



*A community of
learning and caring.*

Parent Handbook





*A community of
learning and caring.*

Welcome to the Erwin Child & Family Center,

We look forward to getting to know you and your family. Your choice in our Center is an important decision for you. We believe that families and caregivers need to work closely together to become partners in caring for your child. It is our priority to develop this relationship and do our best to provide a loving, nurturing environment for your child and your family.

Our Center is a relatively new program having opened in the Fall of 1998. While only opened a relatively short time, we have continued to grow and expand our services and programming. The Erwin Child & Family Center is a program offered by Pathways, Inc. and provides quality child care. The facility is built, owned and maintained by Corning Enterprises.

The Center has an open door policy and you are encouraged and welcomed to visit anytime. This Parent Handbook introduces you to and details most of our philosophies and general policies. Please use it as a guide, we encourage you to ask questions and let us know your thoughts and ideas.

We appreciate the trust you have placed in us to care for your child. We look forward to working with you and offering your child a happy and healthy start!

Sincerely,

Erwin Child & Family Center Staff

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Erwin Child & Family Center **A program offered by Pathways, Inc.**

About Our Center

We are pleased to introduce you to the Erwin Child & Family Center - A community of Learning and Caring. This childcare center represents a partnership between Corning Incorporated and Pathways, Inc., a local human service provider. It is a not-for-profit childcare center. The Center opened in September 1998.

It is a beautiful facility designed by D.W. Arthur Associates of Boston, Massachusetts. Although a large center, each wing provides care in smaller neighborhoods that serve infants through preschoolers. This allows children to transition and remain within a familiar group of children, caregivers and be with their siblings throughout their time at the Center.

The Erwin Child & Family Center provides year-round childcare for families in the Corning Valley. The Center serves infants, preschool and school age children, up to age 12. The center is open from 6:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. We attempt to accommodate flexible scheduling options, including part-day and part-week enrollment.

In addition to providing daily childcare needs for working families, the center also provides occasional drop-in care and back-up childcare alternatives. Back-up childcare is available on a pre-arranged basis for families whose regular childcare is unavailable.

The Center is a service provided by Pathways, Inc. The services provided include childcare, referral and connection to community resources, and parenting education. The Erwin Child & Family Center seeks to identify, understand and explore

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family's needs, providing a service that is both flexible and affordable. The Center adheres to the quality practice standards established by the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA). We have met their rigorous standards of care, learning, safety and administration and are accredited by NECPA. We meet or exceed New York State Office of Children and Family Services regulations.

Mission Statement

To be responsive to the needs of families in our community by providing parenting education, resources and high quality childcare in a safe, secure, nurturing environment.

Philosophy

We believe that families should have access to childcare services, that are responsive to their needs, and that are stimulating and developmentally appropriate for their children. We believe that parents and children should be offered choices that reflect their interests and desires. We further believe that the best quality care is fostered through strong partnerships and collaborative relationships with families and community.

Curriculum Statement

At the Erwin Child & Family Center we believe learning should excite each child. At this stage learning involves children using their senses to explore their world and interact with others. Play is an important aspect of this early learning and as children play they will be encouraged to explore topics that are relevant to their own lives and experiences. We will plan age appropriate materials and activities in a play-based curriculum that supports children's needs and natural interests. Our approach is based on developmentally appropriate

practices as defined by the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA).

Goals and Objectives

- To provide a healthy, safe and supervised environment.
- To provide a nurturing and enriching environment that promotes young children's development.
- To provide activities, experiences and materials that are appropriate to each individual child's age and development.
- To provide an effective, well-run childcare program.
- To create an environment that supports a partnership with parents.
- To be a leader in quality childcare for our community.

Enrollment

The Center is open to all children regardless of race, gender, ethnic or cultural background, religion, social economic status, disability or diagnosis of HIV or AIDS once the child's parent and/or guardian have completed the registration process for enrollment.

Enrollment at the Center depends on adequate adult: child ratios and we will not exceed licensing capacity. If the center is at capacity, a waiting list is developed. As there are openings, families are contacted to determine their interest in enrolling their child.

Waiting List

The center manages a waiting list for enrollment when capacity for each age group is reached. This list separates children by their age group and establishes placement on the list by date of enrollment. For available openings several factors are considered. Priorities are given to full time placements, siblings, and Corning Inc. employees and are considered based on the date that the

opening is available and the timing of the family's need.

For part time placements we work to maximize the spots and match children whenever possible. If a match is not possible or practical we use the open spot as a full-time opening.

Age Requirement

Children must be six weeks of age up through six years of age for the pre-school program. School age children may attend through age twelve. The center will not admit children who are less than six weeks of age without prior authorization and approval from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

The square footage in our classrooms exceed the typical standard in New York State. The daily schedule plans to keep a teacher or support teacher in the classroom during the majority of each day. In keeping with the Office of Children and Family Services regulations, there is at least one adult for every four infants, one adult for every five toddlers, one adult for every seven preschoolers. These ratios are a minimum standard and we make an effort to exceed that standard during peak times of program activity.

During peak activity periods you can expect:

Infants	1:3
Older Infants	1:4
Toddlers	1:5/1:4
Pre-School	1:8/1:7
School Age	1:10

Tuition

Fees are determined according to a sliding fee scale, which is based on family size, income and child's age:

- Infant Fee Schedule - children six weeks to 17 months
- Older Infant Fee Schedule - Children 18 months to 23 months
- Toddler Fee Schedule - children 24 months to three years
- Preschool Fee Schedule - children three to five years
- School Age Fee Schedule - children in elementary school

All financial information is kept confidential. The Center's sliding fee scale is reviewed and updated each year. These fees are set based upon the program budget. The Center receives financial support from the Corning Incorporated Dependent Care Expense Fund that offsets the full cost of care. As a result no family is required to pay the full cost of care.

Modest annual adjustments that are based on cost of living increases and directly linked to raises in staff wages can be expected.

Parent/guardians may elect to pay tuition on a weekly, biweekly or monthly basis. Checks should be made payable to Pathways, Inc. - ECFC and may be dropped off at the center office or mailed to the address on your financial agreement.

Tuition payment is due before the week begins. Tuition is due on Monday for the following week. Your child's tuition is based upon their enrollment schedule and credit is not given for absences, holidays or vacations. Parents will be assessed a late fee for repeated late payment of tuition. Failure to adhere to tuition payment policies may result in termination of your child.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the center when there is a change in income and family size. Annually, the center is obligated to verify family income and will request that proof of each family's income be submitted to Pathways, Inc. Billing Office. The billing office is responsible to review each family's income and family size to keep your tuition current with the center's sliding fee scale.

Tuition Assistance

Subsidized childcare assistance may be available for families who are income eligible. This assistance is administered by the Department of Social Services in the county in which you reside.

For information:

Chemung County:

Chemung County Childcare Connection: (607) 737-5411

Steuben County:

Steuben Childcare Project:
(800) 553-2033

Schuyler County:

Department of Social Services
(607) 535-2789

Center Hours-Drop Off and Pick-Up:

The Center opens at 6:30 a.m. and closes at 6:00 p.m. All classrooms are staffed by 7:30 a.m. Staff that are familiar with the children and will be cared for in a room appropriate to their age group will welcome children who arrive before their classroom teachers.

Please sign your child in and out of the center at the front desk. For safety reasons, please sign them in on your way into the building and sign them out on your way out of the building. Make sure a staff member is aware your child has arrived before you leave the classroom. It is helpful if you can spend a few minutes each day with

the staff to share any changes in routine, special needs, requests or observations that may help your child have a good day.

It is your responsibility to supervise your child when you are dropping off or picking up. Keeping children safe is important to us. In order to avoid children becoming lost or injured please be sure that your child and his or her siblings stay with you at all times and that they do not run ahead into another part of the building or into the parking lot unattended.

All parents must fill out a form specifying those people who are authorized to pick up their child. We cannot release your child without this written authorization. Any time you have a change in who will be picking up your child, we must be notified in person or in writing.

Staffing patterns have been developed to respond to children's routine arrival and departure times. Both staff and children worry when parents are late. If you anticipate being earlier or later than usual, please let us know. We will call family members and emergency contacts if your child has not been picked up by 6:05 p.m. In order to pay staff for additional time, we will charge a late pick-up fee after 6:00 p.m.

Orientation to the Program for New Families

Upon admission to the center each family is required to meet with the Billing Coordinator to review your application materials and confirm all of your financial agreement information. Any missing information will be reviewed and arrangements made at this appointment. The Center's policies and procedures related to billing, pick up and payment will be reviewed at this meeting.

In order to familiarize you with the program policies the Assistant Director and your child's primary caregiver or the classroom teacher is responsible to orient your family to the routines, policies and procedures regarding the classroom. In this session we will ask you for specific information related to the caretaking routines and concerns that you have for your child. We view this session as an opportunity to get to know you and begin to develop our relationship as partners in caring for your child.

Security

All doors at the Center are locked at all times. The receptionist or staff on duty will buzz you in if they recognize you. Otherwise, staff on duty have been instructed to ask for identification before you leave the reception area.

Communication is the key component in assuring your child's security. Any time there is a change in routine, please let the center staff know. Changes to your list of persons authorized to pick up your child must be made in writing. We may ask for a photo I.D. from individuals we have not met.

It is important to alert staff to any changes in custody or potential conflicts related to custody arrangements so that we can respond appropriately. The Center should have a copy of any custodial legal paperwork in order to ensure that we are able to follow the court's expectations for custody and visitation. Without a copy of a court order we are required to allow biological parents on-demand access to their child and any records that we have regarding their child. Parents are responsible to ensure that your child is brought directly to the classroom and not dropped off at the front doors.

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services requires that the center

ensure that all visitors to the facility are approved in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the children who are in our care. Who is considered to be a visitor in the center is determined based upon the purpose of their visit and the areas to which they will have access. If the visitor will have access to program areas and are not escorted by a staff person they are considered to be a visitor. Enrolled parents are asked to sign in and wear a visitor's badge if you are in the building for extended visits other than for dropping off or picking up.

To protect the safety of the children, the staff, and to ensure that the building is secure and that visitors are accounted for staff will be expected to discourage anyone from leaving or entering via the classroom doors or playground gates. Anyone who enters this area will be stopped and redirected to the appropriate entrance and/or exit. We want to model that the classroom doors are for emergency use and that leaving the premises should be done via the main entrance. Children will learn that this is the expectation and any deviation from this procedure will be unusual or require explanation. Families who pick up children will be encouraged to leave through the main entrance, staff will note that the child has left with their authorized pick up person on their classroom attendance roster sheet.

Withdrawal

In the event that a parent/guardian elects to withdraw his/her child from the center for any reason, a two-week written notice is required. Withdrawal forms are available at the front desk. This time frame enables us to fill the vacancy in a timely manner. Families who choose to withdraw and expect to reenroll in the future will be placed on the waiting list based upon the date they make

this request. In the event of reentry to the center a reenrollment fee will be assessed to the family's account. If less than a two-week notice is given you will be required to pay the difference. The parent or guardian will be invited to meet with the director for an exit interview.

Calendar

The center is open Monday through Friday year round. A calendar of holidays that the center will observe is distributed each year in January. Generally we will be closed: New Years Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thursday and Friday of Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day for both staff and children.

The center is closed for care on Veteran's Day; our staff is required to attend a mandatory staff-training day.

Family tuition is based upon enrollment; no credit is given for holiday closures or family vacations.

Confidentiality

The center shall maintain confidentiality and shall respect your family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life. Disclosure of children's records beyond family members, program personnel and consultants having an obligation of confidentiality requires parental/guardian consent. The center is in compliance with the Federal Law for HIPAA in regard to protection and privacy of your child's health related information. However, in cases of suspected abuse or neglect it is permissible to reveal confidential information to agencies and individuals that may be able to act in the child's interest.

Inclusive Program

The Center may enroll a child with special needs and, with proper supports, include the child in the daily programs of the Center. The patience and support of all the parents in the program is appreciated and needed. If you have questions about other children in your child's classroom, please direct them to the lead teacher or the director. Information will be shared with you as is possible within the guidelines of the applicable laws and the Center's confidentiality policies. Training sessions on this topic may be periodically offered for parents to learn more about how inclusive experiences can help your child transition to school.

Family Involvement

Families are of primary importance in children's development. Your family and our center staff have a common interest in your child's welfare; therefore, the center is supportive of a partnership with parents in ways that enhance your child's development. Our approach is a sensitive and caring one. We are continually striving to meet the needs of children and their families. Parental input is both encouraged and welcomed.

The center has an "open door" policy inviting parents/guardians to visit their child at the center at any time. Parents/Guardians have unlimited access to their child, the provider, written records about their child and the right to inspect the parts of the building used for child day care. Families are invited to participate in all center activities. Opportunities for participation include but are not limited to field trips, potluck dinner, special events, celebrations, parent/teacher conferences, the Center's Advisory Committee and a Room Parent Group.

The center respects the dignity of each family and its culture, customs and beliefs. Each family's child rearing values and their right to make decisions for the children is respected. The center's goal is to develop relationships of mutual trust with the families we serve. The center will provide families with opportunities to build support networks through program activities and community resources.

On a daily basis your child's caregiver will fill out an information sheet documenting your child's feeding, sleeping and toileting activities for that day. Your child's mood and overall disposition each day will be noted. Typically you can expect that this information will be provided to infant and older infant parents on a daily form, and for toddler through pre-school age children noted daily on a form that will be taken home at the end of the week. Parents may request different schedules for this information. Where possible we try to accommodate these requests. Depending on the particular needs of a classroom these forms may change in order to provide information in a timely and quality manner.

Parent conferences will be held with the child's family as frequently as the need arises. A formal conference to discuss your child's development will be held at least once a year and casual conferences will be offered each quarter. Caregivers will be responsible to maintain a developmental portfolio for each child. The parents should be active participants and providers of information in documenting their child's progress; identifying concerns and/or making recommendations during this conference.

Parent Responsibilities

- Complete the enrollment information.
- Keep the center informed of any changes in the information as

provided on the original enrollment forms.

- Bring your child into the center, after a staff member has completed your child's health inspection, sign the child in and give the child an opportunity to say good-bye.
- Inform the staff of any concerns or changes regarding your child since your child was last at the center.
- Inform the staff of any changes in parent/guardian contact phone number for the day.
- Provide any specific or special instructions for the day in writing and give them to the staff who is in charge of your child .
- When picking up your child at the end of the day, sign your child out and notify staff members before leaving the center premises with your child.
- Notify the center when someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up your child. Children will not be released to anyone not designated on the enrollment form; please add names to the list as may be necessary.
- Notify the center by 9 am when your child is absent on a day the child is scheduled to attend.
- Notify the center if your child has or has been exposed to a contagious illness.
- Check your child's mailbox for written center information and take it home with you. Please return forms and surveys that are sent home as your input and feedback is an important part of our decision making process.
- Meet periodically with your child's teacher to review how your child is doing in the center. You may request a meeting at any time.
- Share concerns or ask questions at any time with the center director or Lead teacher.

- Bring items needed for your child to the center. Replenish the items as needed.
- Label personal items to help the staff keep track of your child's things.
- Take bottles and/or soiled clothing home at the end of the day.
- Pay tuition for the childcare services as agreed.

Child's Daily Needs

Childhood can be a messy business. Please dress your child in clothing that is appropriate for all types of play and activities. Children should wear simple, comfortable clothing that is free of complicated fastenings to encourage the child's ability to dress themselves.

Every day children will be playing outside and experimenting with messy art materials, so clothing should be sturdy and washable. Comfortable shoes with non-slip-soles are best.

Consider the season and changeable weather, and send a sweater or jacket in fall and spring; a hooded raincoat in cool, damp weather; mittens, coat, hat, boots and snow pants in the winter; bathing suit and towel in the summer. Children will be assigned a cubby to store their personal items each day they attend the center. This space will accommodate all of the child's belongings in a manner that does not place them in contact with another child's clothing or the floor.

Children will need to bring:

Infants: If you choose not to participate in the CACFP option(s) you will need to provide bottles of formula or breast milk, and baby food. You will also need to supply diaper wipes, diapers, diaper cream (in the original box), blanket, change of clothing and a

special toy for the crib. A picture showing the entire family.

Older Infants/Toddlers: Diapers, diaper wipes, training pants when required, blanket, toothbrush, toothpaste and several changes of clothing. A picture showing the entire family.

Preschoolers: Toothpaste, blanket and a complete change of clothing. A picture showing the entire family.

We like to display your family photographs as we know that familiar photographs help with the separation factor if your child is feeling a bit sad, and is a reminder of their special family. It also helps create connections for children between home and child care center and children enjoy talking about their photographs with the caregivers and other children.

Change of clothing includes: underwear, socks, shirt, slacks, sweater or sweatshirt and seasonal items.

All items should be *labeled* with the child's first and last name.

It is sometimes helpful to keep a tote bag at the center to carry things to and from home.

The Department of Health regulations prohibit us from washing or rinsing clothing that is soiled with fecal matter. If your child's clothing becomes soiled in this manner, it will be placed in a separate plastic bag, labeled with your child's name and will be sent home to be laundered.

Health

Prior to enrollment and yearly thereafter, each child's parent/guardian must submit a physical form stating that their child is in good health and free from contagious or

communicable disease. This form also needs to show the child's immunization record and lead testing/screening results (lead screening is strongly suggested for children 1-6 years of age). Physical forms are provided to parents upon enrollment and are available by request when updating their child's physical. Lead poisoning information is provided at enrollment.

As a child receives additional immunizations, a written note from the health care provider stating the date and type of immunization received must be given to the center office. Caregivers should remind families to keep this information current.

Upon arrival at the center each day, your child will receive a health check by the classroom staff. Please feel free to tell them any health concerns you may have that day so that they may best serve you and your child.

If a child becomes ill during the day, parents will be notified as soon as possible. The staff member and the parent together will discuss if the child is in need of being picked up or can stay in program. Each case will be looked at on an individual basis.

Children may stay in program with a low-grade temperature as long as they are able to actively participate and have no other symptoms (unidentified rash, vomiting, diarrhea that is not able to be contained in the toilet/diaper, or difficulty breathing)

Child must be picked up immediately:

- Babies who are less than 6 months of age with a temperature of 100.5° F aural (ear) or 99.5° F axillary.
- Children over 6 months who have a temperature of 102° F or higher.

Our exclusion criteria are based upon:

The child may not remain in care if he/she does not feel well enough to participate

comfortably in the usual activities of the program and the staff can not care for the sick child without interfering with the care of the other children.

The child can not remain in care if he/she has any of the following that indicates a contagious disease or indicates an immediate need for a medical evaluation:

- A temperature of 101° F axillary or higher and is acting sick.
- Diarrhea that cannot be contained in the diaper/toilet.
- Vomited more than 2 times in a 24 hour period or less if the child is unable to participate in program.
- A rash that is unidentified; not healing; accompanied with fever; has oozing open lesions.
- Earaches accompanied with fever, behavior change, drainage, or pain.
- Conjunctivitis (may return 24 hours after he/she is on medication).
- Impetigo (may return 24 hours after he/she is on medication).
- Strep throat (may return 24 hours after he/she is on medication).
- Scabies (may return 24 hours after treatment has begun).
- Ringworm (may return 24 hours after treatment has begun).
- Lice (may return after treated, nits are removed and child is cleared by center nurse or designated person).
- Chicken pox (may return when all lesions are crusted and dry; usually about 6 days).
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) (may return with low-grade temperature and behavior change with a physician's note that says child is clear to return). Child will be excluded if staff are unable to care for the child and also provide quality care to other children in the group.
- Other symptoms of a possible serious condition.

If a child needs to leave the center due to illness:

- The classroom staff, in consultation with the Director or Next-in Command, has the ultimate responsibility and authority to make the decision regarding when a child should be sent home or excluded from care.
- Classroom staff will notify the parent/guardian regarding child's symptoms and decision to have child go home.
- Staff will obtain information from the parent/guardian regarding who will be picking up the child and at what time.
- We will provide a supervised quiet area for the child to rest until they are picked up.
- Staff will observe and document child's symptoms.
- Staff will continue to wash their hands frequently.

If your child has been exposed to (or contracts) a contagious illness, parents/guardians should notify the center. When a child or staff in the center exposes other children in the center to a contagious illness, the director will notify the other parents/guardians in writing, without disclosing names, and provide a written description of the illness.

The Center contracts with Steuben Child Care Project for the services of a Health Care Consultant. This Registered Nurse reviews our health policies, regularly visits the Center and is available for advice, consultation and training.

The center observes universal precautions for all blood borne pathogens and infection control.

All health related information that you provide to us is protected information and is subject to the privacy protection laws and regulations governing medical and health-related information. It will be kept confidential.

Accidents and Injury

Program staff are responsible to provide adequate supervision, redirection of activity and management of children's behavior in order to prevent injury from occurring. Any accidents and/or injuries which occur during the program session and involve children, staff, volunteers, and/or other family members are to be documented on an "Accident Report Form." A copy may be given to the parent/guardian. Accident Report Forms are signed by the staff completing the form, the parent and initialed by all classroom staff.

Staff are responsible to provide standard First Aid consistent with the training provided. Parents will be informed as soon as possible of their child's injury; first aid provided and review of the completed accident report. The Center Director is to be notified in the event of an injury.

In an emergency, a child's well being must take priority. A bleeding child must not be denied care because gloves are not immediately available. The center classrooms will be equipped with a portable first aid kit, accessible to center staff. Upon all outings outside of the center including the playground the portable first aid kit is to be taken.

Each incident is analyzed and signed by the Assistant Director and Director to determine what events contributed to the situation, what corrective actions are recommended and used as a teaching tool for all staff in the classroom. All accident

reports are tracked each month in order to analyze trends regarding classroom, specific equipment, time of the day and for specific patterns. This information is shared with all classroom staff in order to ensure accountability and attention to correcting areas of concern.

Medication

Prescription and orally-administered over-the-counter medication may be administered only upon written permission of the parent and written instructions from a health care provider stating that the child day care provider may administer such medication or prescription and specifying the circumstances, if any, under which the medication or prescription must not be administered. The consent to administer medication form must be filled out completely and be renewed at least every six months. These forms as well as the medication administration logs are located at the front desk.

Medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's complete name, the medication name, recommended dosage, time intervals for administration, method of administration, expiration date and, for prescription medication, and the prescriber's name. Medications meeting the above requirements will be accepted by MAT certified staff and will be stored in a clean, dry locked area in each classroom inaccessible to children. Any medication needing to be refrigerated will be kept in the staff lounge refrigerator on a designated shelf, in a locked container, both away from food and inaccessible to children. The refrigerator temperature will be kept between 36-46 degrees while medication is stored. The temperature will be monitored daily. Medications no longer needed by the child or has expired will be returned to the parents.

In addition, the center may administer over-the-counter topical ointments upon the written instructions of the parent, following the instructions on the package and be in the original container.

At the time of administration, the staff must document the dosage and time that the prescription or over-the-counter medications was given to a child and whether the child retained the medication. A separate log will be kept for each medication and for each child. If the medication is for as-needed symptoms, the symptoms observed will be noted on the log of administration and parents will be notified. Any side effects will also be noted on the log and parents will be notified.

Hygiene

Studies show that the most important deterrent to the spread of infection is good hand washing practice. Staff members are expected to wash their hands upon arriving at the Center and wash their hands constantly through the day with liquid soap and dry with paper towels. We use a non-toxic disinfectant solution (bleach and water) on the diaper-changing tables, the furniture, counter tops in the kitchen and for rinsing toys. Toys are rinsed in clear water. Mouth toys are also run through the dishwasher on a daily basis.

To keep children as healthy as possible, children who are old enough to understand are taught to follow many basic hygienic procedures to prevent the spread of germs.

When they cough, we ask them to cover their mouth and nose when they sneeze, and to wash their hands before eating, cooking, and after using the bathroom. Teachers are also role models for all of these practices.

Use of Pesticides

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This center is required by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services regulations to provide prior notification to the parent of each child not less than 48 hours prior to the use and application of pesticides in the facility or on the premises. These applications are done only when absolutely necessary and every precaution is taken to choose the proper pesticide, apply it as directed, and protect the staff and children from exposure to the chemical. MSDS Documentation (materials safety data sheets) are required and available for all pesticide products that are applied in the facility or on the grounds. Additional information will be available from the Front Desk.

Nutrition

The center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) that is a federal program administered by the Department of Health in New York State. The center provides breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack daily in accordance with the Day Care Regulations and the CACFP regulations. All children who are enrolled in the child care program, including infants under 12 months old, must have access to CACFP meals as long as the child is in care during our meal service periods.

These meals are provided to us from Corning Catering for all children who are not on infant formula and baby food, and are able to eat table food (this usually occurs at age one year). A copy of the menus will be provided for you at the time of enrollment. The menu is a four week rotating menu; the weekly menu is posted in each classroom. Breakfast and snack is prepared and served by the caregivers. For families who prefer we also offer a vegetarian menu option.

The food components that we offer for infants are consistent with the Infant Meal

Pattern as established by the Department of Health. The center provides one option of a selected iron-fortified milk based infant formula, as well as, a variety of iron-fortified infant cereal, commercially prepared fruits and vegetables and other baby foods as appropriate to your baby's age and nutritional needs.

As the child's parent or guardian you are required to sign the Statement Regarding Infant Feeding indicating your choice regarding the provision of infant formula and/or other baby food options. As the child's parent you have the option to accept or decline the formula and/or food being offered and supply some or all of your infant's foods yourself.

The Center's feeding policy recognizes that feeding demands a division of responsibility. *Adults are responsible for what, when and where children eat.* The center provides food and we have regular meals and snacks. Meals and snacks are an important part of our program day.

Caregivers take time to help children relax and prepare to eat. Caregivers sit down to eat with children and have good times. Caregivers help children learn to behave well at meal and snack times. Meals are served family-style.

The center keeps in mind the special food needs of small children. Familiar and popular foods are offered along with unfamiliar foods. Children are allowed to eat what they like and also try out new foods. *Children are responsible for how much and whether they eat.* Children are trusted to manage their own eating. Children will eat, they will eat what they need, and they will learn to eat the new foods that we offer. Caregivers let children eat as little or as much of the food as they want. Some days children eat a lot

and other days, not so much. But they know how much they need.

There are no limits on the amounts children eat. Caregivers do not force children to eat certain foods or certain amounts of food. Food is not used as reward or punishment at the center.

Infants: Every effort is made to accommodate the needs of infants being breast-fed. Parents/Guardians of bottle fed infants are required to provide formula prepared and in bottles, and jars of baby food, if not participating in the meal program. **The bottles and jars must be labeled with the child's first and last name.** Parents/Guardians provide the formula and food amount and feeding schedule in writing. Our caregivers will record child's intake on a daily log; any unused portions of formula will be discarded after each feeding. Children will be held for bottle feedings. Infants and toddlers will be held or placed in a chair for spoon-feeding. The propping of bottles is prohibited. Children may not be placed in a crib or cot while drinking a bottle regardless of its contents. Bottles are warmed in a hot water bath.

Safe drinking water is available to children at all times and offered at intervals responsive to the needs of individual children.

Any special diet must be provided by parent/guardian only in accord with a physician's written order or for religious purposes.

When food is brought from home, caregivers will determine if the food is adequate and ensure that the food is properly stored. Heating food in a microwave is prohibited for children up to 18 months old.

Breast milk should be in a labeled bottle or breast milk bag. Thawed breast milk is preferred due to the time it takes to defrost. If breast milk is frozen it must be used within two weeks from the date it is brought in.

Food Allergies

We are concerned that we provide children and infants with safe and nutritious meals. However in the instance where a child has one or more food allergies we are required to have documentation of the specific allergy by your child's physician. If a special diet is required and the food is not available you will be asked to supply those components for your child. The center will ensure that the food is stored and reheated in the proper manner. Please make sure that staff in your child's room know about any food allergies your child may have and see that the allergy is noted on your child's physical form.

Studies have shown that food allergies are most common in children under age five. Peanuts, long considered to be one of the staples of children's diets, are one of the leading causes of food- allergic reactions in children. As you may be aware food allergies can be life threatening. Children and adults who have allergies to peanuts are most at risk for this type of severe reaction. As a center we have determined that the safest way to avoid accidental exposure is to be a "nut-free" zone. As a result we do not serve or allow any foods that contain peanuts or that have been processed on machinery that may contain trace of nuts. Strict avoidance is the only way to prevent an allergic reaction. We ask your help in managing this very important health concern by:

- Asking our help and guidance in selecting foods to be used in classroom parties or other special events;

- Read the ingredients label of all food, any food brought from home needs to include this label so that staff may double check it for everyone's safety;
- Do not encourage your child to bring in or eat any candy-type products as they are often manufactured on equipment that processes peanut related foods and are of dubious nutritional value;
- Discourage trading of food;
- Have your child wash their face and hands after eating all meals (milk mustaches too!). Children who have eaten peanut butter should be encouraged to brush their teeth as well;
- Understand if we err on the side of caution and determine that unlabeled foods or foods with unknown ingredients cannot be served safely and are sent back home with you.

Naps and Rest

During the course of the day opportunities for rest/naps are provided for all children. Naps are a part of the routine in each infant through preschool classroom. Infants and young toddlers follow their own napping schedule. Naps for older children are scheduled following lunch.

A firm crib with washable mattress is provided for infant's six weeks to 12 months. For children who are in the older infant rooms we typically begin having children sleep on a firm, washable cot. A firm, washable mat of at least $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thickness and of adequate size is provided for each child two years through five years. Each child who spends more than four hours per day at the center will have his/her own crib, cot or mat. Cots and mats will be used in areas free of draft and arranged so that no one can step on the children occupying the cots or mats.

The Center provides sheets and blankets for the cribs. Once the child sleeps on a cot or a mat, parents are asked to provide a blanket.

For children who are resting at naptime and unable to sleep, an area will be provided for quiet play after resting. Children are not forced to rest for long periods of time.

Safety and Emergencies

Suitable precautions are taken at all times to eliminate conditions, which may contribute or create a hazardous situation. Caregivers and the director will inspect the environment regularly for hazards. A monthly safety inspection is done and any hazard is corrected immediately.

Fire drills are conducted at least monthly. Most drills are unannounced; a record of these drills is kept on file in the center office. Children will be made aware of the emergency by an alarm and will be escorted out of the building and supervised by staff at all times. A caregiver is assigned to take attendance. In the event of a real emergency, the director and designated emergency center staff will notify parents/guardians immediately, by phone. Emergency exit routes are posted by each room's door. If you are ever at the Center during a drill, please stay with your child and exit as directed by classroom staff. This will eliminate confusion and ensure safety.

The Center has a safety management plan to be used in the event of other types of emergencies. A copy of this safety manual is located in each room's policy manual and staff are aware of the procedures to follow for these types of situations.

In other emergency situations due to weather conditions, heating, water and plumbing or electrical problems parents/guardians will be notified of the emergency by the director or designated

center staff and the radio if it becomes necessary to close the center.

Parents/Guardians will be requested to pick their children up immediately. If it is necessary to evacuate the center before parents/guardians are able to pick up children, children will be taken to HealthWorks.

Weather Closure Policy

It is the policy of the Erwin Child & Family Center to remain open unless an official State of Emergency is declared, or structural or utility problems occur at the Center. The decision to open, close or delay is not influenced by the local school districts or to any particular employer in our area. Instead, the decision will be specific to the circumstances that exist within our Center.

In instances of bad weather that may make it difficult for staff to get into the center to work, opening may be delayed. Whenever possible this will be avoided. We do, however, want to assure that adequate staff are available to care for the children. We reserve the right to close if opening or remaining open is unsafe.

Delays or closures will be announced on the local area radio stations.

Child Abuse

Child abuse violates children's health and safety and betrays their trust. It is our legal and ethical obligation to report to the proper authorities any suspicion of nonaccidental injury or pattern of injury for which there is no reasonable explanation. Procedures such as our daily health check help us monitor children's overall physical well being.

All employees of Pathways, Inc. child care programs, as providers of childcare services are required to act as mandatory reporters

of child abuse and neglect. Reports are to be made in the following instances:

- When a mandated reporter who in the course of their employment, occupation or practice of their profession has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused or neglected or demonstrates any of the indicators of abuse as defined in Section II of our Center policies.
- When a mandated reporter has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused or maltreated where the parent and/or other person legally responsible for such child comes before the reporter in his/her professional or official capacity and stated from personal knowledge facts, conditions or circumstances, which if correct, would render the child abused or neglected.
- When a mandated reporter suspects child abuse or neglect while acting in his/her capacity as an employee of Pathways, Inc. Child Care Program.

If a childcare staff or volunteer is the subject of the New York State Mandated Reporters Hotline call action will be taken which ensures the safety and protection of the children enrolled in the program.

As mandated reporters of child abuse and maltreatment, we must place the welfare of the child first and will not automatically release a child to an adult who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. We may request that an alternative be found to get your family home safely.

Discipline

We believe that the quality of the young child's environment and social experiences has a decisive and long lasting impact on their ability to learn and their overall well-being. The Erwin Child & Family Center is committed to using positive behavioral

strategies when responding to children and in helping children learn how to manage their own behavior. The guidance and classroom management strategies that we use and our classroom management decisions help promote positive social skills, foster mutual respect, strengthen self-esteem and support an emotionally and physically safe environment.

Discipline is loving guidance. It is not just a word, technique or set of rules. The Erwin Child & Family Center endeavors to help each child develop inner controls in order to develop acceptable ways to respond to their feelings and improve their ability to respond by making good decisions. To this end we use the following approach:

- > Children are helped to label and understand their feelings. The message is that all feelings are valid and in order to express them appropriately first one needs to understand them and be assisted to express them in an appropriate manner.
- > Show respect for the child by giving advance warning for transitions and changes in routines (i.e. "in a few minutes it will be time to clean up for lunch").
- > Caregivers explain how a child's behavior affects and impacts others, as well as themselves. "It hurt John when Emily hit him, it made him cry, how do you feel when someone hits you?" Using the child's name personalizes this approach.
- > Problem solving is encouraged. "What ideas do you have to solve this problem? Lets work together to figure out a solution to this problem."
- > Cooperation among children is fostered rather than competition. Each child is an individual—we avoid making comparisons.
- > Use praise, encouragement and other means of recognizing appropriate behavior.

- > The learning environment is organized to minimize conflicts, i.e. toys are easily accessible, the room is set up in a manner that allows children to play in an "organized" fashion, activities that are planned are of interest to the children and are developmentally appropriate, choices are offered and teachers are actively engaged with the children in these activities.
- > Caregivers are expected to model respectful behavior and show evidence of good communication with other adults as well as with the children.
- > The behavioral expectations are clear, consistent and reinforced. The basic expectations of the Erwin Child & Family Center are:
 - I keep myself safe.
 - I keep my friends safe.
 - I keep my school safe.

Occasionally all children have a day when their behavior is not acceptable and they may cause disruption in the classroom. All children will misbehave. Our goal is to prevent troublesome behavior in the first place by establishing clear limits, expectations and rules in an appropriate environment that meets children's needs for affection and attention. Children should not be condemned or labeled for the inappropriate behavioral choices that will inevitably occur in experiential, trial-and-error learning. Before we proceed as labeling a child's behavior as an isolated event caregivers are expected to consider what the issue really is.

- The child's age and if the behavior is developmentally appropriate?
- What are the circumstances surrounding the event?
- What was going on in the environment at the time of the inappropriate behavior?

- What were the triggers for the behavior?
- What are the child's feelings regarding safety and security? (What are the triggers for this child?)
- What has worked in the past for this child?
- Who does the child feel bonded to? Were his/her needs being met at the time of the behavior?

In dealing with disruptive behavior one or more of the following techniques may be utilized: redirecting the child's attention to another activity or to conversation with a child or caregiver; suggest activities that may be of interest; asking if there is some other activity that may be of interest; examine the environment and determine if changes or adjustments in the activity level, transitions or routines should occur; addressing the child's needs for food, rest, emotional or physical care.

If the unacceptable behavior persists, help the child recognize and solve the problem. Speak with the child privately and calmly. View the discussion as problem solving rather than disciplinary. Help the child identify the behavior we want to change. Reinforce with the child the classroom and center rules regarding safe choices. If appropriate discuss what the reason for the rule is. Help the child understand how his/her actions might make others feel (help label feelings). Assist the child in identifying the possible or likely consequences if the behavior continues. If the conflict becomes physical intervene immediately to ensure that all children are kept safe and use the positive problem-solving methods previously described.

Any discipline that is used must relate to the child's action and handled without prolonged delay so that the child is aware of the relationship between his/her actions and the

consequences. Consequences need to be related to the rule and the connection is obvious to the child. Consequences look to the future and help the child to make better decisions. Children will not be disciplined for the toilet learning process. All discipline is to be directed, administered and supervised by program staff. Children may not be given this responsibility.

Corporal punishment is **not allowed** under any circumstances. The term *corporal punishment* is defined as physical contact inflicted directly on the body. As a result, staff is not allowed to: spank, bite, shake, slap, twist, squeeze or pinch. Children are not to be asked to do excessive physical exercise, such as run laps, do pushups, etc. Techniques such as putting the child in bizarre and/or strenuous postures, making a child eat soap, foods, hot spices or foreign substances are not allowed. Withholding or using food, rest or sleep, as a punishment is not allowed. Force-feeding, or making a child eat is not allowed.

Isolating a child (often referred to as "time out") in any area where the child cannot be seen and closely supervised by a staff member is not allowed. Isolating a child in a closet, small room, adjoining area or darkened area is also prohibited.

A child may be separated from the group only under the following circumstances:

- When a child's behavior harms, or is likely to result in harm to the child, others or the property.
- Where a child seriously disrupts or is likely to seriously disrupt the group interaction. This separation is not to be used as a consequence for inappropriate behavior. The separation is intended to help the child calm himself/herself and regain composure that will enable

discussing the problem with the caregiver.

A child may be separated only for as long as is necessary for the child to regain self-control and rejoin the group. We refer to this as "time-in" for the child with the staff. This separation from the group is for a short time period of no longer than five minutes. This separation may be generally no more than one minute for each year of the child's age. If separation is utilized the child must remain in constant supervision of a staff member. It is expected that staff are immediately available to provide support, reassurance and help the child process the feelings that led to the issue and develop alternative problem resolution strategies. Immediately following this separation the caregiver must guide the child in rejoining the group. The caregiver is expected to facilitate this process to ensure that the child is actively and successfully reentered into the group.

The caregiver may want to inform the parents of the difficulties the child experienced during the day and the successes the child experienced when problem solving. Any use of time away ("time-in") from the group will be communicated to the parents. In this discussion the focus should be on the feelings the child was experiencing and the manner in which we helped facilitate its appropriate expression. Any information that may shed light on the nature of these emotions shared by the family should be relayed to the classroom team.

If a child attending the Erwin Child & Family Center is consistently disruptive, impacts the well being of self or others or impacts the quality of care for others provided, a parent/guardian conference will be requested. Prior to the conference a period

of observations will occur to observe the child's interactions in the classroom and to attempt to identify potential areas for remediation. Specific attention will be paid to environmental factors and teaching styles. An observation by the parent/guardian may be requested.

A conference will include discussion of the areas of concern, the child's needs and specific information regarding the anecdotal observations that have been made by the classroom teachers, director etc. Review of the behavioral intervention strategies that have been utilized thus far and the success of these methods will also be discussed. During the conference specific concerns of the family will be reviewed and considered. A plan and a strategy to address the behavioral concerns will be developed. Any necessary consent for release of information will be obtained from the child's parents in order to assure collaboration between other service providers. A review schedule will be established.

If the plan produces observable improvement in the child's behavior follow-up meetings will be arranged with the Erwin Child & Family Center staff and parent or guardian as needed.

If no observable improvement is noted the Erwin Child & Family Center will seek recommendations from the appropriate specialists upon proper consent. A new plan and review schedule will be established. A child may be temporarily removed from the Center if the child's condition poses a direct threat to the health and safety of the others in the childcare setting. Reenrollment will be contingent upon a plan acceptable to the parents/guardians, director, staff and appropriate specialists.

Parent/guardians are required to be active participants in this process in order to maintain enrollment in the program.

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Children and Biting – Our Approach

Our program recognizes that biting is, unfortunately, not unexpected when toddlers are in group care. We are always upset when children are bitten in our program, and we recognize how upsetting it is for parents. While we feel that biting is never the right thing for toddlers to do, we know that they bite for a variety of reasons. Most of these reasons are not related to behavior problems.

Our program, then, does not focus on punishment for biting, but on effective techniques that address the specific reason for the biting. When biting occurs our four main responses are: 1) to care for and help the child who was bitten, 2) to help the child who bit learn other behavior, 3) to work with the child who bit and 4) to understand the reasons for the biting behavior so the biting will stop.

As caregivers we express strong disapproval of biting. We work to keep children safe and help the child who bit learn different, more appropriate behavior. When there are episodes of on-going biting, we develop a plan of specific strategies, techniques and timelines to address it. We do not and will not use any response that harms a child or is known to be ineffective.

We give immediate attention and, if necessary, first aid to children who are bitten. We offer to put ice on the bite if the child is willing. We clean all bites with soap and water regardless if the skin gets broken.

When children bite, their parents are informed personally and privately the same day. When children are bitten, their parents are informed personally and may be given a copy of the completed accident form. When

we experience on-going biting in a toddler room, we develop a written plan with specific strategies, techniques and timelines to work on the problem. This written plan can be shared with all parents in the room.

Biting is always documented on our standard accident report form. It is completed and signed by a teacher and an administrator. The parent must also sign it. A copy may be given to the parents, and the other copy is kept in the accident report book in the office.

We keep the name of the child who bit confidential. This is to avoid labeling and to give our teachers the opportunity to use their time and energy to work on stopping the biting.

We have staff training on dealing with biting at least once a year. In addition, we have current resources on biting available for staff and parents. We encourage parents to bring their concerns and frustrations directly to the teachers.

In regard to biting, parents and families can expect that:

- We will put children's safety first and provide appropriate first aid as well as comfort and advice to any child who is bitten.
- We will provide appropriate programming for toddlers to help prevent biting.
- We will have current information and resources on biting for staff and families.
- We will have teachers with adequate knowledge and training to deal appropriately and effectively with biting.
- We will take parent concerns seriously and treat them with understanding and respect.

- We will tell families what specific steps are being taken to address biting and explain the reasoning behind those steps.
- We will respond to family's questions, concerns and suggestions - even when the response to some suggestions might be "no."
- We will work to schedule conferences about biting with your child's teachers at a time when parents can come
- The child's identity will be kept confidential if he or she bites. This helps avoid labeling or confrontations what will slow the process of learning not to bite.

Field Trips

During the course of the daily activities, children may be taken off the Center premises for a walk within the neighborhood. Children will always be supervised within the recommended guidelines for adult:child ratios. At the time of enrollment, parents/guardians are asked to sign a release for permission for these outings.

As part of the school-age curriculum, fieldtrips may be planned to provide additional hands-on learning opportunities or to attend special cultural or recreational events. Field trips will build on children's interests and experiences. Providing hands-on experience of the topic being investigated will provide staff with the opportunity to enrich the curriculum experience for the children.

On these occasions, parent/guardians are notified in writing stating the place, time route and method of transportation the children are to use. Parents/Guardians need to sign the field trip permission form if you want your child to participate in the trip. Adequate staff will always be provided to ensure the complete and total safety of the children. The first aid kit and list of children's names, walkie-talkies, and

emergency numbers are taken along on walks and field trips in case of an accident or emergency.

Any child exhibiting repeated inappropriate behavior or not following directions on a field trip might not be able to participate in the next field trip.

Toys and Sharing

The Center is equipped with toys and learning materials appropriate to the children's ages. It is important to remember that when a child brings a favorite or special toy from home, the potential for that toy to be broken or lost is present in a group setting.

Each classroom will share with parents/guardians their preference for toys from home. Please leave war and weapon toys at home. If a child comes to the Center with a weapon toy, the parent/guardian will be asked by the classroom teacher to take the weapon toy with him/her. We do this so as not to encourage violent or aggressive behavior.

A group setting provides a child with the opportunity to learn to share. This is a difficult concept for young children to learn. The classroom teachers assist each child in learning this social behavior. Children are encouraged to use words to ask for a turn with a toy or activity. The child using the toy or doing the activity will be encouraged to respond, letting the other child know that he/she will give that child the toy or activity when they are finished. The classroom teacher monitors this situation to make sure that the child finishes with the toy or activity in a reasonable time frame and that both children are able to cope with the sharing opportunity.

Toys from home do not have to be shared with all of the children at the Center. The

child who owns the toy can decide whom he/she shares the toy with or can decide not to share the toy at all. If this situation becomes upsetting for the child who owns the toy, the child will be asked to put the toy away until it is time to go home. All toys and learning materials that belong to the Center will be shared by all children.

Comfort Objects

As your child progresses through childhood, we as professionals, recognize the need for some children to use a "comfort" or transitional object. Children use these objects, such as blankets, pillows, stuffed animal, when they need help with difficult emotional and/or physical transitions. Since the object is associated with the security of home and family, it brings comfort. The use of these objects during this time is natural.

We understand the dilemma these two important, but opposite, needs bring to a child's environment. Therefore, it is our policy to gradually wean the object from a child until he/she will use it only during naptime and times of stress, such as early morning departures. In addition, we will teach the child that it is his/her responsibility to put the object away when finished, with the goal of having it ultimately be the child's choice to do so. All of this, of course, will be accomplished with as much love and attention as the child needs so that he/she gains a sense of trust and comfort from the teachers. We ask that you keep us informed as to your comfort level with this process so that we can work together as your child grows into a more independent person.

Holidays and Celebrations

The Erwin Child & Family's holiday and celebration policy is derived from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Erwin Child & Family Center supports the recognition and

celebration of holidays in our classrooms. Holiday celebrations can be wonderful opportunities for children to learn about the traditions and values that are cherished parts of people's lives. Holiday celebrations should never take over the curriculum and should respect the cultures represented by all children.

NAEYC believes that decisions about what holidays to celebrate are best made together by teachers, parents, and children. Families and staff are more comfortable when both have expressed their views and understand how a decision has been reached. At Erwin Child & Family Center, these conversations should occur during classroom orientation for new families and at move-up meetings for children already enrolled. The important thing for all to remember is that when planning holiday activities, the rules of good practice continue to apply:

- Are the activities meaningful to the children?
- Are their needs and interests being met?
- Is the activity a valuable use of children's time?

Teachers will have regular conversations with families as holiday issues arise. Parents and teachers who have questions regarding the appropriateness of an activity can also address them with the assistant director or director.

Holiday celebrations are just one way for programs and families to work together to create developmentally and culturally appropriate learning experiences. These experiences will be initiated by children or families. We expect that holiday recognition will vary year to year in each classroom and will look different in each age group. For example, activities that are developmentally appropriate and valuable for preschool

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children will not always be meaningful for infants and toddlers.

Religion: Teachers will not teach the religious aspect of a holiday or teach one religion or religious holiday as the correct one. Religious aspects will be explained matter-of-factly, with simple language. Questions such as, "Did that really happen?" or "Is there really such thing as ___?" will be seen as opportunities to build on thinking skills. A simple reply such as, "What do you think?" is an appropriate response. Children will be referred back to their parents for more specific questions.

Here are some signs of good practice in celebrating holidays:

- Activities and projects will be child or parent initiated.
- Parents and teachers ask themselves why children should learn about this holiday. Is it developmentally appropriate for those in the group? Why is it important to specific children and families?
- Activities are connected to specific children and families in the group. This helps children understand holiday activities in the context of people's daily lives. Children should have the chance to explore the meaning and significance of each holiday.
- Children are encouraged to share feelings and information about the holidays they celebrate. This will help them make the distinction between learning about another person's holiday rituals and celebrating one's own holidays. Children may participate as "guests" in holiday activities that are not part of their own cultures.

- Every group represented in the classroom is honored (both children and staff). This does not mean that every holiday of every group must be celebrated or classrooms would be celebrating all the time! It does mean that once families and classrooms have decided on what holidays to celebrate, none should be treated as if they are "unusual." Children should recognize that everyone's holidays are culturally significant and meaningful and fun.
- Activities demonstrate the fact that not everyone in the same ethnic group celebrates holidays in the same way. Families may provide examples of their own unique traditions.
- Curriculum demonstrates respect for everyone's customs. If children are observing different holidays at the same time, the values and traditions of each child's culture should be acknowledged.
- Parents and teachers work together to plan strategies for children whose families' beliefs do not permit participation in holiday celebrations. Families should take part in creating satisfactory alternatives for the child within the classroom.
- Focus is on meaningful ways to celebrate holidays without requiring families to spend money. Families may find certain holidays stressful due to the amount of commercialization and the media pressure to buy gifts. Teachers can help by showing children that homemade costumes and gifts are very special, and celebrating can be joyful without gifts.

Birthdays

Children's birthdays can be celebrated at the Center. Parents/guardians can make arrangements with the classroom teacher with regard to special treats. We ask you to remember our "peanut free practice" in making your decision on what to bring into share. We would encourage families to share a healthy treat with the children.

If your family chooses to have birthday celebrations away from the Center (a birthday party) we would ask that you pay special attention to the fact even young children can feel excluded if not invited. Please ask your child's teacher for help in being discrete with invitations or suggestions in addressing this issue with your child.

Outdoor Play

We believe that exposure to a period of fresh air assists in maintaining children's health. A variety of research emphasizes the benefits of outdoor play including less illness, improved fitness, improved concentration abilities; and that physical motion stimulates brain cell growth. Daily outdoor play gives children the opportunity to be in control of their own play and learn about social interaction, it is a social play environment and is a natural and challenging environment. As such it can be one of the most stimulating for children's intellectual development.

A period of daily supervised outdoor play is required for all children in the program, except in inclement weather or unless ordered by a physician. Provided children have the appropriate attire for the nature of the weather conditions and type of activity planned they may go outdoors each day. A variety of activities should be planned for outdoor play so as to meet the individual needs and interests of the children in each age group.

During periods of extreme weather conditions care will be taken to minimize children's length of exposure and the times of day we play outdoors. Parents/guardians may request that children remain indoors as long as required adult:child ratios are maintained. The Center discourages this practice, but will honor it when possible. Children who have a doctor's note stating they cannot go outside will not go outdoors.

The Center staff are to assure that children are properly supervised while on or near the playground equipment. Children are to be guided and informed regarding the safety rules and the way to utilize the playground equipment to promote the highest level of safety possible.

Classroom Program and Schedules

The planned, daily schedule for each classroom balances indoor and outdoor activities, quiet time and active time, periods when individual children choose their own activities and periods for group activities and child-initiated and adult-initiated activities. The classroom teacher's role is to plan and arrange the learning environment. Hands-on activity is encouraged. Materials are readily accessible to the children. The schedule supports children being actively involved, since children learn through play.

Program goals are established for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. These goals will promote a schedule that includes educational, social, cultural, emotional and recreational activities that are appropriate to the ages and developmental levels of the children in each group.

A written plan of program activities and routines will be kept for each room. The

Assistant Director and/or Education Coordinator review these plans. Program plans are shared with the parents/guardians and should be posted in each classroom. The daily schedule is posted in each classroom and includes a schedule of meals, naps and rest periods, indoor and outdoor activities and learning activities through play.

All activities planned for and held in the daily program are designed to engage the children's interests and developmental levels. In doing this, the children will be encouraged to join in and participate in the activities but will be allowed not to participate if they do not want to, in a particular activity. Options are available to facilitate this.

For children two to three years of age and older the classrooms are divided into specific areas which provide children an opportunity to manipulate materials and interact with peers and adults. These areas include but are not limited to small motor, blocks, language arts, science, art, music, quiet and dramatic play.

Program activities will follow the standards guidelines of best practice as developed by NECPA (National Early Childhood Program Accreditation) and NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children)

Infants and toddlers are free to explore their environment and freely move in their environment that allows them to practice their developing motor skills. While awake, infants will not be left in a crib for more than one half-hour without direct staff contact. Infants will not be left in a swing, highchair, crib or other piece of equipment for more than one-half hour at any one time. Sleeping infants are monitored throughout their naps by the caregivers.

Materials and equipment for infants and toddlers will enable the children to explore by mouthing, touching, squeezing, rolling, pushing and pulling. These materials will consist of a variety of textures, softness and firmness.

Infant Sleeping Positions

Sudden infant death, or crib death, is the sudden unexplained death of a healthy infant. It usually occurs during sleep and often affects newborns. SIDS is often reported during the winter months when children are overdressed or covered with heavy blankets. We believe that the education of families is important and we provide literature regarding SIDS. We require back sleeping as a safe sleeping position for SIDS prevention.

In the event that a parent insists that their child should sleep in the prone position we are responsible to:

- Identify any health conditions or birth defects requiring the infant to sleep in the prone position; and
- Obtain written confirmation from the child's physician that the child should sleep in the prone position.

Absent this documentation infants must be placed on their backs to sleep.

Toilet Learning

As children are ready, the program includes toilet learning. Your child's teacher will share with parents of toddlers the classroom procedure for toilet learning. Toilet learning methods, which frighten, demean or humiliate a child, are prohibited.

Toilet learning should be a non-stressful experience that is appropriate to each child's individual development and involves you, your child and us as caregivers. Toilet learning is one task that we as adults cannot initiate or control for the child as much as we wish we

could! We respect each child's timetable, emotional and physical needs and self-esteem as we help him/her learn to make the transition between diapers to using the toilet independently.

We will work with you to ensure that the toilet learning process is consistent between home and the Center. We have many articles and tips to share with you and are available to discuss your concerns and experiences along the way. Independent toileting is not a requirement for determining if a child is ready to move up.

We look for readiness indicators and see this as the key to a positive and successful experience. We will not punish or shame children for accidents as they are an expected part of the learning process and may be attributed to many factors. Adults are responsible to clean up after children's accidents.

Videos

Videos and movies may be utilized as a part of the curriculum and activity planning, but only as special events. The use of media such as television, films and videotapes is limited to developmentally appropriate programming that has been previewed by adults prior to use. Another option for the activity is always available and no child is required to view the program. Staff discusses what is viewed with the children to begin developing critical viewing skills. The choice of the movies shown will be restricted to "G" movies.

Photographs and Publicity

Photographs of the children participating in our programs will be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures or other publicity materials. We obtain your permission to use photographs including your child without compensation at

enrollment. The release for photographs is found on the Registration Form.

Resource Library

The Center has a library located in the lobby. The library is always expanding and adding new items. Resources include articles on childcare, parenting, children's health issues, teaching and curriculum. Parents are encouraged to use the library for their own needs. If you are interested in a particular topic and need assistance locating materials let us know. Please let the receptionist know what materials you are borrowing and when they are returned.

Program Goals for Each Age Group

Infants/Toddlers

Cognitive Objectives - To promote cognitive development by providing opportunities for infants and toddlers that use all their senses to safely explore their environment. To interact with infants and toddlers in ways that promote their confidence and curiosity and by providing opportunities, experiences and materials for infants and toddlers to develop new concepts and skills.

Social Objectives - To help children begin to learn to get along with others, understand and express their feelings and respect those of others. To provide an environment with experiences that support social development, e.g., responding to infants' gestures and sounds to help them learn how people communicate, encouraging them to help each other; modeling cooperation and positive ways to interact with others. To make sure popular toys are duplicated so those who cannot yet share can play peacefully alongside of one another.

Cultural Objectives - To provide a multicultural experience for the children

through diversity of peers and caregivers, as well as, providing multicultural pictures, toys and books that reflect their own and less familiar cultures.

Emotional Objectives - To provide a safe and nurturing environment where caregivers' interaction with children promotes security, trust and high self-esteem. More specifically, each child's needs will be met promptly, emotions identified and reflected back to the child, feelings verbalized and family talked about often.

Physical/Recreational Objectives - To provide a safe environment, as non-restrictive as possible, to promote all areas of physical development based on each individual child's ability. This includes development of both large and small motor skills, reflex skills and movement.

Preschool Age

Cognitive Objectives - To provide an environment rich in activities and experiences that promote the preschool child's cognitive development and ensure school readiness. To enjoy literature in a variety of ways that exposes children to language, rhythms and sequence. To develop an awareness of recall and sequence of stories. To have an interest in how and why things happen. To explore the world and community around them. To explore art activities of all types. To be provided educational opportunities, which take into account each child's individual learning style and multi-sensory learning styles.

Social Objectives - To make strong friendships with a few children in the group, to enjoy conversing and participating in activities with peers and caregivers. To enjoy large and small group activities. To be aware of and respond to the feelings of others. To show more sharing in play. To

enjoy small and large group activities. To begin to enjoy planning a project. To be able to wait to take a turn. To enjoy and become an active participant in conversation with others.

Cultural Objectives - To be secure about self as a unique individual, recognizing that self as a member of a family and an ethnic, racial, cultural, and gender sub group. To expose children to the diversity of cultures, traditions, and customs that exist in our community and the world. To be exposed to and learn to appreciate the differences and similarities among families.

Transition into the Center or to a New Classroom

It is best for families and children to transition to the Center on a gradual basis and for children to get used to the new environment with their familiar parent nearby. This is a recommended practice for all children who enter the program. We do recognize that there may be situations where this is not practical or possible and we will work to transition children and the family according to their needs.

Families may come in with their children one week before their enrollment date to visit the classroom they are enrolling in. Families should be encouraged to use this time to help their child transition into the Center and help them get to know the staff and feel comfortable here. The family will meet with the new teacher who will ask about the family culture, holidays and celebrations, child's habits, nap and meal routines and other pertinent information. Classroom specifics will also be reviewed. During this week the family will have an orientation with the assistant director. They will meet the billing coordinator and director as well.

The parent should be staying with their child the majority of the time. They may leave the Center and their child here only if they have had their intake appointment with the billing coordinator and have all the required paperwork turned in. Parents that leave the Center must stay in the Corning area and be reachable by phone. Any parent who leaves their child for more than ten hours during this week will be billed accordingly.

Infants

Infants transitioning into the Center for the first time will follow a schedule established between the Assistant Director, the family and the Lead Teacher. A typical visitation schedule is as follows: On the first day the parent stays with the child in the classroom. The second day the parent spends some time at the Center and then leaves the infant for a short time. This is a good opportunity to have the new-family orientation with the Assistant Director and should be coordinating appropriately. On the third day the parent leaves the child for a few hours. Finally, the child is left for a full day.

Older children entering for the first time

For a new child entering the Center for the first time, a similar transition process may occur. However, with older children the process is likely to be completed in two days.

Procedure for Transitioning Children to a New Classroom

Children are enrolled in a classroom according to their developmental level and chronological age. Before a child is moved to a new room, the child's teacher will provide opportunities for the child to become acquainted with the new teacher, classroom and children. The child will be invited by the teachers to visit the new room for short activities as appropriate.

Lead Teachers will always provide activities to meet the developmental needs of the child. This will ensure that when a child is not able to transition on or about their birthday that he/she continues to receive exceptional care.

The process of transitioning a child should be individualized and different for every child. Children should be allowed to go as slowly or as quickly as they seem ready and plans should remain flexible. It is important to continually evaluate how the child is doing on a daily basis. Our goal is to help every child make a smooth and healthy transition to the next room. To assist in this process, classroom staff should plan to spend time going back and forth to the new room with the child. Staff will assist the child in developing relationships with his or her new teachers and children. It is important that children are allowed to return to their classroom when needed. Transitions should be a team effort between the classrooms and everything should be done to ensure a positive experience for the child and family.

Transition Meeting with the Parents

The lead teacher will set up a transition meeting. Every effort will be made to have this meeting with the parents before the child visits the new room. When necessary, the child can visit the new classroom before this meeting occurs, however the parents must be notified before the child visits. The meeting should include the current lead teacher, the new teacher, parents, and the Director or Assistant Director, if needed. The agenda for this meeting is as follows:

- Explanation of the process
- Parent questions about the transition
- Current lead teacher reviews child's progress
- Future lead teacher reviews class schedule, adjustments, other information

- Future teacher asks about the family culture, holidays and celebrations, child's habits, routines and other pertinent information.
- Ways to assist this child with the transition
- Family visits the new classroom

Visitation to the New Classroom

The team should agree upon a tentative visitation schedule for the child based on input from the current teacher, parents and classroom schedules. It should be clear that the schedule is subject to change based on how the child adjusts and at times based on staffing issues.

The transition opportunity for the children is expected to occur over at least a one week time period. It will be adjusted dependent on the needs of the child and/or family to ensure a successful adjustment to the new setting. Inter-classroom sheets will be used to facilitate the basic information between classroom teams.

During the time the child is visiting the new classroom, the Transition Daily Sheet will be used in conjunction with the normal daily sheets in each classroom. The child will carry this Transition Daily Sheet with her as she goes from room to room. This sheet will convey information and updates regarding the visits to parents, whereby the regular daily sheets will give parents details on their routine (diapering, activities, meals, etc.)

Transition to Pre-K

Our pre-k classroom is an option for children the year before they enter kindergarten. Our pre-k program follows the Corning-Painted Post School District guidelines that allow children to enter kindergarten in September if they will be 5 years old by that December first. To be eligible for pre-k children must turn 4 years old by December

first of the year before they enroll in kindergarten. Families and teachers will work together to decide whether the child should attend our pre-k room or remain in one of our multi age classrooms. In the event that we have more children age-eligible for pre-k than we have space, ECFC reserves the right to set guidelines for readiness.

Transitions occur during the summer with the goal being all ECFC preschool children who are going to pre-k are officially enrolled in the room by the beginning of September. The timing of these transitions is contingent upon the terminations of current pre-k children who leave for kindergarten.

Our pre-k classroom will be explained to parents during their transition meeting to the multi-age preschool rooms. Discussions will be on-going with families of children in our multi-age rooms.

Transition to School Age

ECFC preschool children who will be attending Erwin Valley School and plan to use our Center for before and after school care will be transitioned to our school age classroom during the summer before kindergarten.

During the summer months, the preschool teachers will hold their final meeting with parents of children entering kindergarten to review their child's progress. At that time the teacher will tell the parents that visits will begin with the school age classroom. We recognize that entering kindergarten is an important milestone for children and families. We will try to help ease this transition by providing opportunities for children to visit the school age classroom. Due to the nature of the school age classroom, these visits will be informal and will occur based on availability. The school age teacher will set up meetings with the

parents in order to review specific items about the classroom.

Staff Qualifications

Caregivers must be able to meet the requirements of Day Care Regulations. This includes background checks of personal references, employment record and criminal convictions and record of abuse or maltreatment against children. Prior to receipt of these clearances staff are not left in an unsupervised situation.

Each classroom has a teacher, support and teacher aide(s) who comprise the classroom team. All staff receive an annual performance evaluation and on-going feedback in regard to their performance.

Our staff need to meet the qualifications for their position as outlined by the New York State Child Daycare Regulations. We expect our staff to be committed to the early childhood field and genuinely enjoy working with children.

All caregivers must have a warm and friendly personality, be sensitive to the feelings and needs of others, be able to relate well to children and be willing to fulfill responsibilities in accordance with the Agency's and Center's philosophy.

Staff Training

Student Interns - We have relationships with local school districts and colleges that allow students to complete internships at the Erwin Child & Family Center. All students are required to comply with the Center's confidentiality policy and are always under the direct supervision of center staff. These programs are an exciting opportunity for us to help train the next generation of early childhood professionals. These interns help the Center as well by offering an extra

set of hands for special projects and activities.

Childcare program staff are expected to participate in ongoing training and professional preparation. Staff are provided with compensation for training and tuition reimbursement.

During the initial period of employment, there is an initial training period. Ongoing training is included in the design of the program. New York State Regulations require a minimum of fifteen hours of training per staff each year; new staff must complete this in the first six months of employment. A training plan is developed specific to the needs of the individual staff and for the childcare team. Substitutes, volunteers, and students also participate in training.

Complaint Policy and Procedure

The Erwin Child & Family Center has several methods in place that allow consumers to voice their concerns and resolve their issues.

The New York State Department of Social Services Licensing Regulations for Child Day Care are conspicuously posted in each room and on the Parent News Bulletin Board in the lobby for parent review.

The Center follows all regulations as listed in the New York State Office of Children and Family Services Daycare Regulations. A copy of the Daycare Regulations is available for your information and can be found in each classroom. A copy can be requested from the Center Director.

At the end of the Parent Handbook and in the lobby the name, title, address and phone numbers of the New York State Department of Social Services Field Representative and Regional Bureau Director from the New York

State Office of Children and Families, Bureau of Early Childhood Services is listed.

The Center surveys its families once each year. These surveys are tabulated, and action plans are established to rectify areas identified for improvements.

The complete reports are shared with the Governing Board, the Corning Inc. Employee Sponsor and Pathways' Board of Directors Child and Family Services Committee. A composite of these surveys is published in the monthly newsletter.

The Center has an open-door policy. Parents or guardians are welcome and encouraged to visit and observe anytime. Complaints regarding staff or site decisions may be brought to the Center Director at any time. Parents are encouraged to discuss their concerns directly with the staff involved but it is of primary importance to us that the issue be brought forward and addressed.

Staff are expected to receive parental complaints and ask for specific information, as well as, suggestions for how the parent believes that the situation could have been handled. Follow through is expected on all parent complaints. We will work to resolve all issues in a fair and amicable manner. If the complaint reveals information that indicates a violation of a licensing or regulatory issue, the proper authorities will be notified. If the complaint involves an allegation of child abuse or maltreatment, steps will be taken to ensure that the child's health and safety are ensured per the Child Abuse and Maltreatment Policy and reports are made in accordance with the law.

We are very open in asking families and children for their input and recommendations as to how we are doing and where we could

improve. This is a very important part of our program philosophy and staff are expected to do all they can to encourage parental feedback at all times.

Licensing

The Center is licensed in accordance with the State of New York Office of Children and Families, Bureau of Early Childhood Services. The Center's license number is: **44051DC**. The numbers to call if there is a concern with the Center are:

***State of New York Office of
Children and Families
Bureau of Early Childhood Services
Regulatory Agency
Field Representative - Kim Van Dunk
1-585-238-8531***

***Regional Bureau
Daycare Manager - Theresa Chylinski
1-585-238-8533
Regional Bureau Fax Number
1-585-238-8289***

Regional Bureau Address:
State of New York Office of
Children and Families
Rochester Bureau of Early
Childhood Services
259 Monroe Avenue
Rochester, NY 14607

Program Contacts:

Lisa Rice
Director of Preschool Services
607-937-3200

Colleen M. Coro, MEd
Director, Erwin Child & Family Center
607-962-0536
Program Address:
111 Canada Road
Painted Post, NY 14870
Program Phone Number: 607-962-0536



*A community of
learning and caring.*

Erwin Child & Family Center Statement

I acknowledge that I/we have received a copy of the Parent Handbook. My/our signature(s) constitutes my/our understanding to abide by the policies described in the handbook.

Signature

Date

Signature

Date