



Family Handbook

“We love because He first loved us.”

1 John 4:19

Table of Contents

Bright and Early North Dakota Quality Rating	
Licensing	1
Insurance	1
Hiring & Professional Development	1
Privacy & Confidentiality	2
Anti-discrimination	2
Community Resources	2
Babysitting	2
Children With Special Needs	2
Suspected Abuse & Neglect	2
Smoking, Drinking & Illegal Drugs	2
Childcare Assistance	2
Dependent Care Plans & Tax Receipt	3
Grievance Procedure	3
Licensing Violations & Correction Orders	3
Court Testimony	3
Program Visits	3
Trial Period	3
Withdrawal	3
Diversity	3
Tuition Increases	3
Payments	4
Enrollment Forms	4
Custodial Disputes	4
Parent Visits	4
Drop Off & Pick Up	4
Early Intervention	5
Separation Anxiety	5
Biting	5
Hours of Operation	5
Holidays	6
Absences / Accountability	6
Leave of Absence	6
Weather Closings	6
Alternate Childcare	6
Part Time & Drop In Childcare	6
Waiting List & Holding Slots	6
Staff to Child Ratios	6
Classroom Transitions	6
Daily Notes	7
Conferences	7
Personal Items	7
Items from Home	7
Gun Play	7
Grant Initiatives	8
Social Media	8
Curriculum	8
Active Play	8
Outdoor Play	8
Aquatics Policy	8
Holiday and Birthday Celebration	8
Food Nutrition	9
Breastfeeding	10
Infant Feeding	11

Nap Time	11
Diapering & Toilet Learning	11
Dress Code	12
Messy Play	12
Conflicts & Discipline	13
Transportation & Field Trips	13
Hand-washing	13
Cleaning	14
Illness, Health & Safety	14
Sick Children	14
Medication Administration	15
Immunizations	16
Emergency & Disaster Plan	16
Evacuation Plan	16
Missing Children	17
Policy Updates	17

Bright & Early North Dakota Quality Rating

Tender Hearts is quality-rated through Bright & Early North Dakota! Bright & Early North Dakota is an initiative led by the North Dakota Department of Human Services to ensure that children receive the quality child care they need for success in school and life. Using research-based quality rating tools and observation assessments, Bright & Early North Dakota recognizes early childhood programs that go above and beyond. Tender Hearts has completed Steps 1 and 2 of Bright & Early North Dakota.

The goal of Step 1 is to provide a safe and healthy environment for children focused on preventing injuries and reducing the spread of germs. In order to be Step 1 quality-rated, we had to show that we had been licensed by the North Dakota Department of Human Services for at least one year, serve children between the ages of birth to five, and verify that our license was in good standing. In addition, our team had to meet professional development quality standards for Step 1.

The goals of Step 2 are to offer a variety of materials to support play and learning experiences for children with different interests and abilities to serve nutritious food to children. In order to be Step 2 quality-rated, we had to show how we use our space and materials to support play and learning experiences through an Environment Rating Scale observation and how we serve nutritious food to children. The Environment Rating Scale is a reliable, valid, researched-based observational tool, designed to assess the quality of the environment. In addition, our team had to meet professional development quality standards for Step 2.

Licensing

We are licensed by the North Dakota Department of Human Services to operate a group child care facility for 18 children in compliance with the laws of the state of North Dakota. Our license is displayed at our family info center. You may contact our licensor, Coreen Ruona, at Cass County Social Services, by calling (701) 360-8935 or by email at cruona@nd.gov.

Insurance

Tender Hearts Early Learning Program carries liability and building insurance. If your child has an accident and needs to visit the doctor or dentist, your child's primary health insurance would be used, as Tender Hearts does not cover these medical expenses.

Hiring and Professional Development

New employees complete criminal and child abuse and neglect background checks through the North Dakota Department of Human Services upon hire and may not work until their background check results are cleared. Employees will not have been found guilty of homicide, assault, kidnapping, gross sexual imposition, sexual imposition,, corruption or solicitation of minors, sexual abuse, sexual assault, robbery, burglary, sexual performances of children, promoting or facilitating prostitution or any similar offense. All employees meet state licensing regulations.

Individuals must be 14+ years to work at Tender Hearts and those under 16 years must obtain written parental consent. Minor employees must have a background-checked employee 18+ years within sight or hearing at all times, will not be allowed to open or close the facility alone, and will not be left alone in the facility or outside with children at any time.

Employees complete comprehensive professional development within three months of hire, including but not limited to the following:

- 15 hours of basic child care training through Child Care Aware of North Dakota
- 2 hours of physical activity training through Cass Public Health
- 1 hour of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) training through Child Care Aware of North Dakota
- 40 hours of hands-on shadowing in the classroom

Employees also complete additional professional development hours annually, including but not limited to the following:

- Annual training hours depending on the number of hours worked per week
- 2 hours of physical activity training through Cass Public Health
- 1 hour of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) training through Child Care Aware North Dakota
- First Aid / CPR / AED Re-Certification as needed

At least one employee certified in First Aid, CPR and AED will be on duty at all times.

We occasionally provide semester-long college internships to child development and social work students. These internships can be completed solely at Tender Hearts or may be split with The Perry Center. Interns complete all employee requirements and are introduced to families as a part of our team.

We have many volunteers serving at Tender Hearts, completing repairs, helping with projects or playing with children! All volunteers work directly under the supervision of a background-checked employee 18+ years of age and are required to wear a name badge to identify themselves to parents.

Privacy & Confidentiality

We value your family's privacy and confidentiality. We do not share records, photos, videos, or any other information about your child or family unless we have your written consent. If an outside agency asks us to provide information about your child, we will request that you complete a "Release of Information" form before sharing any private or confidential information.

Anti-Discrimination

We do not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, national origin, public assistance status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Community Resources

If you are having difficulties providing for your child's needs, you are welcome to visit with the Program Manager. We can help you find community resources that may offer support and assistance during times of hardship. It is our privilege to serve you in any way we can!

Babysitting

Tender Hearts families are welcome to make babysitting arrangements with staff members, with the understanding that staff members are not supervised by Tender Hearts during off-duty hours and are not acting within the scope of their employment.

Children with Special Needs

It is our privilege to care for children with special needs! We first like to meet with your family to complete an assessment to make sure that we are equipped to provide the care that your child needs. We often consult with an inclusion specialist from Child Care Aware of North Dakota for guidance when working with children with special needs. We may ask your family to meet with our team to provide information about how we can best serve your child. At times, it may be determined that we are not able to care for a child with special needs with reasonable accommodations. In those circumstances, we are happy to work with your family to refer you to another early childhood program that can better meet your child's needs.

Children with diagnosed special needs must have an "Inclusive Care Plan" form signed by a healthcare provider and parent, as well as a "Release of Information" form signed by a parent. Emergency medication and/or equipment must be available at our facility at all times and when the child is taken off-site during childcare hours.

Suspected Abuse & Neglect

Our employees and volunteers are mandated by North Dakota state law to report any suspected cases of physical or sexual abuse or neglect. All staff members are trained on the policies and procedures relating to child abuse and neglect. All documentation of suspected abuse and neglect is kept confidential.

The Program Manager will report any suspected abuse or neglect and document all concerns, along with staff members. If there are any questions about whether or not to report, the Program Manager will follow recommendations given by Cass County Social Services. When the Program Manager is not available, staff members and volunteers will use their own judgment to document and report concerns to Cass County Social Services when the situation is warranted. The Program Manager will be informed immediately upon return.

To report a suspected case of child abuse and neglect, you can call Cass County Social Services at 1-833-958-3500..

Smoking, Drinking & Illegal drugs

Our facility and campus is a smoke-free environment. No one is permitted to smoke in our facility or on our property during or after our hours of operation. State law does not allow smoking in our facility or within 20 feet of all entrances, exits, windows, and vents. Because research has not shown that electronic cigarettes are safe for bystanders, e-cigarettes are also prohibited where smoking is not allowed. Our employees do not smoke or use alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours.

Child Care Assistance

Families who participate in North Dakota's child care assistance program are responsible to pay all tuition and fees up front and are legally responsible for paying the full amount of fees in our contract. Any issues with child care assistance should be resolved directly with the county.

The Program Manager will complete a "Provider's Request to Pay Parent Directly" form upon enrollment and a "Child Care Request for Payment" form at the end of each month. Families receive reimbursement checks directly from the county after the monthly "Child Care Request for Payment" has been processed. For more information about North Dakota child care assistance, contact Cass County Social Services at 701.240.5761 or visit their office at 1010 2nd Ave S. Fargo. For more information about North Dakota child care assistance, contact Cass County Social Services at (701) 240-5761 or visit their office at 1010 2nd Ave S. Fargo

Dependent Care Plans & Tax Receipts

We participate in dependent care plans offered by employers. Families must provide us with the required forms, instructions, and any deadlines. Dependent care funds may not legally be applied as a credit for future child care services. If families have not spent all the funds they have set aside under the dependent care plan by the end of the plan year, they are encouraged to consider donating the remainder to our program.

Year - end tax statements are distributed to families by January 31 of each year for the previous tax year and indicate how much was paid to Tender Hearts during the previous year. Requests for additional documentation must be presented in writing to the Program Manager at least one week in advance.

Grievance Procedure

There may be times when a parent will have a grievance against a staff member at Tender Hearts. We observe the biblical principles for reconciliation, with the grievance settled at the lowest level of relationship possible. If a parent has a grievance against a staff member, the parent should go directly to the staff member to discuss the problem. If the problem cannot be resolved, the parent should then go to the Program Manager. If the parent is still unsatisfied, he/she should then go to our child care licensor, Coreen Ruona, at Cass County Social Services. She can be reached at (701) 360 -8935 or by email at cruona@nd.gov.

Licensing Violations & Correction Orders

If parents have concerns about a suspected licensing violation, they may contact our child care licensor, Coreen Ruona, at Cass County Social Services. She can be reached at (701) 360 -8935 or by email at cruona@nd.gov. Upon request, Tender Hearts will make available to the parent a list of names, phone numbers, and addresses for all enrolled families who have granted permission to disclose that information.

If our child care licensor or another representative from Cass County Social Services finds, upon inspection, that Tender Hearts is not in compliance with child care licensing regulations, a correction order will be issued, provided our child care license is not revoked as a result of noncompliance. The correction order must cite a specific statute or rule violated, state the factual basis of the violation, state the suggested method of correction, and specify the time allowed for the correction. The correction order must also specify the amount of any fiscal sanction to be assessed if Tender Hearts fails to comply with the correction order in a timely fashion. Within three days of the receipt of the correction order, Tender Hearts must notify all families that a correction order has been issued and must post the correction order at the family information center in the gym until the violation has been corrected, or for five days, whichever is longer.

Court Testimony

If a staff member of Tender Hearts is requested to testify in a court case or is subpoenaed as a professional witness, there may be fees for preparation, travel, and testimony regarding the case, which will be billed to the person making the request.

Trial Period

Each child begins our program with a two - week trial period to make sure that we are a good fit for one another. During this time, either the family or the Program Manager may cancel the contract immediately without written notice. If the contract is canceled during this trial period, the family will only be responsible to cover tuition and fees for the days of care received.

Withdrawal

Families choosing to withdraw from Tender Hearts must submit a four-week written notice to the Program Manager and are responsible to cover all tuition and fees associated with the remaining four weeks of care.

Diversity

We support diversity by helping children to feel confident about themselves, their families, and their communities. We also expose children to differences and experiences beyond their immediate lives and encourage children to experience people of diverse cultures working together as unique parts of a whole community.

Tuition Increases

Tender Hearts is financially self - supporting and a new budget is submitted annually. Our rates will increase each year, depending on the amount needed to meet financial obligations and to remain competitive with staff wages. Families will be notified of any tuition increases four weeks in advance and will be asked to sign a new contract.

Tuition covers staff wages, benefits, mortgage and condo association fees, meals and snacks, staff training, toys and materials, curriculum, equipment, utilities, licensing and inspection fees, household products, facility repairs and maintenance, advertising and referral fees, business insurance, liability insurance, unemployment insurance, and worker's compensation insurance.

Payments

Tuition and fees are billed via Brightwheel, our classroom management app, and payments are made via automatic bank withdrawal, which must be set upon enrollment. Invoices go out on Friday and payments are made on Monday for that week of care. All billing question should be directed to the Program Manager.

Enrollment Forms

Prior to enrollment, we require families to complete enrollment forms for their child. All records are kept confidential, with access restricted to staff members, parents, authorized representatives from Cass County Child Care Licensing, and individuals providing a service to your child who are listed on the consent form. Families are responsible for updating records immediately when any information changes.

Enrollment forms include:

- Contract
- Consent
- All About Me
- Child Information Sheet
- Parent's Statement on Health of Child
- Child & Adult Care Food Program Child Enrollment Form
- Certificate of Immunization OR immunization Print-Out
- Child's Birth Certificate OR US Passport (photocopy)

Additional enrollment forms include:

- North Dakota Child Care Assistance Program
- Care Plan for Diagnosed Special Behavioral, Developmental, or Health Needs (If applicable)
- Child & Adult Care Food Program Medical Statement to Request Special Meals & Accommodations (If applicable)
- Medication Authorization (If applicable)

Additional resources include:

- Baby's Cues & Routines (0-11 months)
- Helping Baby Transition (0-11 months)
- Family Handbook
- Brightwheel Overview
- Brightwheel Billing
- Bright & Early North Dakota Handout
- Child Care Facility Immunization Requirements

Custodial Disputes

Tender Hearts staff members remain neutral in the case of custodial disputes and will not get involved or take sides. If a parent would like to disallow another parent from picking up his/her child or if there is a specific visitation schedule that is to be followed, he/she must provide legal documentation if the other parent's name is listed on the child's birth certificate. Without legal documentation on file, we are required to release the child to the other parent if he/she attempts to pick up the child. If a non-custodial parent tries to remove his/her child from Tender Hearts, the custodial parent will be notified but in the event of physical force, staff members will not endanger themselves or other children to prevent the parent from taking the child from the premises.

Parent Visits

Parents are welcome to visit our program at any time! We ask that parents remove their shoes or use shoe covers if they plan to come in past the entry way and wash their hands before engaging in play with their child. If your child has difficulties separating from you, it would be best if you visited our program when he/she could leave with you.

Drop-Offs & Pick-Ups

Parents should assist their child with his/her personal belongings during drop-off and pick-up times. We ask that parents check in with us about anything going on at home that may affect their child that day, such as not getting a good night's sleep, a parent out-of-town, etc. Parents of infants may be asked to share the last approximate feeding time. This information helps the transition from home to child care setting go more smoothly and helps our staff members be more in tune with the child throughout the day. Upon pick up, staff members may share a brief glimpse of a child's day with the parents; however, parents are encouraged to check Brightwheel, our classroom management app, for daily notes.

Parents should notify us as soon as possible if they plan to be early or late. Changes in these times affect our daily schedule and food preparation.

Parents are encouraged to drive carefully in our parking lot to ensure the safety of children. Families may park in the four parking spots in front of our garage or in the two parking spots in front of The Perry Center's double garage near our fenced play space.

Only individuals authorized on a child's "Child Information Sheet" are permitted to pick up that child from our program. Unfamiliar individuals on the list will be asked for a valid government-issued identification card before we will release a child to them. We reserve the right to remove anyone from the authorized pick up list for any reason. If a parent has legal documentation that limits the rights of one of the child's biological parents listed on the child's birth certificate, such as a custody agreement or restraining order, a copy must be provided at the time of enrollment. If a parent is unable to transport his/her child safely to and from our program for any reason, we reserve the right to contact law enforcement.

All children must be accompanied by a parent or other authorized person during drop-off and pick-up times.

Early Intervention

We believe that early intervention is the key to helping all children reach their full potential! If parents have questions or concerns about their child's development, they should contact the Program Manager about early intervention resources. We have partnerships with several local agencies that provide early intervention and therapy services and can provide referrals or arrange a free developmental screening.

Separation Anxiety

Sometimes it is difficult to know what to do or say when your child cries or clings when it is time for you to leave. This behavior shows healthy attachment to primary caregivers and is not unusual or unreasonable for young children. We encourage families to bring along a comfort item, such as a photo, a special blanket, or stuffed toy. A parent who leaves a scarf or other personal item with a child is sending the message, "A piece of me is with you and I'll be back."

Always let your child know you are leaving. Slipping away unnoticed can cause mistrust and increased clinging next time. In addition, tell your child when you will return. Although young children cannot tell time yet, they can understand ideas like, "I'll be back when you're playing outside after nap-time." Be sure to return when you said you would. Say goodbye quickly, cheerfully, and confidently. Your child looks to you to find out how to react. When you look worried, he/she feels worried. When you look cheerful and confident, it sends the message, "You can handle this!"

We encourage you to message us on Brightwheel, our classroom management app, if you are concerned after you have left a crying or clinging child. Most children happily engage with others in play within a few minutes, but knowing that your child is happily settled can provide much needed peace of mind. Keep in mind that saying goodbye gets easier with time and experience. Eventually, your child will understand that you will always return, and will be able to let you go with trust and confidence!

Biting

Although biting is common among young children, when it happens it can be disturbing to both families and staff members. Some of the most common reasons for biting include: teething, attempting to express feelings not easily expressed with words, sensory exploration, learning about cause and effect, developing a sense of space and autonomy, frustration, and excitement. Staff members take measures to prevent potential bites from occurring by supervising children carefully, reacting quickly when children are in dispute, giving extra attention to children who have been known to bite, providing enough toys, activities, and space to minimize frustration, providing teethingers to children who are teething, and meeting children's needs promptly before they become frustrated whenever possible. If a bite should occur, we immediately tend to the child who was bitten. We examine the bite, wash the area with soap and water, and provide comfort and reassurance. We respond to the child who bit by letting them know that biting hurts and sharing appropriate alternatives to biting.

When a child continues to bite, we may take notes about what is happening beforehand and make changes to the environment or daily schedule whenever possible. At times, we may need to put a plan in place to shadow a child who is biting frequently. Whenever a bite occurs, both families will be notified of the incident via Brightwheel, our classroom management app, without any names shared.

Hours of Operation

We are open between the hours of 7:30 AM and 5:30 PM Monday through Friday.

Holidays

Our program will be closed on the following days each year: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Black Friday, and an entire week at Christmas. We will close Friday to observe a Saturday holiday and Monday to observe a Sunday holiday. Parents will be notified four weeks in advance if there are any changes to this schedule.

Absences/Accountability

Parents are responsible to notify us in advance whenever a child will be absent due to illness, vacation, or any other reason. If we have not been notified of the absence, we will send a message via Brightwheel, our classroom management app, to confirm your child will be absent. If the message is not answered, we will call the phone numbers listed on the Child Information Sheet. If there is no answer, we will contact the authorities to conduct a wellness check at the discretion of the Program Manager.

Leave of Absence

Occasionally, families may wish to temporarily withdraw enrollment from our program due to employment lay-off, serious illness, financial hardship, etc. Payments for these types of situations may be negotiated with the Program Manager, depending on the situation.

Weather Closings

Families will be notified as soon as possible when our program will be closed due to inclement weather. We take into account weather reports, area school closings, and travel advisories when making decisions related to weather closings.

Alternate Child Care

Families are responsible for finding alternate child care if we must close our program or are unable to care for a child. This may include, but is not limited to, the following reasons: staffing issues, inclement weather, environmental emergencies, or child illness. We encourage families to contact Child Care Aware of North Dakota at www.ndchildcare.org or (218) 299-7026 to help find alternate child care arrangements as needed.

Part-Time and Drop-In Child Care

We may choose to enroll a child on a part-time or drop-in basis, depending on our current openings and staff-to-child ratios. This will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Waiting List & Holding Slots

At times, Tender Hearts may have a waiting list for enrollment. We reserve the right to use discretion when enrolling children from the waiting list. Families with siblings enrolled or parents employed by Tender Hearts or The Perry Center may be preferred. We may also choose to hold open spots for a family in exchange for a holding fee. When an opening becomes available, we contact families from our waiting list in the order listed. If a family declines to take the opening within 48 hours, they may be bumped to the bottom of the list or removed upon request. We continue to move down the list until the spot is filled. Remaining openings may be filled through community advertising.

Staff-to-Child Ratios

As a group-licensed early childhood program in the state of North Dakota, we are required to use a point system that determines proper ratios based on the age of each child enrolled. One adult can care for children totaling 1.34 points, two adults can care for children totaling 2.34 points, and three adults can care for children totaling 3.34 points. The point levels for each age group are listed below:

Age:	Point Level:
6 weeks - 17 months	.25 points
18 months - 35 months	.20 points
3 years	.14 points
4 years	.10 points
5 years	.08 points

Our staff-to-child ratios meet or exceed state licensing guidelines in all classrooms with 5:1 in our infant classroom, 5:1 in our toddler classroom, and 8:1 in our preschool classroom. At any given time, there will be no more than four infants under the age of 18 months under the care and supervision of one staff member.

Classroom Transitions

The decision to transition a child to a new classroom is determined by, but not limited to, developmental readiness, age,

and available space. When we begin to see signs that a child may be ready, we discuss a possible transition with parents. Classroom transitions typically take one week, in which time spent in the new classroom increases gradually throughout the week, allowing the child time to explore his/her new environment and become comfortable.

Daily Notes

Individualized daily notes are provided throughout the day for each child in Brightwheel, our classroom management app, and include information about meals, naps, infant safe sleep checks, diapers or potties, activities, medications, incidents, and requests for needed items, as well as general notes, photos, and videos. Parents are encouraged to use the messaging feature to maintain communication with staff members and the Program Manager.

We love to share information with parents to help them stay connected throughout the day! We ask that parents notify us whenever there is a change in their child's schedule, routine, or home environment, and we will do the same for any changes in our program that may affect their child.

Conferences

We offer conferences throughout the year as needed. Conferences are a time to celebrate all the things that are going well for your child and to come up with solutions in partnership for any areas of concern. Conferences usually involve parents, staff members, and the Program Manager and can be scheduled upon parent or staff member request.

Personal Items

The following items must be provided for each child. Parents should label each item with their child's name. Each child will have a cubby and classroom bin to store his/her personal items.

Personal Items include:

- Breast Milk {if applicable}
- Diaper Ointment {if applicable}
- Diapers / Training Pants {if applicable}
- Extra Clothing Sets {2}
- Family Photos {2}
- Medication {if applicable}
- Over-the-Counter Non -Aerosol Personal Products {if applicable}
- Pacifiers {2, if applicable}
- Seasonal Outdoor Clothing {boots, coat, hat, mittens, snow pants, swimsuit, tennis shoes, etc.}
- Water Bottle {12+ Months}
- Preferred Alternatives to Items Provided by Tender Hearts:
- Babyganics Deet-Free Natural Insect Repellent {2+ Months}
- Babyganics Mineral -Based SPF 50 Sunscreen {6+ Months}
- Dr. Brown's Natural Flow Original Bottles & Nipples Levels 1 – 4 {0 – 11 Months}
- Nap Blankets {12+ Months}
- Parent's Choice Advantage Infant Formula Milk -Based Powder with Iron {0 – 11 Months}
- Sleeveless Sleep Sacks {0 – 11 Months}
- Food Purees {6 – 11 Months}

Winter scarves are not permitted due to the risk of strangulation.

Items From Home

We welcome toys and materials from home. For younger children experiencing separation anxiety, items from home can be comforting. Other children love sharing something that is special to them with staff members and classmates. Your child is responsible to take care of his/her items from home and we cannot be held liable for loss or damage to these items. If this becomes a problem for a child or group of children, we may ask that families keep items at home for awhile.

We encourage children, especially those in our preschool classroom, to bring in treasures and discoveries to share with their class! These items can include photos from a family vacation, an unusual leaf, foreign currency, a bug in a jar, or a unique garage sale find! Discoveries of every kind are honored and respected at Tender Hearts and we encourage the sharing of them.

Gun Play

Gun play can be a controversial topic, especially in our violence-centered culture. While there are many approaches, most early childhood educators find value in allowing children to use play to explore their fears about things they see in the media. We intentionally do not have guns, knives, or swords in our classrooms, but we also don't discourage children from fashioning weapons out of cardboard tubes, blocks, and other materials. We do encourage children in purposeful

Grant Initiatives

At times, Tender Hearts participates in grant initiatives through Child Care Aware of North Dakota, Bright & Early North Dakota, and other early childhood organizations. These grants typically involve staff training, classroom observations, reading and homework assignments, self-reflection exercises, parent feedback, and one-on-one consulting. Grant funding may be used for additional staff training, toys, materials, or equipment. Families will be notified about grant initiatives and how they can expect their child's daily routine to be impacted.

Social Media

Tender Hearts has a private Facebook group where photos, videos, news, and reminders are often shared. We also occasionally post on The Perry Center's public Facebook page and Instagram account. We only post photos and videos of children who have permission via a signed media release.

Curriculum & Activities

Curriculum and activities are developmentally appropriate and are designed to balance active and quiet play, individual and group play, and indoor and outdoor play. Classroom materials, toys, and equipment are rotated on a regular basis to provide excitement and variety for children.

The following activities are examples of some of the play experience and activities we offer at Tender Hearts:

1. Literacy and language development activities
2. Creative expression activities
3. Health, safety, and nutrition projects
4. Puzzles, games, or hand-eye coordination activities
5. Active physical play
6. Gross motor activities
7. Free play
8. Block play
9. Music and movement
10. Sand and water play
11. Individual quiet activities
12. Dramatic play

Daily schedules are posted in each classroom. Because we offer individualized care in all our classrooms, but especially our infant room, posted schedules are meant to be used as a guideline and can be flexible based upon the day's needs.

Active Play

We strive to provide all children with two hours of active play and physical activity every day. Staff members encourage physical activity by participating, leading, and planning active play activities into daily routines. In addition, unplanned physical activity is encouraged during free play times in our gym and outdoor play areas.

Children are not seated for periods of more than 20 minutes at a time, with the exception of nap time. Active play is never withheld as a form of punishment; however, children may be provided with additional active play time as a reward. Screen time is not offered at Tender Hearts.

In order to promote physical activity in non-mobile infants, teachers actively engage with infants during tummy time and other forms of active play on the floor, which helps build motor skills such as lifting, turning head, rolling over, sitting up, reaching/grasping for toys, etc.

Our classrooms are free of restrictive equipment such as swings, bouncers, exersaucers, seats, etc. There may be times where restrictive equipment is used upon parent or healthcare provider request for children with diagnosed special needs.

All staff members receive ongoing professional development and training in the area of active play and physical activity.

Outdoor Play

We strive to provide one hour of outdoor play for our toddlers and preschoolers, weather-permitting.

Infants sometimes join outside activities, depending on their individual schedules. We do not go outside if the heat index is over 90 or if the wind chill is below 15. Children are supervised at all times while playing outside. For staffing reasons, all children must go outside to play if they are in attendance that day. We are unable to keep children inside due to illness or threat of illness. You are responsible to bring appropriate clothing that allows your child to play outside comfortably in all seasons.

Aquatic Policy

With parental consent, Tender Hearts provides water play to children and infants (who can sit independently) during the summer months. We offer water tables and a sprinkler where the kids can play and run around. We do not take field trips to community swimming pools or splash pads.

Holidays & Birthday Celebrations

In our program, we celebrate nationally observed holidays and holidays integral to our Christian faith. Your child may participate in art projects, group activities, and other projects related to these holidays.

We love to make each child feel special on his/her birthday! We welcome families wishing to provide birthday treats, but we ask that you bring in healthy store-bought options and reserve the cake, ice cream, and sweets for celebrations at home. Stickers, raisins, low-fat yogurt, a special book or game from home to share, temporary tattoos, string cheese, whole fruits, pencils, etc. are all wonderful ideas.

Tender Hearts celebrates birthdays by giving children a birthday sticker to wear, giving bubbles or a punch balloon to take home, and singing "Happy Birthday" as a class. Children in our preschool room will be invited to complete an "All About Me" poster at home with their family and bring it in on their birthday to share with their class. Weekend and holiday birthdays will be celebrated the day before or after the child's actual birthday.

Birthday party invitations are welcome; however, please respect children's feelings by sending invitations to everyone in your child's class or by obtaining a list of names to send invitations directly to children's homes if you need to limit the number of participants.

Food & Nutrition

Tender Hearts participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program through Southeastern North Dakota Community Action Agency. Through the food program, we follow nutritional guidelines from the United States Department of Agriculture and are partially reimbursed for our food costs. Children over the age of one year are required to be on the food program. Enrollment for infants under the age of one year is optional, due to different dietary needs and parent preferences. If you opt out of the food program, you will need to provide all foods for your infant under one year of age. Families may choose to enroll or withdraw their infant from the food program at any time.

If your child has an allergy to any food or beverage, you must complete a Medical Statement to Request Special Meals & Accommodations with a healthcare provider's signature. All staff members will be made aware of the allergy and meals and snacks will be adjusted accordingly.

We serve morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. You are responsible to feed your child breakfast or a morning snack if you arrive after 8:30 am. Our weekly menu is posted at our parent information center in the gym and on your child's Brightwheel log. Our menu is subject to change based on availability, current sales, in-season produce, group cooking activities, and individual allergies.

Water is available and offered throughout the day to all children, especially after active or outdoor play. Fruit juice and sugar-based drinks are not offered to children of any age.

We strive to exceed national standards by offering whole grain and high fiber foods as much as possible, serving a wide variety of whole fruits and vegetables, providing lean protein foods on a regular basis, and offering low-fat 1% milk to children over the age of two years. Sugar-based foods are limited to special holiday celebrations.

We serve a variety of different foods and encourage children to try new foods as they feel comfortable. Children are never forced or bribed to eat anything and food is never offered as a reward or restricted as punishment. Children are never left unattended when meals or snacks are served. You will be informed if we notice any change in your child's eating habits.

Staff members encourage and model eating healthy foods and good manners by eating at the table with children. Children are encouraged to engage their five senses and we talk about the foods we eat, noting colors, textures, shapes, etc. Toddlers are guided to feed themselves with praise and hands-on assistance. Our preschoolers occasionally engage in family-style eating and serve themselves using scoops, etc. Children also have opportunities throughout the day to learn about healthy eating during activities outside of meal times.

We may have children in our program who have mild or severe allergies. We read food labels very carefully and purposely do not have certain foods in our facility for health and safety reasons. For this reason, please do not bring food items to Tender Hearts with your child.

All staff members receive ongoing professional development and training in the area of child nutrition. Educational child nutrition materials such as brochures and tip sheets are occasionally sent home after visits from nutrition educators as part of the Child & Adult Care Food Program. Children are never left unattended when meals or snacks are served. You will be informed if we notice any change in your child's eating habits.

Staff members encourage and model eating healthy foods and good manners by eating at the table with children. Children are

encouraged to engage their five senses and we talk about the foods we eat, noting colors, textures, shapes, etc. Toddlers are guided to feed themselves with praise and hands-on assistance. Our preschoolers occasionally engage in family-style eating and serve themselves using scoops, etc. Children also have opportunities throughout the day to learn about healthy eating during activities outside of meal times.

We may have children in our program who have mild or severe allergies. We read food labels very carefully and purposely do not have certain foods in our facility for health and safety reasons. For this reason, please do not bring food items to Tender Hearts with your child.

All staff members receive ongoing professional development and training in the area of child nutrition. Educational child nutrition materials such as brochures and tip sheets are occasionally sent home after visits from nutrition educators as part of the Child & Adult Care Food Program.

Listed below are some examples of meals we may serve:

Morning Snack - 8:30:

Whole Grain Cereal & Milk

Graham Crackers & Milk

Whole Grain English Muffins, Almond Butter, & Milk

Lunch - 11:30:

Peanut Butter & Bananas on Whole Grain Pita Bread, Monterey Jack Cheese Slices, Green Beans, & Milk Taco-Seasoned Ground Beef, Brown Rice, Pineapple, Black Beans, & Milk

White Cheddar Scrambled Eggs, Whole Grain Waffles, Apples, Carrots, & Milk

Parmesan Pesto Turkey Meatballs, Croissants, Tangerines, Marinara Sauce, & Milk

Garden Spinach Herb Mozzarella Chicken Quesadillas, Strawberries, Mashed Sweet Potatoes, & Milk

Afternoon Snack - 3:00:

Whole Grain Cheddar Crackers, Mozzarella String Cheese, & Water Honey Wheat Pretzel Twists, Homemade Lemon Hummus, & Water Whole Grain Toast Topped with Pureed Blueberries & Water

Mango Banana Pumpkin Smoothies & Water

Oven-Roasted Kale Chips, Havarti Cheese, & Water

We serve breast milk or iron-fortified formula to children 0 - 11 months, Vitamin D milk to children 12 - 23 months, and 1% milk to children 2 - 5 years.

We are happy to provide food substitutes to children for medical, allergy, religious, or cultural reasons. If you have personal preferences regarding foods, you are welcome to provide those for your child, with a maximum of one component per meal.

Breastfeeding

We welcome breastfeeding mothers in our program! Breastfeeding mothers will be supported and encouraged to continue breastfeeding when their infants enter our program. Mothers who wish to breast feed on site will be provided with a quiet area with a chair, nursing pillow, electrical outlet for pumping, and access to our kitchenette/sink area.

We have designated freezer and fridge space to store breast milk in our facility. Each infant's breast milk is stored in a separate container labeled with his/her name. We require all breast milk to be labeled with your child's name, as well as date and time expressed. We utilize thermometers in our fridges and freezers to ensure that breast milk is kept at a proper temperature. These thermometers are checked regularly by our staff and occasionally by a health inspector.

We require all breastfeeding infants to be able to take a bottle from a caregiver. During maternity leave, breastfeeding mothers are encouraged to allow others to give a bottle so that the transition to child care is easier for the infant.

Breast milk delivered to Tender Hearts frozen may be stored in our freezer for up to three months from the date and time expressed. Breast milk delivered to Tender Hearts chilled may be stored in our fridge for up to 48 hours from the date and time expressed. Breast milk transferred from our freezer to fridge must be prepared within 48 hours of the date and time transferred or discarded in the sink. Breast milk prepared must be served within one hour from the date and time prepared or discarded in the sink. We are happy to send leftover breast milk home if we have advance notice from you!

All staff members are trained in the proper handling of breast milk and follow strict guidelines to ensure that breast milk is properly treated. In addition, staff members receive ongoing professional development and training in the area of breastfeeding.

Infant Feeding

All parents of infants will be asked to complete an infant feeding plan that includes the following items: food intolerances/allergies/preferences, instructions for introducing solid foods and new foods while in child care, permission to feed on a flexible schedule when he/she shows hunger, and instructions for breastfeeding infants.

Tender Hearts follows the national standards set forth by the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Participation is optional for infants under one year of age. If you decide not to participate, you are required to provide all foods for your infant. For infants who participate, we provide homemade pureed foods to infants that do not contain any added sugars or salt. Iron - fortified infant formula is provided to non-breastfeeding infants through the age of 11 months. We offer Parent's Choice Advantage Infant Formula Milk-Based Powder with Iron, which is nutritionally similar to Similac Advance. You may also choose to bring your own formula.

New foods are not introduced to an infant before a parent first introduces it at home. When your child adds a new food at home, it will be added to his/her infant feeding plan. We do not offer fruit juice to children of any age at Tender Hearts.

Infants are fed on a flexible schedule when they show signs of hunger, with feedings ending when an infant shows signs of fullness. Bottles are never propped; however, infants who are able to hold a bottle are encouraged to do so with close interaction. Responsive feeding techniques such as using eye contact, speaking to an infant, responding to hunger/fullness signs are used as much as possible. Older infants are guided to feed themselves with praise and hands-on assistance. We provide Dr. Brown's Natural Flow Original bottles and Dr. Brown's Silicone Nipples in Levels 1 - 4.

All staff members receive ongoing professional development and training in the area of infant feeding.

Nap Time

We follow safe sleep practices for infants 0 - 11 months to reduce the risk of SIDS. Infants are always put to sleep on their backs and cribs are free of blankets, stuffed animals, bumpers, mobiles, and all other items. Crib sheets are tight-fitting. We do not allow infants to sleep with pacifier clips, hoodies, or other garments with string. Once a child is placed on his/her back, the child may reposition themselves to a comfortable sleeping position, which may include his/her stomach. A staff member will be within hearing of sleeping infants or a baby monitor at all times, and sleeping infants will be physically checked every 15 minutes. With written parent consent, we may use a sleep sack provided by us or you, or provide a pacifier that is provided by you. Sleep sacks must be sleeveless or must have arm panels that are secured under the arms.

Each infant has his/her own crib that is not shared with others and is disinfected weekly and as needed. If you would like your infant to be on a specific nap schedule, please notify us.

We provide a quiet, restful time for toddlers and preschoolers to rest and relax their bodies from 12:00 - 2:00 every day. Preschoolers have the opportunity to read books from 12:00 - 12:30 if they choose. Children are not required to sleep, but must stay on their cots and remain quiet so others may nap. During this time, our staff members may complete cleaning tasks, curriculum preparation, daily notes, and other tasks, while still providing supervision.

Each toddler and preschooler will have his/her own cot that is not shared with others and is disinfected weekly and as needed.

Nap blankets are provided for children 1+ years, which are kept in each child's crib or nap cubby and are washed weekly on-site.

Diapering & Toilet Learning

We will assist your child with toilet learning when both you and our staff agree that he/she is physically ready. Some readiness signs include demonstrating bladder control by staying dry for one or two hours, showing interest in others using the toilet, asking to wear underwear, announcing when he/she went, understanding bathroom language, showing ability to perform simple undressing/dressing tasks, having consistent bowel movements, and wanting privacy when he/she fills a diaper. We encourage consistency between home and child care as much as possible.

You are required to provide disposable or cloth diapers or training pants for your child. Children who are cloth-diapered will also need a wet bag to store soiled cloth diapers. Baby wipes are provided by Tender Hearts.

Children will never be disciplined for lapses in toilet training. We have child-sized toilets throughout our facility. Your child is required to wear diapers or training pants until fully toilet trained, with no accidents for a minimum of two weeks, for healthy and safety reasons.

It is important to follow a consistent routine both at home and in our program, or it can become frustrating for the child and both of us. We will communicate daily with you about how your child is doing and we expect you to do the same. If you have any questions or

concerns, please visit first with one of your child's teachers as they are the ones working directly with your child. You are also welcome to talk to the Program Manager at any time.

Your child is learning to be independent, so it is important to wear easy on/off clothing. The best clothing for toilet training is knit pants with an elastic waistband. Please do not dress your child in clothing that is hard for them to remove or put back on, such as onesies, overalls, dresses, oversize/long shirts, footie pajamas, costumes, rompers, jeans, tights, belts, or pants with snaps, buttons, zippers, or tight cuffs. Cumbersome clothing only frustrates children who are first learning how to manipulate clothing. If we feel that your child's clothing is hindering the process, we will change them into extra clothing and you will be responsible to replace the clothing the next day. Children who are toilet training are required to have a supply of training pants and a minimum of two sets of extra clothing on hand at all times.

We often take children of the same gender to use the bathroom together to save time. Older children who prefer privacy will be given opportunities to go independently with a staff member close by for supervision.

Dress Code

All children should be dressed in comfortable, washable, play clothing. Due to the active nature of play and the curiosity of children, we require shorts, leggings, bloomers, or onesies to be worn under dresses and skirts. This practice minimizes contact between diapers/underwear and the floor, toys, etc.

For safety reasons, we require play shoes for outdoors. Flip-flops, sandals, dress shoes, cowboy boots, etc. are not allowed. Earrings are not allowed in our infant and toddler rooms, due to the choking hazard.

If your child becomes messy with food, art, or other evidence of play, or has a toileting accident, we are happy to change them into his/her extra clothing. In the event your child runs out of extra clothing, we will dress him/her in some of our extra clothing. We ask that these items be laundered and returned within one week.

Messy Play

Children throw themselves wholeheartedly into the business of exploring the world around them, with little concern for grass stains on their pants or paint in their hair. That is how it should be! Children learn best through play... and play has a tendency to be messy, dirty, wet, muddy, and sandy. Children will be playing outside, cooking, digging in sand, painting, and coming home looking like they have done all of those things. The marks on children's clothing, the pockets filled with sand, and the paint in their hair are all indicators of architects, artists, and scientists in training. A messy child is a child who is engaged in risk taking, trying new things, imagining, experimenting, problem-solving, and building confidence. At Tender Hearts, we embrace the mess and encourage the spirit of learning and self-discovery!

Play is also emotionally messy. It involves opportunities for children to fail, struggle, experience disappointment, be patient, and all sorts of emotionally messy things. At Tender Hearts, children are encouraged to explore their emotions. Children need to know that their feelings are okay and they need to learn how to manage life's less-than-perfect moments.

Conflict & Discipline

At Tender Hearts, we believe in empowering children with ownership in handling conflicts. When conflicts arise between children, teachers closely observe and coach as needed. Children are encouraged to explore different ways of non-violent conflict resolution. Trial and error is the best way for young children to learn, even in social situations.

When a child tattles on another child, he/she will be reminded never to be afraid to let a teacher know when they have been hurt physically or emotionally. The child will then be reminded that it is his/her problem to solve. The teacher will then empower the child with the skills and words needed at that moment, until the child can fly on his/her own.

We work hard to create a "yes" environment in our classrooms where children can be successful and the need for discipline is low. Children are given opportunities throughout the day to practice self-control, healthy boundaries, and appropriate behavior. Staff members provide children with choices, treat children with respect, reinforce positive behavior, set reasonable limits, provide consistent routines, approach situations with flexibility, and provide modeling and coaching as needed.

Rules and expectations are provided frequently with clarity and flow from the idea that we will not allow children to hurt themselves, others, or the environment. Redirection, natural consequences, and individual resets, which allow children an opportunity to get back on track, are provided matter-of-factly without engaging emotionally. A reset often happens in the moment, right in the space where the child is. At times, it can be in quiet, separate area if the child needs more time. The idea of a reset is to give time and space for children to practice self-regulation, to ask for what they need, and to express wants, needs, and emotions in a healthy, socially acceptable way.

Under no circumstances will there be corporal punishment, emotional abuse, punishment for lapses in toilet training, use of restraints (unless a child is harming themselves or another child), or withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care. If there is a situation involving two children, we will inform both families of the incident, but we will not disclose a child's name or personal information to another family.

In cases of ongoing challenging behavior, a space will be found for a child to play alone. Young children appreciate alone time and space just as adults do. The problem is, instead of recognizing they need some time alone and asking for it, they show it through their behavior.

We recognize that all children want to belong and realize that challenging behaviors often signal a child's need for help. If the challenging behavior persists without improvement, we will set up a time to visit with you about what can be done to best meet your child's needs and create a joint action plan for approaching specific behaviors. We will make every effort to problem solve and work out solutions, and we expect parents to make an active effort to do their part in problem solving as well. Sometimes a child may display a need that is beyond the scope of our expertise. In this case, we will talk with you about the benefits of outside services that may be available to your family. If your child's behavior prevents our staff members from being able to properly care for other children, you may be required to pick up your child and possibly make other arrangements for child care.

Transportation & Field Trips

Tender Hearts does not transport children to off-site locations in personal or business vehicles. At times, we may take walking field trips around the neighborhood of Tender Hearts. Staff members carry a first aid kit, cell phone, and emergency contact list. Infants and toddlers are required to wear seat belts in strollers on walks. Toddlers and preschoolers are required to hold hands with a staff member or another child or stay within a few feet of a staff member during walks or field trips. We frequently use a walking rope to stay together on walks.

Hand Washing

Hand washing is the most important thing we do to maintain good health for children and staff in our facility. Effective hand washing includes the use of soap and friction from rubbing hands for at least 20 seconds.

Children wash hands upon arrival, before and after eating, after using the toilet or having a diaper changed, before and after sensory play, after messy art activities, before setting the table or helping with food preparation, after playing outside, after sneezing, coughing, or wiping a nose, before entering a different classroom or area, before going home, and any other time hands are visibly dirty.

Staff members will wash hands upon arrival, before setting the table or engaging in food preparation or serving, before and after feeding, after using the toilet, after assisting a child in using the toilet or changing a diaper, after coming in contact with body fluids (blood, urine, stool, vomit, saliva, mucus, etc.), before and after eating, after cleaning up or handling garbage, after playing or working outside, after removing gloves for any purpose, after sneezing, coughing, or wiping a nose, before and after giving medications, before entering a different classroom or area, before going home, and any other time hands are visibly dirty.

Cleaning

All staff members complete daily and weekly cleaning tasks to keep our facility as clean and organized as possible. We also recognize the importance of regular sanitizing and disinfecting to minimize the spread of germs. We only use cleaning products that are recommended by Child Care Aware of North Dakota and all items are kept out of reach of children. We use disinfectants, which kill bacteria and germs completely, on bathroom surfaces, diapering areas, hard flooring, etc. We use sanitizers, which destroy bacteria and germs enough so that surfaces are safe to be used, on infant equipment, tables, cribs, cots, kitchen counters, toys, etc. Sanitizers are also used on surfaces that might be mouthed by a child or are near food preparation areas, as it is safest for children. Mouthed toys are immediately placed in a container out of reach of children and are sanitized in the dishwasher, washing machine, or with a bleach solution at the end of the day.

Illness, Health & Safety

In case of an emergency, we will call 911 and administer first aid or CPR until help arrives. Parents will be notified as soon as possible. If staff-to-child ratios allow, a staff member may be able to accompany the child to the hospital if needed. Upon enrollment in our program, you are required to fill out and sign a Child Information Sheet, which includes a statement authorizing medical care for your child in the event we are unable to reach you.

If a child leaves Tender Hearts and goes directly to a healthcare provider with a serious accident, injury, or illness, the incident will be documented on a Serious Accident, Injury, or Illness Report and a copy will be provided to you.

In the case of a cut, scrape, scratch, puncture, bite, sting, or burn, we will bandage the wound; we do not apply antibiotic or antiseptic ointment to children. All wounds are documented via Brightwheel daily notes.

In the event of a major wound, parents will be notified as soon as possible. In case of poison ingestion, we will contact the Poison Control Center for instructions and will notify you as soon as possible.

The death of a child at Tender Hearts or a child involved in a serious accident, injury, or illness requiring medical treatment while in the care of our program or attributable to the care received in our program will be reported within 24 hours to the Director of Cass County Social Services.

Sick Children

Illnesses can be difficult and frustrating for all, and we appreciate the cooperation and understanding when dealing with these issues. While we understand that taking time off work can be frustrating, the decision about a sick child is always made with our responsibility to protect all children in mind.

You must notify us in advance if your child will not be attending our program due to illness.

We will only care for a sick child who has a mild illness, such as a common cold, and is no longer contagious. We follow the exclusion guidelines provided by Child Care Aware of North Dakota when determining whether a sick child can be cared for at our program. These exclusions are as follows. For a more detailed explanation of the exclusion guidelines, visit www.ndchildcare.org.

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than the child care staff can provide, therefore compromising the health and safety of the other children.
3. The child has any of the following conditions:
 - Fever of 100.4 + degrees, with behavior changes or other symptoms
 - Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs for the child
 - Three diarrhea episodes - stool not contained in diaper or accidents in toilet - trained children
 - Blood in stools, not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
 - Two vomiting episodes
 - Abdominal pain
 - Mouth sores with drooling (except for hand-foot-and-mouth disease, canker sores, and thrush)
 - Rash with fever or behavior change
 - Head lice - 24 hours after first treatment
 - Scabies
 - Active tuberculosis
 - Impetigo
 - Strep throat
 - Chickenpox
 - Pertussis / Whooping Cough
 - Mumps
 - Hepatitis A virus
 - Measles
 - Rubella
 - Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)

We will notify you if your child is running any degree of fever.

You will be notified to pick up your child if he/she has a fever of 100.4+ degrees and is showing other symptoms or a behavior change, such as unusual fussiness, lethargy, verbal cues that indicate he/she is not feeling well, etc. Your child's temperature must be under 101 degrees for 24 hours without medication to return to Tender Hearts. We currently use a Braun Thermoscan Forehead Thermometer.

Your child must be illness-free without medication for 24 hours before returning to our program.

We will notify you if your child has any diarrhea and/or needs extra clothing, diapers, pull-ups, etc. dropped off during the day. You are required to pick up your child if he/she has three episodes of diarrhea during the day. Your child must be diarrhea-free for 24 hours without medication to return to child care. If your sick child is placed on antibiotics, he/she will not be readmitted to our program until 24 hours after the first dosing.

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will contact you to pick up your child. If we are unable to reach you, we will then try to contact another person who is authorized to pick up your child or the emergency contact person. We ask that you pick up your child

within one hour of being contacted. To keep other children protected, your child will be excluded from regular classroom activities, and will be given a blanket for comfort in a quiet, supervised space.

In certain circumstances, we may request a health care provider's note authorizing re-admittance to Tender Hearts. We also reserve the right to override any note from a health care provider.

Occasionally, a sick child may not be contagious, but may be so run down that he/she picks up other illnesses easily or is very miserable. We have the right to require that your child be picked up or kept home for the day.

We do not have extra staffing to keep children inside when they are not feeling well. If your child is well enough to be at our program, they are well enough to go outside.

In the event of the presence of a vaccine-preventable communicable disease, all under-immunized children will be excluded promptly until the period of communicability is passed.

Families should notify us immediately if their child contracts a contagious reportable illness. When children are exposed to a serious contagious illness in our program, we will notify all families as soon as possible, without providing any identifying details of the child who has a serious contagious illness. We are required to notify the North Dakota Department of Health within 24 hours of any suspected reportable illness. You can view the list of reportable communicable diseases from the North Dakota Department of Health here: <https://www.ndhealth.gov/disease/disease%20reporting/>

We do our best to create an environment that minimizes the risk of exposure to allergens for children with allergies. We recognize that the risk of accidental exposure can be reduced, but not completely eliminated.

Medication Administration

Tender Hearts requires written consent and instructions from a parent to administer all prescription and over-the-counter medications. Whenever possible, we encourage parents to administer medication at home.

A Medication Authorization Form must be filled out for each medication. All medications must be kept in the original container and labeled with the child's name, date, and medication name.

We are not able to administer medication "as needed"; we must have instructions to give all medication at a specific dosage and specific time or frequency. We do not administer expired medication. Please note that cold and cough medication is not recommended for children under the age of six. All medications are kept in a locked medication box or on a high shelf out of reach of children and will be returned to you when no longer needed.

Administered medications are logged in your child's Brightwheel daily notes, including the date, time, dosage, and staff initials. We do not allow cough drops as they pose a choking hazard.

Written parent consent is also required to provide personal products to children, such as sunscreen, insect repellent, etc. We do not allow cough drops as they pose a choking hazard.

Written parent consent is also required to provide personal products to children, such as sunscreen, insect repellent, etc.

Immunizations

Immunization records, appropriate for the child's age, as prescribed by the State Department of Health, are required to be on file. It is your responsibility to keep your child up-to-date on immunizations and to provide an updated immunization record each time your child is immunized. According to North Dakota law, early childhood programs cannot refuse to provide care to unimmunized children who are otherwise eligible if they present valid documentation of exemption. We are required to exclude an unimmunized child from our program in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease for the unimmunized child's protection.

Emergency Information & Disaster Plan

We require each child to have a Child Information Sheet on file. This licensing form is required for each child and includes emergency contact information, including the name and phone number of at least one backup person in case we are unable to reach you in the event of an emergency. It also includes the phone numbers of the child's doctor and dentist, and a signed consent form to obtain emergency medical or dental care.

We keep a list of emergency contacts for all children and we use a headcount feature on our Brightwheel app to keep track of who is in the building at all times.

If you leave work early, go to another location for the day, or vary your normal routine, please let us know how we can contact you that day.

To reduce the risk of fire, we follow the fire safety rules and state laws regarding smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. We are also required to have an annual fire inspection. Fire escape routes are posted in the building, along with an emergency meeting place. We teach the children that if there is a fire, they should remain calm, listen carefully to the staff member's instructions, and follow his/her lead towards the nearest safe exit. We conduct monthly emergency drills so children know exactly what to do in the case of a fire or other emergency.

In case the power goes out, we keep a first aid kit, flashlights, and extra blankets accessible.

If there is an emergency concerning our facility's utilities or maintenance, such as a gas leak, loss of water, phone, heat, or air conditioning, we will relocate to The Perry Center or Christian Adoption Services. Staff members will accompany children and parents will be notified as soon as possible.

If your child is involved in a serious or life-threatening emergency, we will call 911 and get immediate medical care, and then we will call you as soon as possible. If your child is involved in an emergency that is not serious or life-threatening, we will call you as soon as possible.

In the case of a staff emergency, other staff members will continue to provide child care at our program.

Evacuation Disaster Plan

In the event that we must leave our facility due to a natural disaster or catastrophic event, we will relocate at one of the following places.

1. The Perry Center
2355 Meadow Ridge Parkway, West Fargo, ND 58078
701.241.9289
2. Christian Adoption Services
2345 Meadow Ridge Parkway, West Fargo, ND 58078
701.237.4473
3. Mapleton Elementary School 300 1st St, Mapleton, ND 58059
701.282.3833

Children are only transported in staff vehicles in the event that staying at our current location is more dangerous than transporting without car seats or proof of insurance.

In the event of an emergency, we are required to take emergency contact information for all families whenever possible. We will notify families via Brightwheel or phone as best we can and we will also notify the following contacts as to our location:

1. North Dakota Department of Human Services
600 E. Boulevard Ave Dept. 325, Bismarck, ND 58505
701.328.3591
2. Nathan Aakre
11579 110th St S, Sabin, MN 56580
218.979.7295

Missing Children

If a child disappears from our group, we will search the immediate area for the child. If the child is not located, we will contact local law enforcement and the child's parents.

Policy Updates

Our family handbook will be updated regularly. When our policies change, you will be advised and a new family handbook will be made available to you.