the building or that looks out of place, please offer to walk them to the office to check in or notify an employee. Parents should not share their access codes with anyone and to report any lost codes or key cards to the Site Supervisor.

Parking Lot Safety

Safety is always our highest priority. Please do not leave your child or your child's siblings alone in the car at any time. Please do not leave your car unlocked or any valuables in plain view. All children are required to have appropriate car seats, boosters and seat belts. Our staff is required to report any violations to the authorities. If you need a resource for car seats, please see the Site Supervisor.

When dropping off and picking up your child you may park in the front of the building, but if you plan on staying at the center for more than a few minutes to talk with teachers or participate in the classroom activities, please use a parking space or park on the street so that other families make take advantage of the area.

In respect of our neighbors please turn down your music and do not toss trash or cigarette butts out the windows of your vehicle. We discourage idling vehicles (buses, families' automobiles) in our parking areas, except if vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures.

Occasionally grandparents, friends or relatives pick up your children. Please tell them of our parking lot procedures. We appreciate everyone being cooperative with parking lot safety. Thank you for your safe driving and alertness.

Child Care Program Plan and Center Policies

Child Care Program Plan and Policies and Procedures

Our Child Care Program Plan is available for you to review at any time. There is a copy on our website www.thelearninggarden.us. If you wish to review our Policies and Procedures Manual or Emergency Preparedness Plan, simply ask a staff member, as it is located in the office. Annually we ask for parent input to make improvements to our program and to our policies and procedures. Our policies and procedures are also reviewed annually by our Health Consultant, our lead teachers and the administration.

Our Health Consultant visits monthly to review our Health and Safety policies, to make recommendations for improvement and to share current research and information on the topics of health, safety and nutrition.

Birthday Celebrations

We feel your child's birthday is a special event and all the children enjoy celebrations. Your child may bring a commercially prepared treat for his/her entire class, but we encourage you to think of alternative ways to celebrate such as a craft or cooking project or arranging a guest reader. We request you notify your child's teacher in advance and if you plan on bringing treats or visitors. If you would like to invite guests or take photographs and we ask that you speak with the Site Supervisor ahead of time.

Clothing

Please dress your child for action since we paint, play outside, and participate in many exciting and "messy" activities. Casual clothing that allows free movement is encouraged. Children will play outside all year round except in weather extremes. Please dress your child appropriately for comfort and safety. Your child needs a change of clothing in the center at all times. Please remember to replace clothing at the end of each season. Be sure to label all belongings with a permanent marker. No clothing with drawstrings and no flip flops or sandals are permitted for safety reasons. Your child should wear closed-toe shoes such as tennis shoes to avoid injuries

Personal Belongings

Children are required to leave toys, food and money at home. All children share the learning materials at each center as part of the learning process. It is much easier to learn to share center toys than one's own "special treasures". On occasion a teacher may allow children to bring items from home such as photos, books or a stuffed animal. If your child requires a special item for security or attachment, please feel free to discuss it with your child's teacher.

Pets

Due to the risk of injury, allergic reactions or disease, no pets are allowed in the program except contained insects and fish or professionally certified therapy or service animals. All visiting animals (petting zoos, ponies, pets, etc.) must be in good health and we will inform parents before pets and/or animals are brought into the program.

Public Relations and Research Policy

A permission form is provided in the enrollment packet for walks, media and over the counter products. We will obtain a separate written parental permission before each occasion of research, experimental procedure, or public relations activity involving your child. You may add or revoke permission for all items at any time.

Weapons

School Safety is very important to the school staff, students and parents. Children cannot bring any kind of weapon or dangerous object to school. We want the children to know that all guns, knives, steak knives, butter knives, toy guns, and BB guns are banned from school. Toys that look like weapons are also banned. We do not allow the children to make pretend weapons or pretend to shoot guns at school.

Threats

Because children and staff need to feel safe at school, we cannot tolerate children or adults who make threats of violence against another child, adult or staff member. Children and adults will be held accountable, by policy, for inappropriate remarks. Children need to learn what unacceptable communication is. Our policy requires that parents and staff meet to discuss the appropriate action if a child or parent violates the rules against “weapons” and “threats”.

Communication

Daily Communication

You will be provided with a daily schedule of activities your child will experience. Field trips, special events, and optional enrichment programs are posted on the Family Bulletin Board for each classroom. We encourage you to review it daily.

For parents of Infants and toddlers a Daily Report (paper or electronic) will be used to communicate information about your child’s mood, eating, diapering and toileting, naptime, and play experiences. Infant Parents, we ask that you share your child’s last

diapering and feeding time with the staff upon drop off or in the Daily Notes application each day so that the teachers are aware of how your child is starting their day. Preschool Parents may request a daily report if desired.

Newsletters and Postings

Each classroom will provide parents with monthly classroom newsletter which will also be posted on the Parent Board in the classroom. The center will send out newsletters quarterly about special events and happenings. Information about resources and community events will be posted on the main bulletin board by the sign in/out area.

Phone Calls and Emails

Parents are welcome to call the classroom during the day to check on their child. If the phone isn't answered it means that the staff are busy with the children. If it is an emergency, please contact the Owner/Director, Angela Kapp at (763) 221-1194 or the Assistant Director, Ashley Lindback at (651) 785-7196.

You can also contact your child's teacher via email as all teachers have an individual email account (usually first name@midwestchilddevelopment.com).

Parent Board

A Parent Board is located in the entry to the building that contains our license and inspections, contact numbers for the owner and licensing, grievance procedures, our mission and philosophy and important reminders.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

In addition to meeting at orientation, parents have an opportunity to meet with their child's teacher during scheduled parent-teacher conferences and home visits. We encourage you to schedule any additional conferences you desire. We will develop goals for your child with you and provide a written assessment for each parent to review at conference time. We will offer three (3) conferences a year, but you can arrange a conference at any time during the year. You can also request a home visit if it is more convenient.

Grievance Policy

It is the policy of The Learning Garden to provide parents with a grievance policy for mutual resolution. It is our goal to satisfy the family and build a respectful partnership. The Site Supervisor will review all grievances.

It is our policy that:

1. The parents first try to discuss their concerns with one of the teachers assigned to your child's class.
2. If you are not satisfied that your concerns have been addressed to your comfort, we ask that you contact the Site Supervisor. The Site Supervisor will investigate your complaint or concern and will schedule a meeting with you within two (2) business days.
3. If you continue to feel as if your concerns have not been addressed, contact the Owner/Director, Angela Kapp at 763-221-1194 or the Assistant Director, Ashley Lindback at (651) 785-7196.
4. If you feel the center violated a licensing rule you may contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Licensing Division at (651) 431-6500.
5. All grievances will be documented listing the date, time, all parties involved in the grievance and any resolution. All grievances are confidential between only those parties having a need to know.
6. There will be no effect to any child whose parent/guardian brings a grievance to the center. The names and phone numbers of the Director and controlling individuals are maintained by Midwest Child Development and available upon request.

Meals and Snacks

Our nutrition program provides meals that meet or exceed the USDA requirements for nutrition. Our Center provides breakfast, lunch and snacks. We strive to provide a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. We do not serve pork and we are a peanut safe environment. Milk is offered at every meal. Menus are posted and distributed to families monthly.

Breakfast

Breakfast is served between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. If you need to bring your child in late, please call the center to inform the teachers. If an item cannot be held, cereal, fruit and milk will be offered.

Lunch and Afternoon Snack

Lunch is served at 11:30 and our Afternoon Snack is served when the children awake from nap, typically between 2:30 and 3:30 p.m. Children who are at the center over 10 hours will be offered an additional snack at 5:00.

Family Style Meals

Meals will be served family style for infants, toddlers and preschoolers and will be pleasant social experiences for children with opportunities for conversation and to learn independence and competence. We will encourage children to pass items and serve themselves. Infants and toddlers needing assistance will be helped using the hand over hand method for serving.

Infant Feeding

The diets of all infants will be determined by the infant's parent and the center will obtain written instructions at the time of enrollment. The program will ensure that sanitary procedures and practices are used to prepare, handle, and store formula, milk, breast milk, solid foods, and supplements. The staff will offer the child formula or milk and nutritionally adequate solid foods in prescribed quantities at specified time intervals; and label each child's bottle with first and last name. The procedures will be reviewed and certified by the Health Consultant. All infants are to be held during bottle feedings.

Food from Home

The center will provide all food for meals necessary to meet the USDA nutrition requirements. If parents wish to bring treats for a special occasion, permission must be given by the site supervisor and all food must be prepackaged or commercially prepared. If parents wish to provide an alternate meal to the one provided it must meet the USDA requirements and contain all the required components. All food must be labeled with child's first and last name and date and stored properly.

We do not allow outside food and beverages to be brought into the classroom. If your child needs a morning snack due to early arrival or a missed breakfast, please let the teacher know and cereal, milk and fruit will be provided. We do not want the children to be eating sweets, candy, McDonalds, etc. in front of the other children, as we wish to promote healthy eating at all times, and we need to be aware of the types of food brought in to the center due to the allergies of some children (peanuts or strawberries are common food allergies for example). Please see the site supervisor if you have questions about this policy or you need to request a morning or evening snack for your child.

Toothbrushing

If parents wish for their child to brush their teeth after meals, parents can provide a toothbrush, toothpaste and travel case for their child.

Cooking Projects

Teachers may include cooking projects in their lesson plans. If the project contains any of the top foods that cause allergies (milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, soy, wheat) the teacher will check for allergies for all the children in the center and the activity will be listed on the lesson plan.

Water

The staff will offer drinking water to the children throughout the hours of operation and offered at frequent intervals. Drinking water for children will be provided in single service drinking cups or from drinking fountains accessible to children. We discourage the use of sippy cups, water bottles and bottles for children over 12 months, but if parents request, we can accommodate provided that we are able to sanitize the item between each use.

USDA

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the

form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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;

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Curriculum and Educational Goals

The Learning Garden uses a child-centered approach and has chosen the research-based and evidence-based *HighScope* as its curriculum framework.

Our teachers also use *Creative Curriculum*, *Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: Minnesota's Early Learning Standards* and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Position Statement: *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8* to guide teachers in fostering the growth and development in all areas of children's development.

Educational Goals and Objectives (Developmental Areas):

Social: To help children feel comfortable in school, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are a part of the group.

Emotional: To help children experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude toward life.

Cognitive: To help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success, and by helping them acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings.

Physical: To help children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do.

Literacy: To help children develop literacy skills in the areas of listening, speaking, emergent reading and emergent writing.

Mathematics: To help children increase their understanding of mathematical concepts such as logical thinking, number concepts and operations, patterns and relationships, spatial relationships/geometry, measurement and mathematical reasoning.

Science and Technology (Scientific Thinking and Problem-Solving): To help children develop their observational, questioning and investigating skills.

Social Studies: To help children become part of their home and school community by helping them to understand human relationships and the world around them.

Creativity and the Arts: To help children be creative thinkers by allowing opportunities for creative expression and for responding and evaluating creative elements.

Approaches to Learning: To provide opportunities for children to express their curiosity, take risks, use their imagination, invent and to increase their skills in the areas of persistence, reflection and interpretation.

Classroom Learning Areas

The Learning Garden provides opportunities for children to engage in developmentally appropriate activities by organizing the classrooms into learning areas. The Learning Areas and the possible activities include, but are not limited to:

Books/Library: There is an area in the classroom that contains a variety of books that are neatly displayed with covers visible to the children. The area includes a variety of books such as non-fiction, fairy tales, wordless, and books with familiar plots and colorful illustrations. Books reflect the current study topic(s) and reflect the cultures and backgrounds of the children in the class. Books are available to children throughout the day and books are displayed throughout the classroom in all the areas. Opportunities for reading include quiet reading and read-aloud in small or large groups or with individual children.

Blocks and Building: This area contains a variety of materials that will allow children to explore and learn spatial and mathematical concepts, as well as allow for engaging in pretend play. The materials in this area include blocks and building materials, and may include wooden or foam blocks, unit blocks, people, cars, traffic signs, animals, ramps, and garages.

Science and Exploration: This area contains materials that allow children to explore investigate and experiment such as measuring devices, magnets, magnifying glasses, and collections of materials found in nature such as shells, pinecones and rocks.

Math and Manipulatives: This area contains materials that allow children to develop number, color, spatial and problem solving skills such as puzzles, matching games, counting bears, Legos, patterning cards, lacing beads and geometric shapes.

Dramatic Play: This area contains materials that allow children to learn about the world by allowing opportunities to act out the roles of others. Materials in this area may include dishes, dolls, mailbox, dress-up clothing, and child sized furnishings.

Art/Easel: This area contains materials that allow children to express themselves creatively. An easel is available in this area as well materials such as paints, crayons, markers, glue, a variety of paper, and collage materials.

Writing: This area contains materials to engage children in emergent reading and writing. Materials may include pencils, stencils, paper, journals, word cards and alphabet letters.

Sensory: This area contains materials that allow for children to explore materials with their hands and engages their senses. Materials in this area may include sand, water, play-dough, finger paint and glurch.

Large Group: This area allows the children to come together in a large group to promote a sense of community. Activities in this area include group stories or flannel board stories, music and movement activities, class meetings, shared stories or games.

Music and Movement: This area allows children to appreciate music and express themselves through music. Materials in this area may include a CD player, musical instruments, scarves and bean bags.

Quiet Area/Private Spaces: These areas allow children to seek out private space, quiet or to play with one or two other children. These areas may be located in several places in the classroom, could be partially enclosed, be a small table or contain soft elements such as large pillows or child sized furniture.

Daily Schedule and Routines

Each teacher creates a schedule for their classroom which is posted on the Parent Board. The daily schedule will provide for a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities, including individual and small group activities, routines and transitions. The daily schedule will allow time for the following activities:

- Meals and Snacks (breakfast, lunch and p.m. snack)
- Hand Washing
- Toileting, diaper changing or potty training
- Large Group Activities
- Small Group Activities
- Free Choice Play
- Gross Motor Activities (indoor and/or outdoor)
- Quiet, Nap/Rest Time
- Arrival and Departure Rituals
- Story time

*Infants are on their own feeding, diapering and nap schedule with guidance and input from the parents.

Saying Goodbye

Many children enter our program eagerly and transition smoothly from home to school, but for some, saying goodbye and separating from a parent can be challenging. Separation anxiety is developmentally normal and is not uncommon.

Families can help with this adjustment by providing a consistent goodbye routine. This may include arriving at the same time each day, initiating a goodbye ritual like a special kiss or hug and following through with statements such as “One kiss and then it’s time to say goodbye”. Our trained teachers will happily help you with your drop off transition and remember that families are always welcome to call to check in on their child during the day.

Nap and Rest Policies

The Learning Garden has developed nap and rest time policies for toddlers and preschoolers in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Minnesota DHS Licensing Division. The requirements found in Minnesota Rules, part 9503.0050 and state:

Confinement limitation: A child who has completed a nap or rested quietly for 30 minutes must not be required to remain on a cot.

Placement of equipment: Naps and rest must be provided in a quiet area that is physically separated from children who are engaged in an activity that will disrupt a napping or resting child. Cots must be placed so there are clear aisles and unimpeded access for both adults and children on at least one side of each piece of napping and resting equipment. Cots must be placed directly on the floor and must not be stacked when in use.

Bedding: Separate bedding must be provided for each child in care. Bedding and blankets must be washed weekly and when soiled or wet.

At the Learning Garden nap or rest time is a period of time set aside in the schedule to allow children to rest their bodies and recharge. Children will be encouraged to rest on their cots for at least 30 minutes, but after 30 minutes they may play quietly on their cot or in a designated area of the classroom. Teachers cannot require a child to remain on their cot after they have completed a nap, rested for 30 minutes or are unable to fall asleep after 30 minutes. Children's faces are not to be covered with blankets during naptime and there must be enough light to see all the children clearly.

Teachers will discuss the naptime routines with parents upon enrollment and obtain information about their child's naptime routines at home. Teachers will establish regular naptime routines and give children advance warning of the transition to nap time.

Warnings and transitions may include:

- A verbal warning such as "In five minutes book time will be over and it will be time to get on our cots."
- Dimming or turning off the lights (There must be enough light to see all children clearly)
- Turning on quiet music
- Having a story time or playing a tape story
- Allow children to read book on their cots while waiting for everyone to finish lunch and or/ toileting

The period of time set aside on the schedule for nap/quiet time is generally from after lunch (around 12:30) to approximately 2:30 p.m. Children who have "outgrown" naptime will be offered other quiet activities. Because some children do sleep longer than others, teachers will provide quiet activities for the children who are awake.

Infant Sleep Policies

The Learning Garden has developed sleep policies for infants in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Minnesota DHS Licensing Division, Minnesota Statute 245A.1435:

(a) When a license holder is placing an infant to sleep, the license holder must place the infant on the infant's back, unless the license holder has documentation from the infant's physician or advanced practice registered nurse directing an alternative sleeping position for the infant. The physician or advanced practice registered nurse directive must be on a form approved by the commissioner and must remain on file at the licensed location. An infant who independently rolls onto its stomach after being placed to sleep on its back may be allowed to remain sleeping on its stomach if the infant is at least six months of age or the license holder has a signed statement from the parent indicating that the infant regularly rolls over at home.

(b) The license holder must place the infant in a crib directly on a firm mattress with a fitted sheet that is appropriate to the mattress size, that fits tightly on the mattress, and overlaps the underside of the mattress so it cannot be dislodged by pulling on the corner of the sheet with reasonable effort. The license holder must not place anything in the crib with the infant except for the infant's pacifier.

(c) If an infant falls asleep before being placed in a crib, the license holder must move the infant to a crib as soon as practicable and must keep the infant within sight of the license holder until the infant is placed in a crib. When an infant falls asleep while being held, the license holder must consider the supervision needs of other children in care when determining how long to hold the infant before placing the infant in a crib to sleep. The sleeping infant must not be in a position where the airway may be blocked or with anything covering the infant's face.

(d) Placing a swaddled infant down to sleep in a licensed setting is not recommended for an infant of any age and is prohibited for any infant who has begun to roll over independently. However, with the written consent of a parent or guardian according to this paragraph, a license holder may place the infant who has not yet begun to roll over on its own down to sleep in a one-piece sleeper equipped with an attached system that fastens securely only across the upper torso, with no constriction of the hips or legs, to create a swaddle. Prior to any use of swaddling for sleep by a provider licensed under this chapter, the license holder must obtain informed written consent for the use of swaddling from the parent or guardian of the infant on a form provided by the commissioner and prepared in partnership with the Minnesota Sudden Infant Death Center.

At the Learning Garden we discuss your child's sleep schedule with you upon enrollment and make every effort to follow the schedule you would like your infant to follow. All children are assigned a crib, and the sheets and crib railings are washed weekly. No items may be placed in the crib except for the child's pacifier. There may be sleep sacks available or you can provide one for your child. On occasion infants may

have trouble sleeping on their backs in a crib, without a comfort item or in lighted/noisy classrooms, so we will work with you to help your infant adjust.

Outdoor Play

All children, including older infants will participate in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Teachers will provide opportunities for children to play outdoors in their daily schedule. If it is raining hard, there is lightening or severe weather; the children will not go outside. Teachers will use the Child Care Weather Watch chart to determine if it is appropriate to take children outdoors on extreme cold or hot days. If parents do not wish for their child to go outside a doctor's note must be provided.

Field Trips

As part of our daily schedule, we may take the children on a field trip. Field trips are special planned activities that require the children to leave the premises. These activities include walks around the neighborhood, to the neighboring parks, library, and the local merchants.

The following procedures are in place:

- A consent form is signed by the parent when the child is enrolled and kept in the child's file.
- Parents are notified in advance when a field trip is scheduled. Information on the trip is provided for parents to read and once again sign off for verification of details. The details include: date of trip, location of trip, departure time, return time, means of transportation and if we will be having a meal on the trip.
- Whenever we use the local parks, staff members check the grounds before permitting the children to enter the park to ensure the play area is free of hazardous debris.
- All staff carry an emergency/first aid kit which includes emergency contacts, attendance list, first aid supplies, and any required prescription medications. All staff leaving the premises has an emergency cell phone for direct contact with the Center.

Every measure is taken by the staff to ensure a safe play environment when the children are participating in any off-site activities.

Assessment of Children and Conferences

The Learning Garden uses an authentic assessment approach to obtain and provide written information on children's learning and development in the areas of intellectual, physical, social and emotional development. We will assess each child three times per year. The results will be shared with parents during conferences and home visits.

Assessment includes observing, recording, and documenting in various ways what children do. Assessment of a child's progress is essential for curriculum development and is used for several purposes: to plan activities for classroom groups or individual children; to communicate with families; to identify children who may need specialized services; and to evaluate our program.

Parents may request to view their child's portfolio at any time and may review the assessment materials and documents pertaining to staff training on using the assessment system and the validity of the assessment tools. At any time parents can discuss any concerns they may have about the curriculum and/or assessment meeting their child's needs.

The Learning Garden's Assessment Plan includes: 1. Teachers meet with parents within the first 10 days of enrollment to develop a goal, review Orientation Form and review the Getting to Know Your Family Form. 2. Teachers collect documentation and enter observations into the child's assessment portfolio. 3. Teachers meet with parents to discuss assessment results three times per year and develop goals for next assessment period.

Teachers are trained during orientation on our assessment process and retrained each year at the annual staff professional development day. Teachers are checked for assessment reliability on the assessment tool during their first year of employment.

Referrals for Developmental Concerns

If parents or teachers suspects that a child is in need of an evaluation or referral for developmental delays, health concerns, behavior or mental health they will meet and talk about the referral options, such as the family's doctor, the child's school district or a social service agency. The teachers and parents will develop a plan for follow-up together and the site supervisor will assist in obtaining resources. Parental permission to share information is required.

If your child demonstrates challenging behavior which results in injury to their self or others, additional classroom support or complaints from other parents you will be asked to participate fully in the referral process for your child. If you choose not to participate in the referral process and your child continues to exhibit challenging behaviors your child

may be asked to leave our program. We are willing to work with all families through many different situations, providing the family is willing to work with us to meet the needs of all children.

Children with Special Needs

Children with special educational, mental health and health needs are welcome in our program. Our program will work with the family and any special education programs to ensure that children receive needed services or adaptations and that an Individual Child Care Plan is developed in coordination with the teachers, parents and specialists.

When children who already have an IEP (Individual Education Plan) or IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) are enrolled the program will set up a meeting with the school district, teachers and parents to review the IEP or IFSP and determine how the program will meet the child's needs.

Behavior Guidance

Each child is a special and unique person deserving of our respect, nurturing and guidance. We use positive methods of guiding and relating to children. Our teachers will remain positive and supportive while your child is learning to assume responsibility for his/ her actions. Guidance will be consistent based on individual needs directing your child toward an acceptable expression of his/her feelings. The guidance techniques that the teachers will use include redirecting and offering choices to your child and guiding him/her in problem solving methods.

Positive Behavior Guidance

As children grow and develop an understanding of right and wrong, they need rules and guidance to learn acceptable and non-acceptable behaviors. It is the policy of The Learning Garden to ensure that there is always a positive model of acceptable behavior, starting with our staff. It is our goal to redirect behavior issues through planning and setting limits and leading by example. The purpose in discipline is to encourage your child to learn self-control.

For infants, toddlers, and preschool children, acceptable behavior will be modeled. For toddlers and preschool children, unacceptable behavior will be explained. Each child will be reminded of the rules and given positive alternatives to correct their behavior. It is our goal to redirect any negative behavior to more constructive activity. We will teach the children alternative problem-solving methods by empowering them to make more positive choices, which allows them to be a part of the problem-solving process.

Prohibited Actions

It is our number one goal to protect the safety of our children and staff while providing immediate and directly related corrective action for unacceptable behavior. At no time will your child be subjected to spanking, hitting or verbal shaming by staff or any of the children. This will not be tolerated. The only time a child can be physically restrained will be to protect them or others from harm. The need to physically restrain a child will be documented and a written copy will be given to the parent explaining why the action was necessary. No child will be subjected to the use of mechanical restraints, such as tying. No child will be deprived of food, light, warmth, clothing or medical care as a form of punishment for unacceptable behavior, or otherwise. No child will be punished for lapses in toilet habit.

Persistent Unacceptable Behavior

“Persistent Unacceptable Behavior” requires that there be a written procedure for dealing with persistent unacceptable behavior that will require an increased amount of our staff’s time. Therefore, our staff will observe and document any unacceptable behaviors of your child and actions taken by staff person. The staff will work towards helping your child understand that their behavior was unacceptable, remind the child of the rules and help the child find more positive way to behave. The parent will receive a written or verbal consultation and behavior and corrective action will be documented in our files. If the behavior continues a conference will be held with the parent to develop a plan to direct the child.

Separation from the Group

No child will be separated (aka given a “Timeout”) from the group unless all other efforts to guide the child’s behavior have been ineffective. If your child is given a time out he/she will remain in the class in view of the teaching staff. The child will return to group after the child stops or gains control of the unacceptable behavior. Any separation from the group will be documented listing the child’s name, date and time. The documentation will indicate all other methods that were used to stop the negative behavior prior to the child being separated from the group. If a child needs to be separated 3 or more times in one day the parent will be called and a notation will be made on the log. If the child is separated 5 times or more in one week, or 8 times or more in two weeks, the behavior will be documented, and a meeting will be called with the parents to develop a plan to address the behavior (MN Rule 9503.0055 Subp.4&5). At no time will children between the ages 6 weeks-16 months be separated from the group as a means of behavior guidance.

Suspension and Expulsion

Our goal is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures. The circumstances under which types of exclusion may occur include:

- When a parent or family member threatens a staff member, child, other parent or administrator.
- When parents/guardians fail to participate in the referral process or behavior guidance plan.
- When the behavior of the child is unsafe and puts the program, child or other children at risk

Before a decision to exclude is considered, the following steps must occur:

- Documentation of the child's behavior is recorded
- A referral form is completed by the teacher or administrator
- A behavior plan is created with the parents that includes the child's strengths, goals and positive behavior support strategies
- The teachers, administrators and parents have met with the early childhood coach/consultant.

Exclusionary measures are considered only when all other possible interventions have been exhausted, and there is agreement that exclusion is in the best interest of the child.

When exclusionary measures must be taken, the program will offer assistance to the family in accessing services and an alternative placement.

Emergency Procedures

Emergency Closings

In determining whether the center will close for severe weather or an emergency, the Owner will make the decision based on factors such as the temperature/wind chill (extreme cold), road conditions (hazardous or unsafe), whether the local school districts are closed, whether something creates an unsafe condition for children (loss of heat, air conditioning or water, shortage of staff, etc.), and whether closing is in the best interest of the children, families and staff.

Closing information will be submitted to WCCO and posted on our website www.thelearninggarden.us. We will do our best to inform all of our families in a timely effective manner of any emergency closings via our messaging system in COR.

If a severe weather emergency or other emergency is declared during the business day, parents will be called to pick up their children and staff will remain with children until all children are picked up. Snacks will be available to children if needed.

Emergency Preparedness

The center will conduct monthly tornado drills from April to September and record in a log indicating the time and date. At most of our sites, the basement, bathrooms or hallways are the designated area for the emergency shelter in the event of a tornado or other natural disaster.

Emergency Contacts, a cell phone, attendance list and first aid kit are to be with each group in an emergency.

Staff Training of Emergencies

All staff will receive training on emergency procedures upon hire as part of their orientation. Emergency Procedures are posted in each classroom and in all rooms/spaces in the program. Procedures are reviewed annually and updated as necessary. Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom and the primary and secondary evacuation routes will be marked. Staff is trained on use of a fire extinguisher, how to cut off power, what to do in a lockdown situation and where emergency equipment is located.

First Aid and CPR

All staff will complete training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and in the treatment of obstructed airways that includes CPR techniques for infants and children, as well as pediatric first aid within 90 days after starting work.

Safety and Sanitation

The goal of The Learning Garden is to provide a safe, secure, and healthy environment for the children in our care. We regularly monitor, inspect and evaluate our program to ensure that all potential safety issues are addressed. We are committed to ensuring that staff members are following all health and safety policies and procedures, including our cleaning and sanitizing schedule. Our policies and procedures follow strict guidelines for:

- Hand Washing
- Diapering and Toileting

- Food Preparation and Service
- Hygiene Practices
- Administration of Medications
- Cleaning and Sanitation of toys, materials and equipment
- Daily cleaning of the center
- Playground Safety
- Classroom Safety
- Supervision of Children (All children will be supervised by sight and sound at all times, including while sleeping and using the bathroom).
- Emergency Procedures, including first aid and handling bodily fluids

If you have any questions or concerns about our Health and Safety policies or procedures, please speak with the Site Supervisor or your child's teacher.

Mandated Reporting Policy for Programs Providing Services to Children

All staff must follow the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) Maltreatment of Minors Mandated Reporting policy:

What to Report

Maltreatment includes egregious harm, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, substantial child endangerment, threatened injury, and mental injury. Maltreatment must be reported if you have witnessed or have reason to believe that a child is being or has been maltreated within the last three years.

Who Must Report

- If you work in a licensed facility, you are a “mandated reporter” and are legally required (mandated) to report maltreatment. You cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility.
- In addition, people who are not mandated reporters may voluntarily report maltreatment.

Where to Report

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.
- Reports concerning suspected maltreatment of children, or other violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules, in facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, should be made to the Licensing Division's Central Intake line at 651-431-6600.
- Incidents of suspected maltreatment of children occurring within a family, in the community, at a family child care program, or in a child foster care home, should be

reported to the local county social services agency at 651-266-4444 or local law enforcement at 651-777-8191.

When to Report

- Mandated reporters must make a report to one of the agencies listed above immediately (as soon as possible but no longer than 24 hours).

Information to Report

- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the maltreatment (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected maltreatment occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

Failure to Report

- A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been maltreated and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor.
- In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from a position allowing direct contact with, or access to, persons receiving services from programs, organizations, and/or agencies that are required to have individuals complete a background study by the Department of Human Services as listed in Minnesota Statutes, section 245C.03.

Retaliation Prohibited

- An employer of any mandated reporter is prohibited from retaliating against (getting back at):
 - an employee for making a report in good faith; or
 - a child who is the subject of the report.
 - If an employer retaliates against an employee, the employer may be liable for damages and/or penalties.

Staff Training

The license holder must train all mandated reporters on their reporting responsibilities, according to the training requirements in the statutes and rules governing the licensed program. The license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

Provide Policy to Parents

For licensed child care centers, the mandated reporting policy must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment and must be available upon request

Internal Review

- When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care.
- The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:
 - related policies and procedures were followed
 - the policies and procedures were adequate
 - there is a need for additional staff training
 - the reported event is similar to past events with the children, or the services involved
 - there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

Primary and Secondary Person or Position to Ensure Reviews are Completed

The internal review will be completed by the Site Supervisor. If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, the Director or Assistant Director will be responsible for completing the internal review.

Documentation of Internal Review

The facility must document completion of the internal review and make internal reviews accessible to the commissioner immediately upon the commissioner's request.

Corrective Action Plan

Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan to correct any current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder.

Staff Training

Staff will be trained on the Mandated Reporting Policy, the process for internal reviews and when a need has been determined by an internal review as part of the corrective action plan.

Our Learning Garden Team

All teachers and classroom assistants meet or exceed the qualifications specified by the Minnesota Department of Human Services Licensing Rules. The Learning Garden selects its teachers and assistants on the basis of their educational background, experience in early childhood and their love of children. All teaching staff and personnel who work with children are required to pass a background check, attend ongoing professional training and be First Aid and CPR certified within 90 days of employment.

We assign teaching staff to work with specific groups of children and keep children with their primary teacher for as long as possible. We employ float teachers who get to know all the children, families and routines of the center to ensure children have stability and predictable routines.

All teachers are required to maintain the required ratios and group sizes specified in our Child Care Program Plan. This may mean to ensure ratios and group sizes are maintained your child may “visit” another classroom for a short period of time or at a specific time each day (For example, toddlers and preschoolers may be combined during the opening or closing hours).

Our Child Care Program Plan, Policies and Procedures, Emergency Preparedness Plan, Risk Reduction Plan, and Family Handbook are available by request by speaking with a staff member or member of administration.

We hope you found this Family Handbook to be easy to read, fair and consistent with your family’s goals and needs. Please be sure to discuss any questions, comments, concerns with the Site Supervisor for your location. Again, we are happy to have you as part of The Learning Garden Family!

Family Resources

This is a small list of resources for children and families in our community:
(links available via online copy by clicking on the underlined resource)

- Think Small (formerly Resources for Child Caring) provides assistance with child care searches, paying for child care, scholarships, understanding child development, classes and parent support.

Phone: 651-641-0305

Fax: 651-645-0990

Inquiries: info@thinksmall.org

Mailing Address:

10 Yorkton Court St. Paul, MN 55117

For scholarship information, call 651-665-0150 or 1-866-807-6021 or email scholarships@thinksmall.org

- MFIP (Minnesota Family Investment Plan) helps families with children meet their basic needs, while helping parents move to financial stability through work.

Economic Assistance and Employment Supports Division

PO Box 64951

St. Paul, MN 55164-0951

Phone: 651-431-4000

Fax: 651-431-7526

- Child Care Assistance through the State of Minnesota can help to make quality child care affordable for income-eligible families.

Ramsey County Community Human Service Department

160 East Kellogg Boulevard

St. Paul, MN 55101-1494

651-266-4019

Or

Think Small (Ramsey County contracted agency)

10 Yorkton Ct.

St. Paul, MN 55117

651-641-6665

- MN Child Care Resource and Referral Network: helps families find child care and understand their care options, supports child care providers through grants and education, and informs the community on the importance of child care.

Child Care Aware of Minnesota
 10 River Park Plaza, Suite 820, Saint Paul, MN 55107
 T: 651-290-9704
 F: 651-290-9785

- NAEYC: The National Association of Young Children is the world's largest organization working on behalf of young children with nearly 80,000 members, a national network of more than 300 state and local Affiliates, and a growing global alliance of like-minded organizations.

1313 L Street, NW, Suite 500
 Washington, DC 20005
 Phone 202-232-8777
 Toll free: 800-424-2460 or 866-NAEYC-4U

- Parent Aware: Parent Aware gives you the tools and information to find the best quality child care and early education for your child.

888.291.9811
<http://parentaware.org/partners/>

- Wilder Foundation, Provides children and family services, offers counseling and family support programs

451 Lexington Parkway North
 Saint Paul, MN 55104
 Phone: 651-280-2000
 Email: webmaster@wilder.org

- Early Childhood Family Education: Saint Paul Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) offers parent and early childhood education for families with children between birth and kindergarten age.

1845 Sheridan Avenue
 Saint Paul, MN 55116
 651-793-5410
ecfe@spps.org

- Early Childhood Special Education: (ECSE) in the St. Paul Public Schools provides special education services to children ages birth to kindergarten. Settings including home, community and school-based early childhood programs.

360 Colborne St. Paul, MN 55102

Main: 651-767-8321

Early Childhood Special Ed (ECSE): 651-744-8094

Special Ed Family Engagement: 651-767-3437

Student Placement: 651-632-3773

Ombudsperson: 651-767-8394

- Head Start: Head Start helps families with low incomes by encouraging financial independence for parents, and helps to improve the health and social skills of children from birth to age five.

450 Syndicate Street North, Suite 5

Saint Paul, MN 55104

651-603-5977

- Early Childhood Screening: Provides early childhood screening to children ages 3 to kindergarten entry and helps for identify concerns before the child enters school.

Early Childhood Screening Office 651-632-3746

Student Placement Center: 2102 University Avenue West

- Help Me Grow: Can provide information on any concerns you have about the development of your child including behavior problems or mental health concerns (birth to 5 years of age).

MDE.ECSE@state.mn.us

1-866-693-GROW (4769)

- Minnesota Dental Association/Give Kids a Smile provides dental services to underserved children.

800-950-3368

info@mndental.org

1335 Industrial Boulevard, Suite 200

Minneapolis, MN 55413-4801

- Women, Infants and Children (WIC): Provides food vouchers that can be used to purchase infant formula, milk and other specified foods at participating stores within a defined time period.

St. Paul - Ramsey County Public Health
555 Cedar Street St. Paul, MN 55101
(651) 266-1300

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Provides supplemental food benefits based on your income and expenses. Your county will determine your benefit amount. Apply online at www.BridgetoBenefits.org

Ramsey County Human Services
160 E. Kellogg Blvd. St. Paul, MN 55101
Phone: 651-266-4444
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