

THE MAINE NATURE ACADEMY



2026

~ PARENT HANDBOOK ~

www.mainenatureacademy.org

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MAINE NATURE ACADEMY

Parents,

Thank you for choosing “**The Maine Nature Academy**” for your childcare needs. Enclosed you will find a copy of my *Parent Handbook*. It may seem like a lot of information, but this is to let you know what you can expect from me as your child’s care giver and in turn to also let you know what is expected once our contract is signed.

Please take the time to go over this handbook. We have reviewed it during your tour, but this copy is for you to keep as a future reference. If, at any time you have a question regarding my policies, please don’t hesitate to ask. I want to have an open line of communication with you.

A new contract will be signed by all families at the beginning of each year. I reserve the right to make changes in policies as I deem necessary. You will be notified, in writing, of any changes that may occur. Every attempt will be made to give at least a two-week notice of new changes.

I look forward to welcoming your child/ren into our childcare/preschool. care.

Sincerely,
Tamara
Gallagher, owner
&
Sarah Libby,
director



WE ARE ECO-FRIENDLY!

Young children are especially susceptible to the negative effects of modern life, including indoor air quality, heavy metal exposure, such as lead, chemical-heavy cleaning products, and poor-quality, sugar-laden food. Many eco-living families feel like they must sacrifice some of their green morals when placing their children in daycare or preschool. At the Maine Nature Academy we strive to keep an eco-friendly childcare environment. This means we use eco-friendly cleaning supplies; we practice and teach children about the three “R’s” – Reduce, reuse and recycle, encourage and provide organic, local food when possible, and promote preserving the environment.



The Maine Nature



Academy

Thank you for choosing **The Maine Nature Academy** for your child. The owner started **The Maine Nature Academy** in 2017, because of a strong desire to spend more time with her own children. It was this desire to spend more time with her own children and provide them with playmates in a safe and happy environment that led me to start her in-home child care. She lives with her three great kids ages 16, 14 and 11, her mother, and three kitties, Max and Bandit and Nutmeg. Her desire to help more children fueled the center opening in Portland in 2020. In 2023, she opened a second new building in Portland. The MNA building opened in August 2025. This continues our eco-friendly nature based ways. It is an in home childcare like feel, but in a center. We serve 52 children in the center.

As a childcare provider, the goal is to provide a safe and happy environment for each child that will stimulate their physical, intellectual, social and emotional growth at their own pace. We offer loving care that focuses on each child as a unique and wonderful individual and in doing so, builds self-esteem and respect for others.

For clarification purposes:

Regarding all statements in this policy book directed to the parent, the word parent shall mean parent or guardian or adult person responsible for the child's physical and financial well-being.

Infant - any child 18 months or younger

Toddler - any child 18 months to 36 months

Budding preschool - 36 months-48 months

Preschooler - any child 48 months to kindergarten

School-ager - any child attending grades K or higher

All policies shall remain in effect as stated herein unless provider gives notice of change of any said policy in writing. Provider retains the right to enforce these policies at will. Lack of enforcement of a certain policy at any time does not indicate that the particular policy is no longer in effect.

THE MAINE NATURE ACADEMY

The following is a list of rules and regulations governing our child care agreement. Please read this handbook thoroughly as it contains many important policies and procedures that pertain to the care of your child. If you have any questions or need clarification, please ask.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

All necessary forms must be completed and returned to me before we will assume the responsibility of caring for your child. NO EXCEPTIONS! Please inform me immediately of any changes.

Listed below you will find the list of forms that you need to return to “The Maine Nature Academy” before or on your child’s 1st day.

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| *Financial Agreement | *Birth Certificate |
| *Medical Consent | *Information Form |
| *Authorization to Leave Care | *Permission slips |
| *Holidays/vacation | *Immunization Record |

AGES SERVED

The ages of the children that we care for are 6 weeks up through school age. If you reserve a spot for an older child and they don’t attend, you will still be required to pay for the spot. Please keep in mind that we do not provide transportation to and from school and our program. We are occasionally available for non-school days to care for other siblings in the center. **Arrangements must be made in advance.** If you reserve a spot for an older child and they do not attend, you will still be required to pay the full-time rate.

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

Childcare is open Monday—Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Child care is never offered on weekends, evenings or holidays. Please have your child to us no later than 10 a.m. If you will be later than 10 a.m. without previously letting us know, we will assume your child is not coming that day and plan staff accordingly. If you have let us know prior your child still needs to be here by 11am so they can have lunch and settle in before nap, so there are no disruptions to our day. Late drop -off does not constitute late pick up . Late pickup is \$10 for the first five minutes, \$5/minute thereafter.

FEES

The fee for full-time childcare is Infants (6 weeks to 18 months): \$365.00 per week Toddler: \$335 per week (18 months to 36 months).

Budding Preschool (36 months to 48 months): \$315 per week; PreK (48 months to kindergarten): \$315 per week. School aged: \$275 per week (vacation weeks, snow days, in service days, early release); \$175 per week (before & after school). Ask us about part-time care. This is for the normal business hours of 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. five days per week. You are paying for a contracted spot for your child. We will be taking **2 weeks' vacation per calendar year**. The dates of our vacation will be posted at least two months in advance. Regular payment rates apply for our vacations, your vacations, weeks with holidays. Payments are to be made by 5:30 PM on the Friday prior to each work week. If the childcare is closed on Friday, then payment is due on the last day of childcare of that previous week. A late fee of \$10.00 per day will be charged for payment not received by 5:30 p.m. on Friday. If payments are late a third time, a late fee of \$20 per day applies and the contract will be reviewed. A fee of \$30.00 will be charged for any returned checks along with any bank fees. Future tuition payments will then be paid in cash. When parent fees are not current, children will not be admitted. If a Court Date has to be set for collection, the Parent/Guardian will be responsible for any and all fees associated with this. This is to include but is not limited to Late Fees, Loss of Wages, and any Court Costs. Tuition does not include overnights, deposits, or hours outside of our normal operating hours.

HOLIDAYS

We take the following paid holidays: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Halloween (close at 3 p.m.), Thanksgiving, and Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day. We occasionally take other days. If any of the above days fall on a Sat. or Sunday, we will either take the Friday prior, or the Monday after the holiday. Holidays are subject to change. We will provide one month's notice and the holiday/vacation list is always available at the front desk and on Procure. We will not be liable if you don't know of future days off, etc.

SNOW DAYS

We rarely take snow days, but if the weather is severe, we will close to allow staff to stay safe. We will give as much notice as possible, though there may be times it will not be until it is assessed in the morning (5 a.m.)

TRANSPORTATION

Limited to specialty field trips within an age group (preschoolers/school age). The transport vehicle will be a van with age-appropriate car seat restraints.

HOLDING FEE

We do not charge an enrollment fee; however, before your child is admitted into childcare (or to hold a future spot) a deposit must be paid. This deposit/reg fee is equal to two weeks and towards the last two weeks of care. The first week's payment is due the Friday before the start of care. After paying the holding fee, if you later decide not to enroll your child, the fee is



nonrefundable. If you are on subsidy, there is no deposit, rather this is a registration fee and not credited to tuition. This registration fee is nonrefundable. If you later enroll in subsidy, your deposit is converted to a registration fee and not applied to tuition. You are still required to pay for the last two weeks of care. All deposits and registration fees are nonrefundable.

DIAPERING

We use latex gloves when changing diapers. After use, the changing pad is cleaned and sprayed with a disinfecting solution. Hands of the child and care giver are washed thoroughly with soap and water. Diapers are changed as needed and are checked often. Creams, ointments, and powders are not routinely used. On the occasion that these products are needed it will be discussed with the parents before applying (unless discussion has already occurred). We very seldom have a problem with diaper rash. Most cases occur because of the child having been on certain medications or teething. We can do cloth diapers, however, we will not be cleaning, rinsing, or reusing covers.

PROPER ATTIRE

Child's play is messy work! Your child will be painting, playing on the grass, in the sandbox, playing with chalk and participating in many other various activities. Please do not expect me to keep your child's clothes clean and free from stains. Please dress your children appropriately. We are not responsible for "cute" clothes getting dirty. The children will participate in all activities regardless of their dress.

Children (and parents) do not wear shoes when inside the building. They must be taken off in the entrance and put on the shoe tray. Children should have slippers kept at childcare to be used. This helps to keep the floor more sanitary for crawling infants and children.

TOYS AND PERSONAL ITEMS

Toys brought from home will be placed in the child's cubby until it is time to go home. Occasionally children may play with these toys if it is not disruptive. Please note that we are not responsible for broken toys. Please keep small choking hazards at home. This includes coins, tiny hair clips/bows in the infant and toddler rooms.



A TYPICAL DAY AT THE MAINE NATURE ACADEMY

7:30-8:00 Children arriving, and breakfast being served.

8:00-9:00 Breakfast cleaned up/free playtime.

9:00-10:00 Begin class time with good morning song. Weekly theme projects
(Colors, shapes, numbers, arts & crafts—alternate days).

10:00-11:30 Group play, outside play, free play, music, story-time.

11:30-11:45 Lunch preparation time/ hand washing, clean up time.

11:45—12:30 Lunch/wind down time.

12:30– 2:45 Nap time/Quiet time. All children (other than school age) will be expected to rest at naptime. They may quietly look at books or other quiet activity.

2:45 Wake up time, hand washing. 3:00—

3:30 Snack time

3:30-5:15 Free play, outdoors if weather permits. If not, free play & dress-up inside. Close to closing, wind-down time. Pick-up

(This schedule is typewritten—it is not set in stone. This is an idea of what we do during the day.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Our outdoor activities will include using the playground equipment, riding toys, and playing organized games. Children, no matter the age, will NOT be allowed outside to play unsupervised. During the summer most of the day is spent outside. During the winter, children will go outside if the temperature is above 20 degrees. We pay attention to the weather and wind chill factors. If your child is too sick to play outside, he is too sick to attend childcare. If your child is not appropriately dressed for the weather, you will be required to return to childcare with the correct attire. Please be sure your child is prepared to start the day. This includes infants and toddlers as well.

Please note we are working towards becoming an outdoor certified classroom which means we are outside a lot!! *If the weather is below 20 degrees, an informed decision will be made whether we go outside. This is dependent upon classroom age and weather reports.

MAINE WEATHER

We are all aware of how unpredictable Maine winters can be. We know that weather and driving conditions can cause late pick-ups. These are unavoidable, but please try to remember the hours you are contracted for. Please pay close attention to the weather to help avoid late pick-up.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Maine Nature Academy is proud to offer a “Preschool Program” September to June of each year. This program targets children ages 2 1/2 to 5 yrs. (or when developmentally ready). There are many learning stations in spaces. There is a housekeeping area, blocks and trucks, puzzles and books, dress-up items and much more. Children actively learn while playing. We will be using a combination of developmental and Montessori approaches, also known Reggio-Emilia pedagogy. One of the goals of Reggio-Emilia is to use collaborative learning to help a child become a better citizen. It emphasizes creativity and artistic expression.

ILLNESS AND SICK CARE

The health and wellbeing of all the children here are the utmost importance to us. It is for the protection of the children that I must insist on a strict adherence to my Health Policy. Please keep in mind how you would feel if another child's parent brought their child to care and exposed your healthy child. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions or doubts regarding the statements, it contains please discuss them with us now. Even with all our precautions, children do get sick and/or hurt. A doctor's note may be required before your may return If a child is on antibiotics they may return after at least 24 hours and at least two doses of antibiotics.

Upon application for enrollment, you will be asked to fill out an immunization record. Children who are under immunized may not be enrolled. Children with minor illness may attend childcare at the provider's discretion. It is important to realize that if a child is unable to participate in the normal routine or needs more care than staff can provide without neglecting the others in my care, that child must stay home. Siblings will be excluded for diarrhea, vomiting, fevers, and the illness listed below. There are also some illnesses that by law exclude the child from attending childcare. Some of those illnesses are:

*Chicken Pox *Hepatitis A *Scarlet Fever *HFM *Scabies *Ringworm *Strep Throat *Lice
*Impetigo *COVID-19 **Please note this is not an all-inclusive list. We have consulted with health care professionals and are continuing to do so.

When a child has certain symptoms, he should be kept at home. Some of these are:

FEVER

A fever is a sign that the body is fighting some problem. The importance of a raised temperature depends on what is causing the fever. A temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher means a child should stay home. In the event of this type of temperature, the child should not come to child care until the temperature has been down for 24 hours without the aid of a fever reducing medication such as Tylenol. If your child wakes with a high temperature and you administer a fever reducer, this generally only lasts a few hours and I will have to call you when you arrive at work to come pick up your child. In the meantime, the other children have possibly been exposed to an undiagnosed illness.

VOMITING OR UPSET STOMACH

A child who has been vomiting can easily spread germs. If your child vomits while at childcare, you will be expected to come immediately to remove your child. If you are not able to come as soon as you are called, please arrange for someone else to come pick up your child. The child must stay home until 24 hours has passed with no vomiting episodes.

DIARRHEA

When a child has a single loose stool, he or she does not need to be at home. However, if a child has very runny stools that cannot be contained in a diaper, or the child cannot reach the toilet in time, the stool may contaminate the child care setting and this child must remain at home. Please use your discretion with this. If the child has diarrhea that's not contained, you will be called to come pick your child up from child care. Child can return when symptom free for 24 hours.

RUNNING NOSES

Children with constant runny noses that are not caused by allergies may spread germs everywhere. They may wipe their noses on their hands, and then rub them on other children, toys and on surfaces. This is a difficult one to call. These cases will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.



Some of the features that help to ensure your child's health are:

- * NO SMOKING ON THE PREMIS
(We are a non-smoking program)
- * Our health policy is strictly adhered to
- * Current immunizations are required.
- * Good hygiene is always stressed.
- * Every attempt is made to keep toys and play areas sanitized
- * Napping is done on individual nap mats.
- * Food preparation is done in a safe and hygienic manner.
- * Menus using fresh, organic, and local food.
- * Hand washing before eating, after diapering, use of toilet, outside play, touching bodily secretions, messy crafts, or projects. (And about 100 other times during the day...)

DISCIPLINE

Our philosophy is that you use discipline to teach a child. We achieve this through love, consistency, and firmness. We stress two main patterns of behavior: respect for other people and respect for property. The children are explained the rules of the childcare program frequently, so they are all familiar with the guidelines.

Young children especially, who are not adept at communication have a hard time expressing their feelings. Sometimes they bite, hit, or throw toys, etc. Although teaching children appropriate behavior is what we will be doing, remember that this behavior is normal in most cases. The following methods of discipline will be used:

- * Encourage children to solve problem themselves.
- * Intervention and discussion
- * Redirection to another play area
- * Loss of privileges
- * Time-out

If we feel there is a chronic behavioral issue that needs attention, we will let you know so that we are all handling it in the same way and your child has consistency in discipline between our places. These types of behavior might include such things as biting, use of bad words, chronic hitting, etc.

Together, we will try to find a solution. You may be called to remove your child if his/her behavior prevents us from being able to properly care for the other children. If the problem continues, other arrangements for the care of the child will have to be made, for the safety and wellbeing of all. This may mean working together to contact CDS/ADA and making sure there is parent follow through.

Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will there be any spanking, physical abuse, verbal abuse, name calling, or isolation used. Neither food nor sleep will ever be withheld from children as a means of punishment.



As Childcare providers, we have a responsibility by DHHS to recognize and report any suspicions of child abuse—physical, sexual or emotional—or neglect. This is strictly for the benefit of your child. All licensing inspections are public knowledge and available online.

SMOKING

This is a non-smoking program and there will be no smoking anywhere on the premises. Cigarette butts are not to be discarded in the driveway, yard, planters, etc. Please respect this.

BIRTHDAYS

Each child's birthday is his/her "Special Day." We will celebrate everyone's birthday and provide cake or treats if desired. Parents may bring treats from home after a previous discussion with us.

EMERGENCIES

(1) Fire Drills/Evacuation Drills: We have monthly fire drills. The children are instructed to go outside in the front parking lot and meet by the dumpster area. If there is a fire the children will be moved to safety and the fire department will be called. During a severe weather warning all children will be taken to the center and they will be provided a blanket to cover with. We will all remain there until it is safe to return to the childcare area. If there is a significant emergency, we will relocate to 481 Riverside Industrial Parkway Portland. We perform evacuation drills twice per year

(2) If your child becomes ill while at childcare, he/she will be isolated from the other children and one parent will be called immediately. If we are unable to contact a parent, we will call the designated emergency contract person on the emergency card. The child will be unable to remain in childcare if ill and we will expect them to be picked up WITHIN the hour. No exceptions—IF a child is not picked up with one hour you will be billed a late fee of \$5.00 per minute. Frequent abuse of this policy may be grounds for termination.

If your child is unable to go outside or participate in daily activities, please inform us. Special needs required by one child restricts the activities of all the children. Prolonged requests for special treatment may result in a request to keep the child home until they are able to participate in normal activities. (3) In case of an EMERGENCY, I will administer necessary first aid. The Portland Police Department or Paramedic Unit will be called, and your child will be transported to the hospital. YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED IMMEDIATELY. If an ambulance is called to transport your child, the cost of the ambulance will be covered by the parent or guardian.

A. MINOR ILLNESS OR INJURY 1. Treat with medical supplies on hand. 2. Evaluate periodically to see if further medical attention is required. 3. Document treatments and evaluations in children's file. 4. Consult family members. B. MAJOR 1. Employ first aid techniques as trained, if needed 2. Contact 911, if immediate medical attention required. 3. If an illness or an injury requires a doctor's care, but emergency services are not required, the staff members should then arrange for transportation to the emergency room, pediatric clinic, or hospital per instructions of the family member. If a child has bumps or scrapes. We will do an incident report and ask the parents sign said incident report with-in 48 hours. The following warrants an incident report: biting (by one child to another); hard impact falls. Parents will be asked to sign an incident report regarding the incident within 48 hours of said incident.



Serious injury and child death reporting: If a child is injured while in childcare, he/she will be checked for life-threatening situations. If child is seriously hurt 911 and/or the police will be called and CPR/First aid will be given. Parents will then be contacted. Child will be kept calm and comfortable until medical services arrive. If a child death occurs, police and 911 will be called as well.

ANNUAL CONFERENCES

Annual conferences (twice a year) will be scheduled during the month of child's birthday as a routine part of your child's care. However, you may request a conference at any time. We publish a monthly newsletter that will explain some of the activities we are doing, our current curriculum themes, events that will be happening during that month, our days off, and any other pertinent or fun information that may be of interest to you. You are always welcome to contribute to our newsletter.

FRIDAY FOLDERS

Children put their artwork and work sheets into their Friday Folders each day. The folders will be taken home with them on Fridays. The folders are to come back every Monday to store their work throughout the week. Children who remember their folders will get a sticker to put on their folder. Please go through the folders with your child each Friday.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND PLAYTIME

Attending “**Maine Nature Academy**” should be an enjoyable experience for the parent as well as the child. While at childcare, your child will be exposed to many kinds of learning experiences including:

- Music
- Arts and crafts
- Story and listening adventures Poems & books.
- Animal husbandry
- Large and small muscle play
- Self-initiated play
- Numbers & Counting
- Letter recognition
- Social development and kindergarten readiness]
- Individual playtime
- Weekly themes
- Parent involvement is encouraged. Parents may visit any time (during daycare hours)

TOILET TRAINING

If you have decided to start toilet training, we will work with you to help the process. We recommend that when in training, your child be dressed in "user-friendly" clothing. Overalls, "onesies", zippers, and snaps are difficult for small children to manage--especially in a hurry! While potty training, parents are to provide lots of thick training underwear, plastic pants, socks, and outer clothing. Whether we switch to undies, will be on a case-by-case basis.

MEALS

We believe in local, organic food & produce. We feed children two snacks per day. Parents are responsible for providing breakfast and lunch.



PHOTOGRAPHS AND PUBLICITY

Photographs of the children participating in our programs may be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures, or other publicity materials. Your permission for photographs including your child, to be used without compensation, is part of this agreement. If you do not wish to have our child photographed for any of the reasons listed above, please let us know.

Rest Time

All children are to lie down for a rest period in the afternoon. Even older children will benefit from a short period of "Quiet Time". I provide mats and blankets. If your child has a special blanket or stuffed animal that he/she sleeps with, please send it along. I would ask that you please avoid picking up your child during naptime, as it disturbs the other children's quiet time. Please come before 12:30 or after naptime around 2:45. We do have some children who do not nap but rest quietly for a short time and are guided with quiet materials for the remainder of rest time.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Please make sure to send along extra clothes, to be kept here, in case their clothes get soiled. (Marked with their name).
2. Please help us to keep floors clean and safe for the children by removing your shoes if they are wet or muddy or wait on the rug that we have provided.
3. Please call us in the morning if your child will not be coming that day.
4. Be prompt in picking up your child after work.
5. Please share information with us that will help me better care for your child. For example: child complaining of tummy ache, throwing up over the weekend, etc.
6. Please respect us, our profession and us program and building. The respect that you show us, including our building furnishings, equipment and yard will communicate itself to your child and will make for a better working relationship. If a child intentionally or unintentionally causes damage to the daycare center's property, toys, or materials, the parents or guardians will be responsible for the cost of repair or replacement.

TRIAL PERIOD AND WITHDRAWAL

A two-week trial period will be given upon enrollment, to determine the suitability of the arrangements. If, at any time during the two weeks, you feel the arrangement has not proven workable, then you will be required to give a two week notice in writing. Your two-week holding fee will be applied towards the last two weeks of care. If on subsidy, you will need to pay for the last two weeks of care. We will also have the right to terminate, with the same notice if we feel that it is not working out. If there is a problem that is affecting the safety and welfare of the other children that we care for, we have the right to immediate dismissal. If, however, you are happy with the care that your child is receiving and your child is settling in, then our contract becomes permanent. Every year we will have parents initial the original contract. Every year parents will be required to sign a sunscreen permission slip. We require a two-week writing notice if you intend to withdraw your child from our care. Your two-week holding fee will be applied towards the last two weeks of childcare fees.

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

We may give prescription medication only when we have written, signed, and dated permission from a Parent. 1. We must only give Medication prescribed for the specified Child, according to the label instructions on the original container. 2. We must not give any nonprescription Medications to a Child without written permission from the Parent. Telephone, text, or email permission is allowed in emergencies, if the provider documents giving the Medication and obtains written permission from the Parent as soon as possible. No expired medications will be given to children. Emergency medications must have an emergency action plan from the PCP/Specialist on site upon enrollment.

ABSENTEEISM AND ILLNESS

If a child or parent is ill, or for any other reason the child will not be here for the day, please call us in the morning to let us know. If you know the night before, please call before 8:00 p.m. We would appreciate this courtesy. The main reason for childcare provider's charge for absent days is to provide stability in their budgets.

Parents should have alternative arrangements available in the event of emergency, illness, vacation, or such, if the situation should occur.

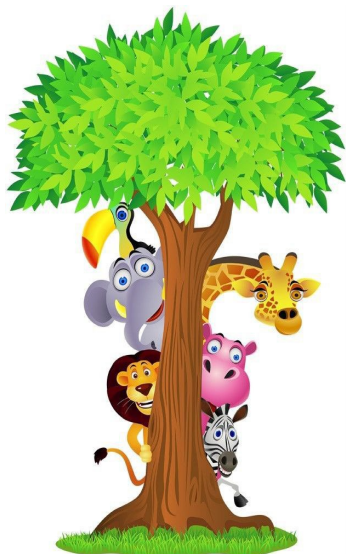
If you are having someone else pick up your child, **please let me know in advance**. We will need to know the name of the person picking up your child, and please let them know we will be asking for some form of I.D. if we have not met them before. I will not let a child leave without the parent's written permission. (See pick-up policy, page 12.)

PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

- * Please label your child's personal possessions.
- * Please be certain that boots slip on and off easily, zippers zip, etc. as the malfunction of these things can hinder and frustrate the child in learning to dress him/herself.
- * Please encourage children to take responsibility for their own belongings.
- * We are not responsible for replacing lost or broken toys. This is why we request you keep such items home. If toys are brought, they will go into their cubbies.
- * Accepting responsibility for their own possessions is an important skill for a child to learn.

SCHOOL RULES

Please go over this section with your child so they may also know what is expected of them while at childcare. We expect all children (age taken into consideration) to know the rules of the program. These are quite like the ones you have in your own home. We don't intend for these to sound as though we don't allow the children to play and enjoy themselves, but it is important with the number of children in a childcare setting to follow these rules to ensure safety and lower the maintenance of the building so staff can focus on fun!



- *No hitting, biting, pushing, kicking, etc.
- *No throwing or intentionally breaking anything
- *No running, jumping, wrestling in the house
- *No picking up babies or toddlers
- *No leaving the house or yard
- *No name calling, teasing, etc. Everyone is treated with respect.



PICK-UP POLICY

Sometimes at pick-up time, the children may get rowdy because someone else is here (you). Your child has listened to our rules all day. Please show your child that you respect us and our rules by reminding them and enforcing them while you are here. Believe me, when they get older, you will thank us...

Please remember there are times we have places to go or appointments that we must meet at the end of the day. For this reason, please don't be late. Childcare hours END at 5:30 p.m.

Only the individuals listed on the Child Information Record, or on a **written** permission note from the parent, will be allowed to leave with a child. We will request a picture I.D. from any unfamiliar person (including grandparents). If there is any concern, we will attempt to contact you and, if we are unable to reach you, we reserve the right to deny a person's request to pick-up a child. We will not allow a child to leave with anyone we believe to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

At Maine Nature Academy, you can always be assured that the door is open to you. Please keep in mind there may be times when it is not convenient for visits, such as at nap time. Also, there may be times when it is not convenient for us to run to the phone. (i.e., diaper changing, bottle feeding, etc.) If the phone goes unanswered, please do not become alarmed, simply leave a voice mail and we will call as soon as we are able. Parents can become involved by bringing appropriate snacks, coming for meals, providing items from our wish list!

You may also communicate with us via email. There may be those times when something comes to you at work that you don't want to forget to relay. If you have an email, please feel free to drop us a line and we will generally reply during rest time.

Email: mainenatureacademy@gmail.com or email Sarah Libby, the director at ktmsarah@yahoo.com

The following is required:

- c. Any suspicion of Abuse or Neglect must be immediately shared with the Provider,
- d. Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect must be immediately reported upon suspicion to Child Protective Intake hotline,
- e. Identification of personnel responsible for contacting the Child Protective Intake hotline,
- f. We will be notifying all relevant parties (Parents, Staff Members, interns, or Household Members) that suspected Child Abuse or Neglect has been reported to Child Protective Intake,
- g. Completion of Incident reports, including: the details of the allegation or suspicion, the date Child Protective Intake was called, which Staff Members and/or interns were notified the report was filed, and whether or not the Parent/Legal Guardian were notified of the allegation, and
- h. Parental notification, including the determination of how and what information will be shared with a Parent/Legal Guardian when Child Protective Intake has been contacted.

If there is an allegation of child abuse or neglect against the Provider, any staff member or Household member, the person accused will be relieved from activities until the investigation is complete. We will rely on video capability as much as possible. Parents will be notified in accordance with DHS policies of the investigation and the outcome. If the Provider or staff or household member is found to be guilty, they will immediately be terminated.

Resources for Child Development:

There are great resources on the CDC website regarding developmental milestones. We will be using some of these at our parent teacher conferences where needed. There is also an act early milestone app the CDC offers.

Child Record Management Policy:

If you require your child's file, please give us two weeks' notice. The cost of copying the file will be passed on to the parent/guardian. We require a written release or a court order.

Crisis

We make every effort not to have to close. Situations that require closing are staff or kids are too sick to maintain ratio; or we lose power and do not have access to fresh water/electricity/heat. Staff members always work together there will never be a time when someone is alone in the building.

(1) I reserve the right to discontinue care for any reason, at any time, upon reasonable notice to the guardian. I will provide a two-week notification except where immediate termination is warranted per this agreement. To voluntarily withdraw from care, parents or legal guardians are required to provide a two-week written notification stating the final date their children will be in care. All tuition fees for the two weeks are due when giving notice or care stops immediately and all deposits paid or forfeited. The end of care cannot occur during our vacation time. If it must occur during the vacation time, that time will need to be paid. If the parents/legal guardians account is in good standing, deposits paid upon enrollment are applied to the last two weeks of care. Any balance remaining is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardians.

I reserve the right to terminate our contract immediately for any of the following reasons (but not limited to):

Nonpayment or continual late payments

Lack of compliance with handbook policies

Lack of parents/legal guardians' cooperation, disrespect

Failure to complete and return required forms

Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property

Continual disciplinary problems

False information given by parent/legal guardians either verbally or in writing.

State subsidized payments: I understand that I am fully responsible for my child's tuition, co-payments and amounts not covered by state subsidy. If state payment lapses due to parental error or misrepresentation, the parent is responsible for the remaining tuition based upon the market rate. If a child is absent more than state excused absence coverage, parents are responsible for tuition balance. I am required to report parents who fail to uphold contract and state guidelines. Late payment, late pickup, closing, and absence policies apply. Subsidy recipients do not pay a deposit, and are required to give two weeks notice for any termination. Subsidy recipients ARE required to pay a two week nonrefundable registration fee, which is not applied towards tuition or parent fees.

A child will not be terminated if the child's parent/legal guardian/relative did any of the following:

Made a complaint to licensing regarding alleged violations of licensing rule.

Made a complaint to licensing regarding alleged violations of the law

Reported alleged child abuse or neglect at the childcare program

Question the child care provider regarding policies and procedures

Rights of Children. Children receiving Childcare from Child Care Facilities have the following rights.

1. Children must be free from emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
2. Each Child has the right to freedom from harmful actions or practices that are detrimental to the Child's welfare, and to practices that are potentially harmful to the Child.
3. Each Child has a right to an environment that meets the health and safety standards in this rule.
4. Each Child must be provided Childcare services without discrimination to race, age, national origin, religion, disability, sex or family composition.
5. Children must be treated with dignity, consideration, and respect in full recognition of their individuality. This includes the use of developmentally appropriate practices by the Child Care Facility.
6. Each Child has the right to the implementation of any plan of service that has been developed for that Child in conjunction with community or state agencies by the Child Care Facility.
7. Each Child has the right to Developmentally Appropriate activities, materials, and equipment.
8. Children with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications to Child Care Facility policies and practices.

B. Rights of parents and legal guardians of Children receiving Childcare from Child Care Facilities.

1. A Child's Parent or Legal Guardian must be fully informed of items or services which are included in the rate they pay for Childcare services.
2. A Child's Parent or Legal Guardian has the right to be fully informed of findings of the most recent inspection conducted by the Department. The Child Care Facility must inform Children's Parents or Legal Guardians that the licensing inspection results are public information and inspection results must be posted in a prominent place on the Premises.
3. Parents or Legal Guardians must be notified by the Child Care Facility within two business days of any actions taken against the Child Care Facility by the Department, including but not limited to, decisions to issue conditional Licenses, refusal to renew a License, or to impose fines or other sanctions.

Discrimination

Each Child will be provided childcare services without regard to race, age, national origin, religion, disability, sex or family composition.

English Language

The Maine Nature Academy will help with English language learners and understanding policies/ procedures.

POLICY FOR BEING OVER GROUP SIZE:

We will always maintain ratio to the youngest child on the playground. We will do head counts every 10 to 15 minutes to ensure everyone is accounted for. Staff will stand all over the playground in each of the corners and someone by the gate as well as staff in the middle of the playground to ensure proper supervision of children. Doing all these steps will allow us to combine classrooms at the end of the evening at the same time while keeping all children safe and secure.

Again, WELCOME to our childcare...we look forward to a great, growing relationship!

