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# Westminster Preschool

## Family Handbook



Revised 03/09/2016

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## WELCOME

Dear Family,

We are happy you have chosen to send your child to our preschool and we look forward to getting to know your family this year. Westminster Preschool is dedicated to helping children explore God's world, grow, and develop spiritually, emotionally, socially, physically, intellectually, and culturally.

This handbook provides you with the policies and procedures we believe will help your child have a positive preschool experience. Please take time to read through this handbook and talk to the director, Suzanne Schneider, or one of the preschool teachers if you have any questions.

The teachers at Westminster Preschool are interested in making their classes the best learning environment possible for all of the children. If you have any questions or concerns *at any time* during the school year, we hope you will feel free to talk with your child's teachers. You may also contact Suzanne Schneider at (402) 475-6702 ext. 103. If Suzanne is not available in the office when you call, please leave a voice mail message and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

We are excited to begin the preschool year and are pleased that your child will be a part of our learning experiences!

Thank you for choosing **Westminster Preschool**. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Schneider  
Director  
(402) 475-6702  
[Suzanne@westminsterlincoln.org](mailto:Suzanne@westminsterlincoln.org)  
**Westminster Preschool**

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## **ABOUT US**

### ***Philosophy***

Westminster Preschool believes every child deserves a safe nurturing environment where children can develop spiritually, emotionally, socially, physically, cognitively, and culturally.

### ***Mission***

Our mission is to create a caring, loving, Christian, community where children have an opportunity to grow socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, cognitively, and culturally.

### ***Certification***

Licensed by the State of Nebraska

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC Accreditation)

Step Up to Quality Rating 3

### ***Hours of Operation***

Child care services are provided from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM Monday through Friday.

Our ratio is 1:8

Adventure Camp Hours are 8:00-5:00

### ***Holidays***

We are closed for certain holidays: Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial day, Fourth of July.

There will be additional closings on See Calendar

### ***Definition of Family***

In this handbook we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

### ***Admission & Enrollment***

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed and enrollment fee paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment fee of \$75 is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 3 to 6 years of age. ( children can start at 2.5 years if they will turn 3 prior to December 1 and are potty trained.

Our process for introducing children to our program is [insert your process for introducing new children]

Children are admitted without regard to race culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

If your child has an identified special need,  
[insert your policy relative to special needs include required forms and completion date]

### ***Inclusion***

**Westminster Preschool** believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

### ***Non-Discrimination***

At **Westminster Preschool** equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

### ***Family Activities***

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

Please see the list of Family Activities at the end of this booklet.

### ***Confidentiality***

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

### ***Staff Qualifications***

Our teachers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

<b>Position Title</b>	<b>Education/Certification</b>	<b>Experience</b>
Teacher	Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education	2 years
Teacher Assistant/Aide	Child Development Associate Certification	1 year

Teachers participate in an orientation class and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by **Westminster Preschool**.

## **Child to Staff Ratios**

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios:

<b>Age</b>	<b>Child to Staff</b>	<b>Maximum Group Size</b>
3 year olds	<u>8 to 1</u>	<u>24</u>
4-5 year olds	<u>[8 to 1]</u>	<u>24</u>

Source: Pennsylvania American Academy of Pediatrics [PA AAP] and Healthy Child Care Pennsylvania.

## **Communication & Family Partnership**

**Daily Communications.** Daily conversations with center staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center.

**Bulletin Boards.** Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

**Newsletters.** [Insert Weekly Monthly Quarterly etc] newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are available at the sign-in/sign-out desk for your taking.

**Email.** We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

**Parent Resource Room.** Our parent resource room provides a learning environment for parents to share opinions, ideas and experiences and increase their understanding of learning and development.

**Family Visits.** Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. Each visitor must wear a visitor's badge while on premises and sign-out upon leaving.

**Family Night.** Family nights are scheduled on a regular basis. These nights include snacks, drinks and fun filled age-appropriate activities for families. Family Nights allow families and children time to share, learn, and have fun. Families have an opportunity to be a part of their child's learning experience and connect with other families.

**Conferences.** Family & teacher conferences occur twice a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

## **HeadMaster©**

To log in to HeadMaster Online:

Step 1. Open an internet browser.

Step 2. Enter this web address: <https://secure.headmasteronline.com>

Step 3. Enter the school's 6-digit **Site Number. 146437**

Step 4. Enter your **Username**.



Step 5. Enter your **Password**.

Step 6. Click **Login**.

After you have logged in to HeadMaster Online, you can view a variety of school information regarding your children including the school calendar, billing information, and events. Parents will also be able to edit contact information to keep their child's file current.

### ***Parent Involvement***

At WPS, we value partnerships with parents. You are your child's first and most influential teacher, and it is our goal to establish a strong partnership with you to help your child make the most of his or her days at school and develop to his or her fullest potential. We are committed to open communication, through regular teacher-parent and school-parent communication, and by way of parent-teacher conferences. We welcome parents' involvement as a way to enrich our curriculum and school happenings, and are always available to provide community resources and services to support families who may be in need.

### ***Parent Advisory Committee***

Members of WPS Parent Advisory Committee organize and/or host various initiatives and events including, open house, graduation, staff appreciation luncheon, fundraising, and curriculum input, among others. If you are interested in participating on this committee, please indicate on the Volunteer Form.

### ***Parent Volunteers***

We believe that children, teachers, and parents all benefit from hands-on parent involvement at the school. We encourage all of our parents to share their gifts, interests, talents, cultures, and hobbies with the children. We encourage parents to visit and spend time in our classrooms and in our yard, and to participate in their child's day at school. This program is about building connections and community, and letting children know that the adults in their life (teachers and parents) are partners who value our school, the children, and the work that takes place at WPS. Volunteers do not need to be parents; grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other caregivers are also welcome. Parent volunteer forms are included in the enrollment packet.

Please: Out of respect for the children's need to adjust to the school setting and work on separation, there is a one-month moratorium on parent volunteers. This time can be extended at the teacher's and/or Director's discretion based on the needs of the children. It does happen that some children simply don't do well having their parents at school with them. This is very common and not a reason for concern — there are many other ways for you to participate in the life of our school.

*Our center has an open door policy, which allows parents access to their child's classroom at any time during our business hours which are 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.*

### ***Open Door Policy***

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. The infant room welcomes parents/guardians to nurse or feed their infants.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

### ***Publicity***

Unless the family indicates that they want their child to participate, we will not use pictures and names of children for publicity.

### ***Parent Grievance Procedure***

Westminster Preschool staff seeks to provide a quality-learning environment for all children. If a parent has a concern, misunderstanding or problem, the parent talking with the staff member on an informal, person-to-person basis can most easily resolve these. If such matters cannot be resolved and the parent seeks further review of the matter, the following procedure should be followed:

1. *Conference with the involved staff member.*

Parents of the preschool program are encouraged to address issues or concerns with the staff member.

If the parent and the staff member do not resolve the matter, and the parent seeks further review, the parent may request a conference with the Director.

2. *Conference with the Director.*

The request for such a conference may be made orally or in writing. The parent may indicate whether they desire the staff member involved to be in attendance at this conference with the Director. The parent and the staff member, (if present), will explain the issue or concern to the Director. The Director may contact any other appropriate parties and conduct further investigation prior to taking any action in this matter.

After the Director has had an opportunity to gather all necessary information, the Director shall determine what, if any, action should be taken. The Director will inform both the parent and the staff member of the decision. If the parent is not satisfied with the Director's decision, the parent may request further review of the matter by the Preschool Parent Advisory Board, and/or the Associate Pastor.

3. *Conference with the Associate Pastor.*

Any further action after this conference will be at the discretion of the Associate Pastor.

## **CURRICULA & LEARNING**

### ***NAEYC (National Association of Young Children) Accreditation***

**We are proud to be an NAEYC Accredited program. For more information, visit [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)**

Since 1985, NAEYC has offered a national, voluntary accreditation system that helps early childhood programs meet high professional standards and helps families identify high-quality

programs. Today, NAEYC Accreditation represents the mark of quality in early childhood education. Nationally, only 7,000 childcare programs, preschools, early learning centers, and other center- or school-based early childhood education programs are currently NAEYC-Accredited.

NAEYC-Accredited programs must meet NAEYC's 10 standards for high-quality early childhood education:

Standard 1: Relationships

Standard 2: Curriculum

Standard 3: Teaching

Standard 4: Assessment of Child Progress

Standard 5: Health

Standard 6: Teachers

Standard 7: Families

Standard 8: Community Relationships

Standard 9: Physical Environment

Standard 10: Leadership and Management

### ***Learning Environment***

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

### ***Curricula & Assessment***

**Westminster Preschool** uses the The Creative Curriculum© System

As part of this curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom so as to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

For information about your child's day, please see copies of daily schedules and lessons plans posted in each classroom.

All children will have an individual online portfolio that is maintained throughout their time in our program. This portfolio will contain observation notes, samples of work, photos, and an assessment form with individualized goals for learning.

### ***Assessing Your Child's Progress***

Every child in our program is an individual, with different interests, skills, strengths, and needs. Our goal is to get to know as much as possible about each and every child so that we can guide learning and plan experiences that are just right. To do this, we use an authentic, ongoing, observation-based assessment system to gather information on each child's development and learning.

### **What is “authentic, ongoing, observation-based assessment”?**

This kind of assessment simply means that we will

- observe your child during regular, everyday activities on a continuous basis;
- document what we see and hear;
- take notes, collect samples of your child’s drawings and writing attempts, or take photos or video clips;
- compare the information collected to research-based, widely held expectations for children of similar ages or grades; and
- use the information to support your child’s learning and meet his or her individual needs.

### **What tool will be used to assess your child’s development and learning?**

We use a valid and reliable assessment tool called Teaching Strategies GOLD<sup>®</sup>. The starting point for the assessment is 38 research-based objectives, including many predictors of future school success. Teaching Strategies GOLD<sup>®</sup> describes the pathway, or progression, of how children develop and learn. We use the documentation collected to determine your child’s progress related to these objectives.

### **What information will be shared with me about-- my child’s development and learning?**

Rather than send you a report card or checklist, Teaching Strategies GOLD<sup>®</sup> offers a variety of tools for sharing information with you, such as reports, online portfolios containing samples of children’s work, and suggested activities. We also invite you to share your own observations about your child’s development and learning. We will discuss the ways to support your child’s development and learning in the classroom and share information about what you can do at home to help.

**We can work together to ensure that your child has the skills needed to be successful in school and in life.**

### ***Chapel Chat***

Chapel Chat is held in the Chapel every Monday and Tuesday so all children have an opportunity to participate.

This time is fun, informal, and generally includes reading Bible stories, singing religious songs, and a time of prayer. The Director of Children’s Ministries leads Chapel Chat. It is not strictly a “Presbyterian” time, but a time appropriate for all Christian children. (*Note: Parents are welcome to join Chapel Chat any time.*)

[Children take turns each week being “candle lighters”]

### ***Outings & Field Trips***

Weather permitting; we conduct supervised walking trips around the neighborhood. Children are accounted for at all times. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the enrollment package.

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, and we encourage you to join your child on the trip. *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child’s family.

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities of child care programs. Proper restraint systems (seat belts) and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the child care program as well as during field trips.

### ***Transition***

Your child's transition in child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

#### ***Transition from home to center***

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

#### ***Transition between learning programs***

Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to propose a plan to introduce your child into the new program.

#### ***Transition to elementary school***

Transition activities such as a field trip to a local elementary school, creating a mural of special friends and special times at our center will be part of your child's education at our center. We will provide you with information on local schools, what to expect, and ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school.

### ***Television Time***

Our normal daily routine does not include television watching, but from time-to-time, we may record a television show without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. Television consumption will not be longer than [one] hour and the program will be screened prior to showing. Programs will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world. Children are never required to participate and will always be provided an alternate activity choice.

### ***Electronic Media***

Electronic Media are limited to 20 minutes or less per day per child. Internet sites and software are pre-screened to contain non-violence and high-quality educational content. Children are never required to participate and will always be provided an alternate activity choice.

### ***Multiculturalism***

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

### ***Photographs***

On occasion, Westminster Preschool will use photographs of children engaged in activities to highlight our program in brochures, on our website/FaceBook, in press releases and other marketing material. We'd like to think that children and their families are excited to be included in photos and welcome the opportunity to visually share their experiences with others. No personal information is ever shared. If you would like/not like your child included in Imagine Marketing material please indicate so on the enrollment form.

We have Picture Day during the fall and spring. Our photographer, Jenny Gegg can be reached at [www.jennygegg.com](http://www.jennygegg.com). The Fall session includes individual portraits; the spring session includes individual portraits as well as a class photo.

## ***Celebrations***

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community.

When it is your child's birthday, we will help them celebrate with a special day celebration. We will have a birthday crown for your child and sing to them at group time. They will have their picture taken and can pick a toy out of the "birthday box" to take home with them.

From birthday parties to holiday parties, there are many celebrations in preschool. Along with the fun, usually comes food. Offering so many treats so often can contribute to unhealthy eating habits.

Holidays will be celebrated with mostly healthy foods or with non-food treats like stickers. If parents want to bring something to celebrate either their child's birthday or a holiday please bring healthier foods or non-food treats. Below are some examples:

- Applesauce or fruit cups
- Pudding, yogurt, or yogurt parfaits (could bring sprinkles to put on top)
- Raisins or dried fruit
- Whole grain crackers with cheese or whole grain tortilla chips and salsa
- Trail mix
- Apple slices, bananas, or strawberries with yogurt dip, chocolate syrup, or caramel
- Angel food cake (could bring fruit for a topping)
- Raw veggies with dip
- Graham crackers with jam
- Popcorn
- Stickers, Bubbles, Pencils, etc.
- Please note – If you do still wish to bring cupcakes, cookies, donuts, etc. they need to be bite-size or mini size. (This helps encourage more appropriate portion sizes for these foods.)

Our school will also be making classroom celebrations healthier by providing more physical activity opportunities, such as scavenger hunts, dance parties, and "free choice" activity time that will be healthy fun for them.

## ***Rest Time***

After lunch, all children in our upstairs preschool class that stay for extended care participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

Prekindergarten age children, although not required, shall be provided an opportunity for a regular rest period if the child desires. For children who do not want to rest, a space and time for quiet play will be made available.

[\[click to insert your policy regarding mats and pillows\]](#)

## **GUIDANCE**

### ***General Procedure***

**Westminster Preschool** is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

### ***Challenging Behavior***

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self control and kindness.

Each student at [school] has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director of the Center.

### ***Physical Restraint***

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

## ***Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families***

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

## **TUITION AND FEES**

### ***Payment***

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

### ***Late Pick-up Fees***

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of [\$1] per minute will be assessed beginning at 5:30 PM and will be due upon arrival.

### ***Special Activity Fees***

From time-to-time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip.

### ***Late Payment Charges***

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs. Therefore we have put procedures in place to reduce their impact.

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of [\$10] will be added for each day that it is late. If your account has not been paid in full within [5] business days, your child may be discharged from the program.

If payment is more than [10] business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

### ***Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges***

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee up to the maximum amount allowed by law. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on "cash only" status.



### **Additional Fees Credits**

- **Vacation** - to retain your child's spot during vacation, [50%] of your regular tuition is due. Vacation days can be used if written notice is given in advance for the days the child will not be in attendance. Tuition must be paid prior to going on vacation. These fees are non-refundable if you choose not to return.
- **Withdrawals** - if a child is suddenly withdrawn from the program without a [2] week written notice of withdrawal, a [2] week tuition fee may be applied. Families who withdraw and later re-enroll will be charged a re-enrollment fee.

### **Credits & No Credits**

- **Credit will be given for Excused Absences** - if your child is hospitalized, absent due to a contagious disease, or absent at the request of the child's doctor, the absence is considered excused. A written doctor's note is required to receive a credit.
- **Credit will [not] be given for Sick Days** – there are [no] credits for sick days. Sick days are considered in determining tuition and are [not] refundable.
- **Credit will [not] be given for Inclement Weather** - if we do not open due to inclement weather on a day that your child is scheduled to attend, your account will [not] be credited for that day.

### **Scholarship**

#### **Jean Gardner Memorial Preschool Scholarship**

Jean Gardner, a dedicated preschool teacher, was loved dearly at Westminster Preschool. Throughout her years at Westminster (1999-2010), she contributed to the lives of more than 2,000 children. In loving memory of Jean's dedication to the children, Jean's family, along with Westminster Preschool, has established the Jean Gardner Scholarship Fund. This scholarship is available annually to eligible children who would not otherwise have the opportunity to attend preschool due to financial hardship.

Scholarships are financed with donations. The school may also from time to time solicit funds to offset the cost of the scholarship program. Donations may be made to the Jean Gardner Scholarship Fund at any time.

## **ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL**

### **Absence**

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after [10] AM, please call us at (402) 475-6702. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

### **Withdrawals**

It is assumed that enrollment is for a complete school year. If you should need to **withdraw** your child before the end of the school year, we request that you notify us as soon as you know the last date your child will be attending. Your registration will not be refunded. Westminster Preschool reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause.

Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the child's file within one week

of the dismissal. Any balances remaining after the 30 day period will be referred to the agency's legal counsel for collection..

### ***Transfer of Records***

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

### ***Closing Due to Extreme Weather***

We follow Lincoln Public School schedule for snow days. If LPS closes, we will also be closed.

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced on local news channel 10/11 and Channel 8.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

### ***General Procedure***

We open at 7:30 AM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children and sign them in.

We close at 5:30 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

### ***Cell Phone Usage***

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at anytime while visiting the center.

### ***Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up***

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after [2] hours we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

## ***Right to Refuse Child Release***

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

[click to insert any other policies you may have]

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

### ***What to Bring***

- **Preschoolers:** at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes.
- **Backpack**

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

### ***Cubbies***

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name and photo. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

### ***Lost & Found***

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located at the entrance to preschool. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

### ***Toys from Home***

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.

## **NUTRITION**

### ***Foods Brought from Home***

In an effort to provide the best possible nutrition environment for the children in our facility we have adopted the following policies:

- It is suggested that parents participate by bringing snack for the class throughout the year. Parents sign up on the predetermined calendar of snack choices
  - We have a four week snack menu that allows for seasonal changes.
    - Our snacks include 2 food groups.
    - Our menus include a combination of new and familiar foods
    - We try to incorporate foods from a variety of cultures and welcome suggestions.

- We believe children deserve the opportunities to be exposed to a variety of healthy foods.
- Beverage Guidelines:
  - We never offer sugary drinks, such as Kool-Aid, sweet tea, soda, punches, etc., other than 100% juice.
  - Drinking water outside is readily available and available on request.
  - Drinking water inside is easily visible and available on request.
  - We serve only skim or 1% milk to children unless a doctor's note is provided.
- Supporting Healthy Eating
  - Meals are served family style (children serve themselves with limited help) some of the time.
  - Our staff consumes the same food and drink as the children most of the time, unless they have allergies or intolerances to the food or drink being served.
  - We provide hands on cooking activities at least one time per month.
  - Our staff often talk informally with the children about trying and enjoying healthy foods
  - We provide teacher-directed nutrition education through a standardized curriculum for children 1 time per week.
- Foods must be Peanut Free. Please be sure foods do not contain any peanuts or peanut by products.
  - **Disclaimer: Dependent upon the allergies present in children during each session.**

The administration and staff appreciate support from the parents in promoting the health of our children.

Children that are in attendance over the lunch hour 11:30-12:30 will bring their own lunch. Our program is licensed by the State of Nebraska. We are required to follow the state regulations in regards to what children bring for school lunch. The requirements are listed below:

Lunches brought from home must contain:

1 serving of protein

1 serving of grain

2 servings of fruit or vegetables

1 serving of dairy (**Milk will be Provided by Westminster Preschool**)

<b>Good Lunch Box Suggestions for a Balanced, Nutritional Lunch.</b>	
½ turkey sandwich Celery sticks Raisins Milk/water	Chicken strips Roll Orange wedges Broccoli Milk/water
Peanut butter on graham crackers Apple slices Carrot sticks Milk/water	Yogurt Crackers Sugar snap peas 100% juice

### ***Food Prepared for or at the Center***

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service.

### ***Food Allergies***

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

### ***Meal Time***

At meal time the dining table is set with plates and flatware, and the food is placed in small bowls from which the children can help themselves. Everyone sits at the same table. Children are encouraged to serve themselves from food passed around each table. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. Weekly menus are posted for viewing by parents/caregivers.

A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

## **HEALTH**

### ***Immunizations***

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). Every [January], we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized

children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

### ***Physicals***

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). A copy of your child's physical should be received before but must be received no later than 6 weeks after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

### ***Accidents and Injuries***

While we take precautions to prevent accidents, they are a normal part of growth and development of your child. If a child is injured or becomes ill while at Westminster Preschool, our first priority is to meet the child's physical needs. If necessary, an emergency care routine is followed, the parents are informed and, if necessary, the child is taken to the closest or designated hospital. An "accident report" is completed by the supervising teacher and reviewed by the Director. In the unlikely event of a serious injury or accident, the Director will meet with the parents one-on-one to provide them with information on the nature of the accident and the actions taken to prevent the accident in the future.

### ***First Aid Kits***

A comprehensive first aid kit is maintained in each classroom. We require each staff member to be certified in Infant and Child CPR as well as first aid. First aid kits are monitored closely to ensure that all items are kept up to date and in plentiful supply. First aid kits are placed in locations convenient to every staff member.

### ***Illness***

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Fever (above 100°F under the arm, above 101°F in the mouth, above 102°F in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or 2 or more times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.

- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
  - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
  - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

## ***Handwashing***

Children and adults wash their hands

- on arrival for the day;
- after using the toilet
- after handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or touching any mucus, blood, or vomit);
- before meals and snacks, before preparing or serving food, or after handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry);
- after playing in water that is shared by two or more people;
- after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals; and
- when moving from one group to another

Adults also wash their hands

- before and after feeding a child;
- before and after administering medication;
- after assisting a child with toileting; and
- after handling garbage or cleaning.

Proper hand-washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include

- using liquid soap and running water;
- rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands

with a paper towel, a single-use towel, or a dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g., by using a paper towel to turn off water ).

## **Allergy Prevention**

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

## **Medications**

All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.
- Safeguards are used with all medication for children:
  - a. Staff administers both prescription and over-the-counter medications to a child only if the child's record documents that the parent or legal guardian has given the program written permission.
  - b. The child's record includes instructions from the licensed health provider who has prescribed or recommended medication for that child; alternatively, the licensed health provider's office may give instructions by telephone to the program staff.
  - c. Any administrator or teaching staff who administers medication has specific training and a written performance evaluation updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the **five right practices of medications** administration:
    - (1) verifying that the right child receives the (2) right medication (3) in the right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation each time the medication is given.
- The person giving the medication signs documentation of items (1) through (5) above. Teaching staff who are required to administer special medical procedures have demonstrated to a health professional that they are competent in the procedures and are guided in writing about how to perform the procedure by the prescribing health care provider.
  - d. Medications are labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider, the name of the licensed health care provider, the expiration date of the medication or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, and instructions on how to administer and store it.
  - e. All medications are kept in a locked container.



- **Non-prescription medications** require a note signed by the physician. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.
- **Non-prescription topical ointments** (e.g., diaper cream) require a note signed by the physician, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered.

[insert your centers policy on the use of sunscreen]

[insert your centers policy on the use of insect repellent]

### ***Communicable Diseases***

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness

## **SAFETY**

### ***Clothing***

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, water, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

### ***Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play***

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than [99] °F or less than [37] °F degrees. Additionally, outdoor play will be cancelled if the air quality rating is [50] or below.

### ***Communal Water-Play***

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions [insert sample precautions taken] are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

### ***Injuries***

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

### ***Biting***

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

### ***Respectful Behavior***

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

### ***Smoking***

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

### ***Prohibited Substances***

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

### ***Dangerous Weapons***

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests

(other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

### ***Child Custody***

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

### ***Suspected Child Abuse***

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

## **EMERGENCIES**

### ***Lost or Missing Child***

In the unlikely even that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within [10] minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

### ***Fire Safety***

Our center is fully equipped with  
[click to insert all fire safety items including alarms, lights and rolling cribs etc.]

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis.

### ***Emergency Transportation***

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

## **CENTER POLICIES**

Our center policies not included in this handbook are reviewed yearly and updated as needed. They are available for review upon request to the center director.

## ***Extended Care***

Extended Care is available from 7:30 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. and from 11:30 am to 5:30 p.m. The charges for extended care are either a contracted set rate or hourly. Occasional drop-in care is charged hourly at a rate of \$5 per hour.

BOTH sessions of before and after preschool extended care are located in the downstairs classroom.

No breakfast is served in before care, and we prefer that your child has already eaten prior to their arrival at Westminster Preschool, but your child may bring a light breakfast (granola bar, cereal in a Ziploc bag, dry waffle or pancake, etc. and drink) and sit at a table and eat it as soon as they arrive at preschool. They will be asked to throw it away when they are finished eating and ready to play.

Part-time drop-in extended care is available to all children on the days they attend preschool. If you are late in picking up your child, they will be taken to extended care until you arrive. Children who are in extended care during the lunch hour (11:30 pm to 12:30 pm) need to bring their own lunch. Due to limited refrigerator space, their lunch will need to be cooled with an ice pack or in an insulated lunch bag. Staff will help the children open containers, etc. but we do not heat up items in the microwave, so please send items that are ready to eat. Westminster Preschool will provide an afternoon snack with milk, water or juice to drink.

## ***Adventure Camp***

When Lincoln Public Schools are closed, Westminster Preschool will also be closed. We do offer "Adventure Camp" during some non-school days. A flier with detailed information will be placed in your child's cubby prior to each time Adventure Camp days are offered.

You can sign your child up to attend some or all of these days. (Cost is \$25.00 per day.)

The schedule for Adventure Camp days will be similar to the morning preschool activities.

**(Adventure Camp Hours are 8:00-5:00)**

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# Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for your acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **Westminster Preschool Family Handbook**, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the **Westminster Preschool** staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the **Westminster Preschool Family Handbook** that I do not understand.

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Recipient Signature

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Date

---

Center Staff Signature

---

Date

## FAMILY ACTIVITIES

We offer a variety of ways for families to participate in the growth and improvement of our program. We encourage families to take an active role.

### Advisors:

- Discussion of Program Goals – annual meeting for families to provide input into our plan for the program.
- Parent Advisory Committee – meets 4 times a year to review progress toward annual goals.
- Classroom Representative – serves as a liaison between classroom parents and teachers
- Home and School Committee – meets monthly to plan family events and fundraisers

**Family Events:** We have several events throughout the year that bring our entire community together. Watch for the announcements!

- Open House
- Back to School Night
- Family Information Events
- Winter Program
- Muffins with Grandparents
- Spooktacular
- Annual Family Picnic

**Classroom Activities:** Enjoy and help your child's class with these special activities.

- Share a meal with your child
- Chaperone field trips
- Read to children at arrival or pickup
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Donate requested items
- Serve as a parent representative
- Welcome new families
- Share your family culture
- Family Teacher conferences

**Family/Parent Workshops:** Our menu of family workshops changes annually. Below is a list of workshops we typically offer. We try to offer these in the early evening or on Saturdays. See the monthly calendar for scheduled topics. We welcome requests for workshop topics.

- Positive Guidance and Loving Discipline
- Toilet Training
- Safety in the Home
- Child Proofing Your Home
- Brain Development
- Nutrition and Exercise for Small Bodies
- Supporting Your Child in Times of Stress
- Food Allergies
- How to Prepare for a Conference
- Warning Signs for Developmental Delays
- Value of Reading to Your Child
- Everyday Math