



Norfolk Early Learning Center

Love. Learn. Grow.

Parent Handbook

Our Mission

The Norfolk Early Learning Center exists to provide high quality childcare for infants and toddlers, an educational preschool program and before and after school enrichment for school age children. Our program is designed to meet the needs of the whole family through nurturing, educational instruction, community involvement and bridging the connection between home life and education.

Philosophy

We believe in the development of the whole child. Our curriculum is designed to focus on the creative, emotional, intellectual, physical, and social growth of each individual. The purpose of our approach is to foster competency in the young child. While the emphasis is on children, family involvement is encouraged and supported.

We have several goals for children.

- to be competent and confident in their abilities
- to be self-directed in a constructive, creative manner
- to be successful in future educational experiences
- to develop a love for learning and the ability to know how to learn
- to develop self-control and a sense of right and wrong
- to feel good about who they are
- to learn cooperation with other children as well as adults
- to reach their full potential in emotional, intellectual, physical and social development

Principles of Child Development and Learning

- Development occurs in a relatively orderly sequence, with later abilities, skills, and knowledge building on those already acquired.
- Development proceeds at varying rates from child to child as well as unevenly within different areas of each child's functioning.
- Early experiences have both cumulative and delayed effects on each child's development; optimal periods exist for certain types of development and learning.
- Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple cultural and social contexts.
- Children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experiences as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their own understandings of the world around them.
- Play is an important vehicle for children as well as a reflection of children's development.
- Children develop and learn best in the context of a community where they are safe and valued, and their physical needs are met.
- Parents are a child's first teacher and an important influence in their life.

History

Our story is a simple one. Two co-workers shared a passion for providing the best possible care and learning experiences for young children. Our experiences and many role models along the way led us to believe in the power of hard work, determination and friendship. After many years of imagining a place of our own, the stars aligned for us when we saw our dream of creating our own business realized, at a time when we least expected it. We took a leap of faith and intend to see our goals of caring for and teaching Norfolk's youngest citizens. Paige Corey & Kailyn Nadeau, Founders & Co-Directors

We have many years of experience between the two of us-let us introduce ourselves!

Paige got her start in the field of early childhood back in 1998 when she began working at the Winsted Area Child Care Center after high school each day. Throughout her time there, she went from a substitute to Preschool Teacher, to ultimately becoming the Executive Director. Paige received her Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education from Northwestern CT Community College and is currently finishing her Bachelor's degree in Child Studies. Her countless hours of professional development, budgeting, community collaborative meetings and classroom work, have given her a multitude of experiences to bring to the table. Paige lives in Norfolk with her husband, daughter and son.

Kailyn is a lifelong resident of Norfolk and feels a very strong attachment to this town and the people in it! Her first experiences with local children range from babysitting and working in the church nursery to teaching swim lessons at Tobey Pond. Kailyn graduated from Plymouth State University in 2002 with a Bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, the main focus being Early Childhood Studies. Less than a week after graduation, she began working as a Toddler Teacher at Winsted Area Child Care Center. Before long, she became the Head Teacher of the program, supervising 8 classrooms and 25 staff. Kailyn is currently working on her Master's degree and lives here in town with her husband and 3 sons.

Together, we have experience with State of Connecticut licensing regulations and have led a program through accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. We are First Aid, CPR and Emergency Med certified, licensed Head Teachers, have worked with all age groups, have extensive knowledge in planning and implementing curriculum and most of all, we love to have fun in the classroom!

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Norfolk Early Learning Center subscribes to a policy of nondiscrimination and will conduct all practices relating to our program in a manner that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status or disability.

A Special Learning Experience

Our goal is to provide you, the families, with a sense of complete security, in leaving your child in our care each day. Your child will be cared for in a manner that aligns with best practice in early childhood education. We are big fans of hugs, reading stories and dancing, however we take pride in our curriculum and teaching! While in our care, your children will be taught the value of kindness and friendship while be encouraged to discover the world around them.

In addition to the daily routines such as mealtimes, diapering and potty training, our days will consist of a daily schedule. This will include circle time, creative expression, music & movement, early literacy, and math & science activities, to name a few.

Discipline Policy

At Norfolk Early Learning Center, we believe in guiding children in making choices that keep themselves and others safe. We set realistic expectations that children are developmentally able to live up to. We believe in positive reinforcement and praising children when they are being good, rather than dwelling on negative behaviors. Often times children need to be redirected in order to elicit a positive outcome. Our program will strive for consistency in discipline and always refrain from exclusion and punishments that are not age appropriate. The goal is to teach children positive and thoughtful ways to interact with one another. We will always communicate concerning behaviors to parents in an effort to provide consistency for the child and ultimately, resolve the problem. NELC is committed to best practice when it comes to discipline, therefore, children will always be supervised by staff during disciplinary actions; we prohibit any physical restraint, unless such restraint is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or other people. Similarly, we prohibit any discipline practices that are abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating or frightening to children. Our many years of experience have taught us that you get more of what you focus on, so positive interactions are the key to promoting a healthy classroom environment.

When a dispute arises between children or a child and teacher, the teacher will encourage the children to talk through the problem, identifying the issue and ways to resolve it are important. The goal of this talking out process will be to acknowledge feelings and finds solutions to using children's ideas whenever possible.

A child who may be overly aggressive or is repeatedly destructive of other children's work may be asked to make an activity choice in another area if talking things through has not resulted in better self-control.

Upon enrollment, each family will be required to sign an agreement to our behavior management and discipline policy.

Biting Policy

As children navigate toddlerhood, many enter into a challenging, developmental phase of biting. Biting can stem from a variety of sources. These may include teething discomfort, frustration from emerging language, boredom and attention seeking.

Although the biting phase is typically short-lived, it can be alarming and stressful for everyone involved. It is important to remember though, that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior. Therefore, here at Norfolk Early Learning Center, we strive to assist children and families through this phase of development. Expelling a child for a behavior that is natural to their development would be a very rare occurrence.

Examples that could be grounds for expulsion include but are not limited to, frequent biting beyond toddlerhood, causing serious injury and families who are not supportive to our staff and the common goal of combating biting.

In the event a child is bitten during their time at NELC, our procedure is as follows:

- The child who has bitten receives a short and firm “No biting. Biting hurts”. They are removed from the situation and placed where they cannot hurt a friend. An older child (preschooler) would be told, “When you choose to bite your friends, you are choosing not to be near them so we can keep everyone safe”.
- Teachers always help the child who has been hurt first. The wound is washed and iced. If skin has been broken, we notify parents immediately in the event they want to seek medical attention.
- The Teachers return to the child who bit and reiterate that biting hurts and we never bite our friends. We need to keep everyone safe.
- Accident report is filled out, to be signed by parents of the child who has been bit, then filed in the office. Bite is recorded in “Biting Log”. Parent or guardian of the child who has bitten, will be notified.

If a child bites more than once in a day, families will be notified and the child will be asked to leave for the remainder of the day.

We will provide information on biting to the families involved, in an effort to collaborate with families and give them strategies to support our teachers from home.

Indoor & Outdoor Play

In addition to our classrooms, we consider ourselves exceptionally lucky to have a gym! We will utilize this to our advantage, taking trips into the gym for gross motor experiences, especially when the weather outdoors is a bit yucky. We will engage in a variety of activities including ball play, climbing, games & more.

Outside, our shady playground provides fresh air and a natural environment for learning. We will go outside twice a day, weather permitting.

Upon enrollment, parents will be asked to sign a permission slip for walking trips. We believe that exploring the town around us is an important component to a child's day care experience. Plus, we are blessed with a central location in the heart of beautiful Norfolk! Walking trips may include but are not limited to, the surrounding back roads, the library & train, the post office and more.

Hours of Operation & Holiday Closings

Center hours are 6:30am-5:30pm, Monday-Friday. We will be closed for the following holiday observances:

Good Friday

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Columbus Day

Thanksgiving & The Day After

Christmas Eve, Christmas & The Day After

We will close at 3pm on New Year's Eve & Remain closed on New Year's Day

*Holidays that fall on a Saturday will be observed by NELC on the Friday before. Holidays that fall on a Sunday will be observed by NELC on the following Monday.

Tuition & Payments

Full Time Infants & Toddlers: 6 weeks to 2.9 years, 4 or 5 days	\$ 250.00 per week
Part Time Toddler, 3 days	\$190
Infant & Toddler Daily Rate	\$75
Pre-K Alternate: M & F Full Day, T, W, Th 11:30-5:30	\$180 per week
Nursery School: T,W,Th 8:30-11:30	\$100 per week
Full Time Preschool: 2.9 years to Kindergarten 4-5 Full Days	\$ 210 per week
Part Time Preschool: 2.9 years to Kindergarten	\$175 for 3 days
Preschool Daily Rate	\$65
School Age: K-12 AM/PM	\$ 15 AM, \$15 PM

Full Week	\$190
Late Opening/Early Dismissal	\$10 Additional per day
Full Day (includes Snow Days)	\$45
Drop In	Daily Rate + \$10

* Please note that families will be charged the Infant & Toddler rate in the event their child is not potty trained when entering the Preschool program. This rate will change to the Preschool rate when the child is using the bathroom.

Security Deposit: A security deposit equal to your weekly tuition rate will be required with your application for enrollment. This secures your child's space in the program and will be refunded towards your last week of enrollment with the program. Failure to comply with payment requirements or disenrollment from the program without proper notice will result in forfeit of your security deposit.

Making your payment: Payment is due on Mondays for the current week. We will accept payment in the form of cash or check. Receipts will be issued for all cash payments. Your payment can be deposited in the lock box at the main entrance. You will receive a bi-weekly invoice that details your account activity. Returned checks will incur a \$30 NSF fee.

Care4Kids: We will gladly accept your Care4Kids certificate for payment. You will be responsible for the parent portion as outlined on your certificate, and any additional fees that exceed the maximum amount of the Care4Kids payment. See Paige or Kailyn for assistance in filling out your application. We would be happy to help you submit your application. Remember, it can take up to 45 days for a certificate to be issued. You will be responsible for tuition payment until the certificate is issued.

Late payments: We appreciate your efforts to make timely payments. If tuition payment is three days late, a late payment fee of \$10 will be applied to your account, followed by \$5 each day that payment is late. Children will not be permitted to attend if tuition account is not current. We will happily accept your child into the programming once your balance is paid in full, provided the space is still available.

Attendance: You will be charged based on your enrollment schedule NOT actual days of attendance. Your tuition holds the space for your child. Your utilization of the space is up to you! We hope that you will take full advantage of the quality programming being offered. Keep in mind that programming starts early, so we would prefer your child arrive before 9:00 to enjoy all of the benefits of the Norfolk Early Learning Center!

Drop-In: Drop-In care is considered any day of care needed that is in addition to the days you are currently registered for. Drop in care can be used as needed and will be assessed a \$10 fee in addition to the daily rate. Drop in spaces are only available when space is available. Families

not currently enrolled will be required to provide necessary health assessment, enrollment paperwork and Drop-In contract. Payment for Drop-In services are required at child drop off.

Each family will receive one week of Vacation, in which you will receive a 50% tuition discount. All other vacation related absences will be charged at full rate.

Two week notice is required for the following:

- Change in care schedule
- Vacation time
- Disenrollment from the program

Norfolk Navigator's Day Camp

The Norfolk Early Learning Center offers a summer day camp for all school age children. This is a separate program and requires a separate registration fee and weekly charge. More information for our Summer Day Camp program is available every April. Children enrolled in our Summer Day Camp program have a separate handbook with more specific policies for field trips, appropriate behavior and discipline.

Swimming Policy

Throughout the summer months here at NELC, our Norfolk Navigators Camp children (ages 5-12) will have opportunities to cool off in the water, at nearby Tobey Pond.

Nestled in Great Mountain Forest, Tobey Pond is leased by the Town of Norfolk annually, for the enjoyment of its residents. Certified lifeguards are on duty at all times, and are supervised by the First Selectman's office. NELC will obtain copies of these certifications each summer, to have on file. A parking pass will be obtained at the town hall, each June.

In addition to lifeguards, NELC will have two staff members at all times, at least one of whom will hold current certifications in CPR and First Aid. Please note that the staff to child ratio drops from 1:10 to 1:6 when near a body of water.

Each child must pass a dock test every summer, in order to swim to the docks or go over their heads. The lifeguards determine who passes this test and keep track for their records as well. Although life jackets are available at the pond, we ask that parents send their own coast guard approved life jacket with their child so that together with the life guards, we can easily identify non-swimmers.

Supplies Your Child Will Need

Parents will need to provide cozy bedding for cribs and cots. This includes a fitted crib sheet (pack and play size for cribs) and a blanket. A special friend or securely fastened crib toy is welcome too! All bedding will stay at the Center until Friday, when we will send it home to be

laundered and returned the following Monday. If your child uses a pacifier, we recommend leaving us a stash, which we will sterilize on a regular basis.

Food and drinks should be provided for the day. This includes formula and breast milk, all of which we will happily store in our refrigerator. For toddlers who have transitioned to table food, preschoolers and school-age children, we will provide snack. Please let us know if you would like to send in a special treat for your child's birthday!

Your child's cubby should be stocked with a few spare outfits, including socks and underwear. For infants and toddlers, parents will need to supply diapers, wipes and diaper cream if needed. The summer months will warrant sunscreen and bug spray, if you choose. We will make every effort to protect clothing with smocks and bibs, but please be advised that play clothes are best for a child care setting!

Although we are fortunate to offer a large indoor space for gross motor skills, we will go outside every day, weather permitting. Please be mindful of notices coming home regarding snow pants, boots or even bathing suits for water play.

Please label all of your child's belongings, including bottles, sheets, lunch boxes, etc. And don't forget those ice packs!

Sick Policy

In order to begin attending child care, each child must have a current physical with up to date immunizations. Our health consultant will check these records weekly and send out reminders as needed.

If your child is feeling under the weather, please use your parental superpowers to decide if he or she is able to attend child care! Here are some reasons your little one should stay home: fever of 100.5 or higher, vomiting, diarrhea or just isn't themselves.

Please be advised, that children will need to be picked up under the following circumstances:

*Fever

*Uncontrollable coughing or runny nose

*Diarrhea with discomfort

*Vomiting

*Unidentified Rash

You may be asked to provide us with a doctor's note to indicate that your child is not contagious. Likewise, your child will be asked to stay home the next day in the event they are sent home for fever, diarrhea or vomiting.

As mothers ourselves, we understand that your professional life is important and will never intentionally compromise your career by unwarranted phone calls regarding your child's health.

Administration of Medications Policy

The center will only administer emergency medications which include prescribed inhalers and premeasured commercially prepared injectable medication (i.e. Epi-pens, Auvi-Q, etc.), non-prescription topical medication and EMERGENCY oral medications (i.e. Benadryl). The parental responsibilities include providing the center the proper medication authorization form, and the medication. The medication administration form must be signed by the authorized prescriber and parent/guardian giving the center authorization to administer the medication. This form is available at the center.

The medication authorization form must include information, such as:

- The child's name, address, and birthdate
- The date the medication order was written
- Medication name, dose and method of administration
- Time to be administered and dates to start and end the medication
- Relevant side effects and prescribers plan for management should they occur
- Notation whether the medication is a controlled drug
- Listing of allergies, if any and reactions or negative interactions with foods or drugs
- Specific instructions from prescriber how medication is to be given
- Name, address, telephone number and signature of authorized prescriber ordering the drug
- Name, address, telephone number, signature and relationship to the child of the parents giving permission for the administration of the drug by a staff member.

Please note that there are many variations of the medication administration form that medical providers have access to. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the medication administration form clearly states that it is for licensed child care centers. Please understand that your child may not be able to attend if he/she does not have the proper authorization.

All medications must be in their original child resistant safety container and clearly labeled with child's name, name of prescription, date of prescription, and directions for use. Except for non-prescription medications, premeasured commercially prepared injectable medications (i.e. Epi-pens), glucagon and asthma inhalant medications, all medications will be stored in a locked container and, if directed by a manufacturer, refrigerated. Controlled medications will be stored in accordance with 21a-262-10 of the RCSA.

Non-prescription topical medications will be stored away from food and inaccessible to children, in each child's individual drawer within the locked diaper cabinet. Children with non-prescription diaper creams will each have their own log, and staff members will record each application.

Staff responsibilities include, but are not limited to, ensuring the medication administration form is complete and that the medication being received matches the medication orders and stored as directed.

This includes non-prescription diaper ointments.

The center staff will keep accurate documentation of all medications administered. Included, but not limited in the documentation are:

- Name, address and DOB of the child
- Name of the medication and dosage
- Pharmacy name and prescription number
- Name of authorized prescriber
- The date & time the medication was administered
- The dose that was administered
- The level of cooperation of the child
- Any medications errors
- Food and medication allergies
- Signature of the staff administering
- Any comments

Please note, parents will be notified when/if a child has been administered any prescription medication. Staff are trained in the administration of medication by a physician, physician assistant, APRN, or RN and renewed every three years. Training for premeasured commercially prepared injectable medications is renewed each year. At no time is an untrained staff allowed to administer prescription medications.

All unused or expired medication shall be returned to the parent/ guardian or disposed of if it is not picked up within one week following the termination or the order, in the presence of at least one witness. The center shall keep a written record of the medications destroyed when shall be signed by both parties

(Adapted from the CT Office of Early Childhood's Sample Policy 5/26/22)

Pick up Procedure & Closing Policy

Upon enrollment, each family will be required to fill out a permission slip outlining who can pick up their children from child care. We will ask these individuals for identification if we do not know them. Please take a moment to remind your family and friends to bring an ID with them!

The Center closes promptly at 5:30pm. Don't forget to sign your child in and out each day! In the event you are running late, we understand. However, please give us the courtesy of a phone call and keep these instances to a minimum, as we have families of our own to get home to! Please be mindful of your pickup time to avoid a \$15 fine for late pickups.

Safety

Safety here at NELC is one of our top priorities. In the event of an emergency, our staff is trained to remain calm and focus on protecting the children. In the event that we need to evacuate the building and cannot return, you will be called to pick up your child from a designated location. To be sure we are well prepared for all types of emergencies, including evacuation, fire, natural disasters and medical emergencies; all of our staff are certified in pediatric first aid and CPR and undergo emergency preparedness training. We will also practice emergency drills with the students and staff, including fire drills, disaster drills and building lockdowns.

Reporting Abuse and Neglect

As childcare center employees, we are considered mandated reporters. Employees must report all actual or suspected child abuse of any child attending the Center as soon as possible to the Directors. Connecticut law requires caregivers to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. The DCF Hotline telephone number to call for reporting abuse or neglect is: 1-800-842-2288. All discussions will be kept confidential. NELC staff partake in annual mandated reporter training.

Child Abuse includes:

- Any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e.: shaking, beating, burning) -any form of sexual abuse (i.e. sexual exploitation) -neglect of a child (i.e. failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care, appropriate supervision) -emotional abuse (i.e. excessive belittling, berating or teasing which impairs the child's

psychological growth) -at risk behavior (i.e. placing a child in a situation which might endanger him by abuser neglect) Child Abuse is defined as:

- A child who has had -non-accidental physical injuries inflicted upon him/her - injuries which are at variance with the history given of them - is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment Child

Neglect is defined as:

- A child who has been: -abandoned - denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally or morally - allowed to live under circumstances, conditions or associations injurious to his well being (CT GS 46b-120)

Staff responsibilities: As childcare providers we are mandated by law to report actual or suspected child abuse or neglect or the imminent risk of serious harm of any child.

Specifics on reporting a suspected case of abuse or neglect - call the Department of Children and Families (open 24 hours a day) at **1-800-842-2288** - Call the Department of Public Health at 1-800-282-6063 or 860-509-8045. - The reporter's name is required, but may be kept confidential.

Information needed:

- name of child
- Address of child
- Phone number of child
- Name of parents/guardians
- Address of parents/guardians
- Phone number of parents/guardians
- Relevant information such as: physical or behavioral indicator, nature and extent of Injury, maltreatment or neglect
- Exact description of what the reporter has observed
- Time and date of incident
- Information about previous injuries, if any
- Circumstances under which reporter learned of abuse
- Name of any person suspected of causing injury
- Any information reporter believes would be helpful
- Any action taken to help or treat the child
- Seek medical attention for the child- if needed Mandated reporters must report orally to DCF or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected. Within 48 hours of making the report, the mandated reporter must submit a written report (DCF-136) to DCF. Staff are protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting suspected abuse or neglect (CT GS, Section 17a-101e). All phone calls to DCF shall be documented and kept on file at the Center. A copy of all statements from staff and the DCF-136 shall also be kept on file.

Staff training: Staff will be required to attend an annual mandated reporter training, focusing on the steps for reporting suspected abuse and neglect and the role of a mandated reporter. All new staff will be trained in these procedures prior to their start in the classroom.

Provisions for informing families of abuse and neglect policy: A copy of this policy will be included in our parent information packet, and each family will be given a copy upon enrollment. A copy of this policy will also be posted on the parent board. When an accusation of abuse or neglect by a staff member is made, the Director must immediately inform the parents/guardians that a report has been made to DCF. Health care officials may need to talk to a child's parents to access the cause of the child's injuries and offer support and guidance.

Communication

We understand the crucial value that family-teacher communication plays in the raising of a child. It can be very hard to leave your child for long periods of time, and we understand that. In an effort to put your mind at ease, we are happy to provide you with daily reports, outlining how your child ate, slept and participated during their time here!

Additionally, we are always available to discuss your child, morning, noon or night. Although our time may be limited as we are also classroom teachers, we would be happy to schedule a time to sit down with you as needed.

Website & Social Media

Our experience has taught us that one of the best ways to advertise is via the World Wide Web. We are in the era of iPhones and wireless internet and let's face it, when people are in need of child care services, they are more than likely to perform a web search!

Upon enrollment, we will ask you for permission for your child's picture to appear on our Facebook page and website. We will not use names when uploading photographs, but firmly believe that sharing images of children enjoying their experiences at child care, will benefit the Center as well as the Norfolk community.

Our website is: www.NorfolkEarlyLearningCenter.com

Thank You

We would like to thank you, the families, for choosing Norfolk Early Learning Center. Your children are sure to put a smile on our faces each and every day, and we couldn't have asked for a better location and community to serve!

Parent Agreement to Policies

I have read, understand and agree to abide by the policies outlined by Norfolk Early Learning Center.

Print Parent Name

Parent Signature & Date