

CHILDREN'S



EST. 1974

UW-EAU CLAIRE

Family Handbook

Serving children 6 weeks old - 12 years old
Open Year Around, Monday - Friday
7:00 - 5:30
License Capacity: 180
1190 Priory Road, Eau Claire Wisconsin 54701
Phone: 715-836-2178

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Family Handbook for the UW-Eau Claire Children's Nature Academy. Most questions or concerns you have can be found in this handbook. Check the table of contents on the previous page to help you find specific topics. If you have any questions regarding the content of this handbook, please see program administration. All families are welcome however enrollment priority is given to UWEC student parents.

PHILOSOPHY

At the UW-Eau Claire Children's Nature Academy, the bond between indoors and out flows naturally. Children are immersed in learning and discovery that is hands-on and utilizes the senses:

- Listening to the birds.
- Watching for the first leaf of spring.
- Tasting garden produce nurtured by little hands.
- Enjoying the smell after a fresh summer rain.
- Touching the cool water as streams trickle down.

We explore the learning that our world has to offer by enhancing life's most wondrous adventures.

MISSION STATEMENT

UWEC Children's Nature Academy provides a learning experience where nature meets development to support each child. We welcome all and make everyone feel like part of a family.

PRINCIPLES

Some of our key principles include:

- Exposure to nature
- Positivity
- Diversity
- Cleanliness
- Safety
- Fun

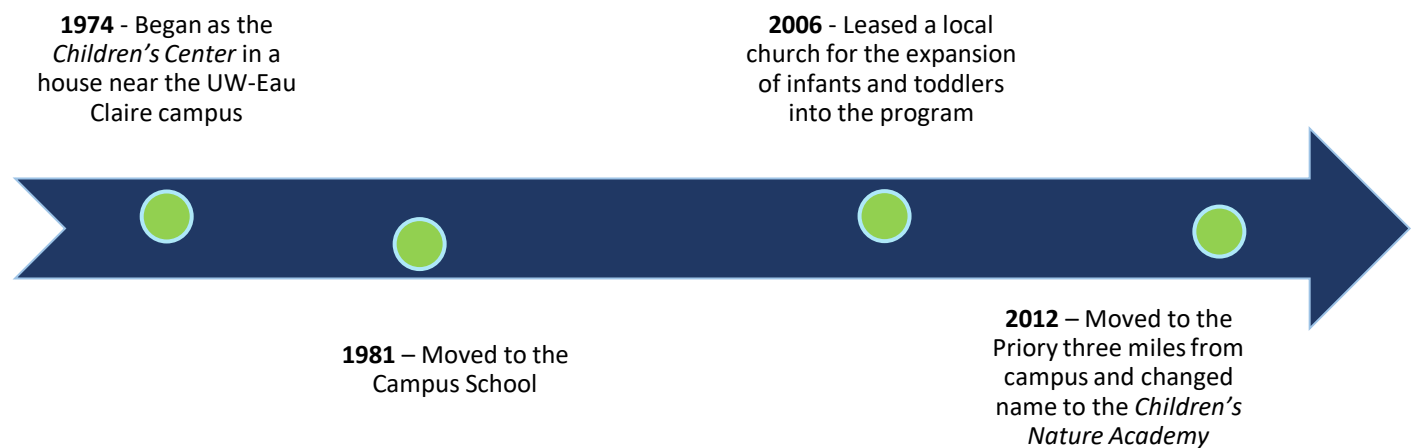
GOALS

Goals are developed in collaboration with families for each individual child. These goals are tracked through the assessment process and shared with families throughout the year.

Program goals are based on the annual evaluation, completed by staff and families. A quality improvement plan is developed and shared with families annually.

PROGRAM HISTORY

UW-Eau Claire's Children's Nature Academy timeline:



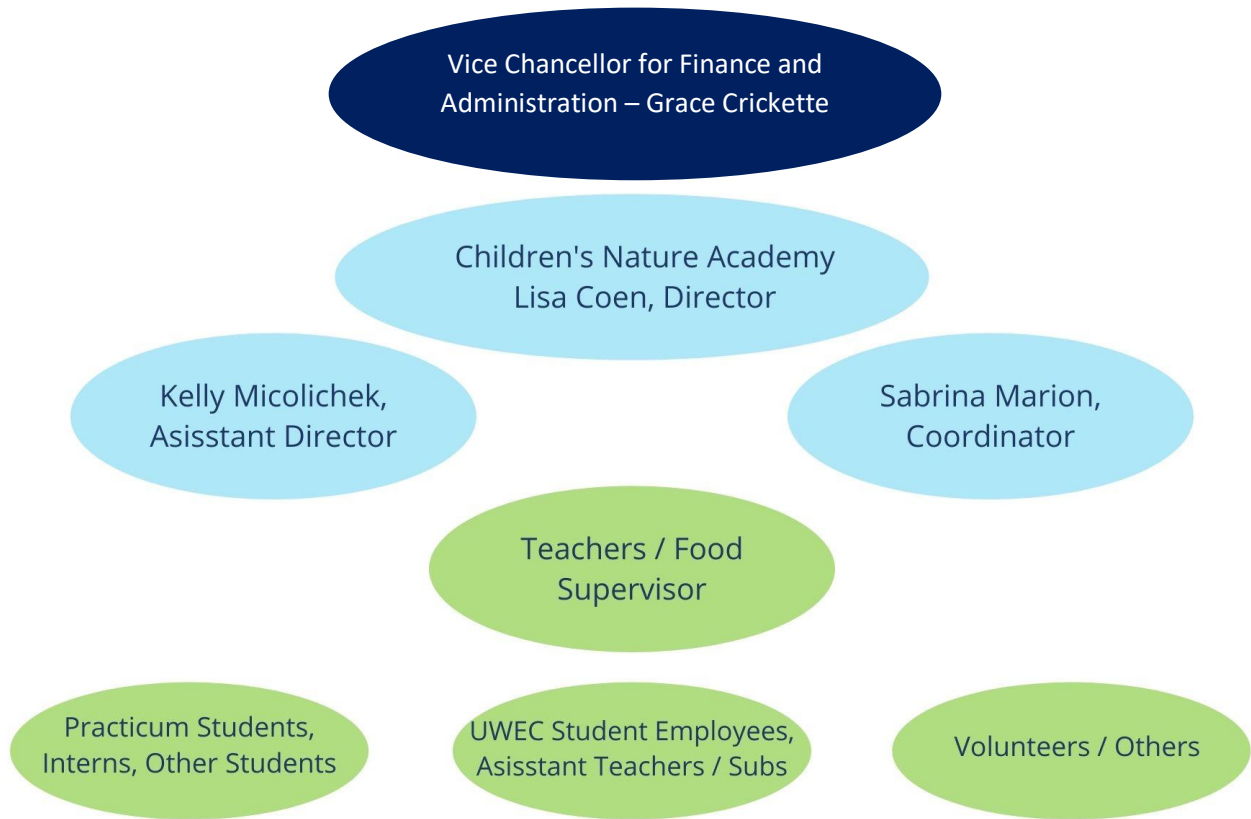
CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The Academy is fortunate to be part of the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire. Their diversity practices have been evaluated by many levels of educators. The program adds diverse experiences such as:

- Embracing differences and similarities in cultures
- Sharing unique traditions
- Exposure to languages

Resources such as the Department of Foreign Languages and the International Studies Program are available for cultural needs and support. We involve other languages as requested by family by using program resources. The Academy hires employees of diverse backgrounds and cultures when possible.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Licensing: Department of Children and Families

Accreditation: NECPA

Food Program: CACFP

Eau Claire Area School District: 4K, School Age Camps

EAU CLAIRE FOR TOMORROW

The Academy works with Eau Claire for Tomorrow (EC4T) to bring in teachers and lesson plans. EC4T is the Eau Claire Area School District's 4-year-old kindergarten program.

Requirements for enrollment include:

- Being 4 years old on or before September 1st
- Living in the school district's boundaries

The Academy enrolls children of university students, faculty, and staff, as well as from the community. UWEC students receive priority enrollment. We register children wanting 4K with extended care while your school district registers children wanting only 4K. The school district does this after the enrollment deadline.

If you live in another area that provides 4K, you must apply with them before the previous school year's deadline. Please contact your home school district for their policy and procedures.

COLLABORATING PARTNERS

ECLIPSE

Eclipse is an AmeriCorps program that sends UWEC students to work within the Academy. Eclipse's goal is to train college students to be enthusiastic and meet the needs of every child.

One-on-one sessions with the college students help children develop skills like:

- Language
- Literacy
- Social

Other departments at the University visit the Academy at times. Some of these visitors include:

- Volunteers
- University student observers
- Student teachers
- Practicum students
- Personnel from partnering agencies.

An Academy staff member must be with visitors when they are with children. Exceptions occur to this only with signed and written permission from a parent or guardian for a specific activity.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community outreach is another primary goal of the advisory board. Many opportunities are within the community to share our mission. Individuals within the program advocate for

children and families throughout the state of Wisconsin. Some examples of who we have worked with in the past are:

- United Way
- US Bank
- Kids First
- Eau Claire Booster Club

The Academy is open to working within the community on various goals. We invite you to talk with us if you have other suggestions for community collaboration.

LICENSING/ACCREDITATION

The UW-Eau Claire Children’s Nature Academy is licensed by the Department of Health and Family Services. The Wisconsin Rules for this licensing are available in the childcare offices or online at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing> Any violation of the rules and a plan of action are posted by the check-in computer.

The Children’s Nature Academy is accredited by NECPA (the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation). NECPA has identified key indicators that help predict that overall quality of programming for children. The process of accreditation requires the program to complete a self-study of the standards to make quality improvements throughout the program.

The program has also been awarded a 5-star rating by the state of Wisconsin, showing the highest quality services offered to children and families.

ADMISSION/ENROLLMENT

Registration priority is given to children of UWEC students. A fee that UWEC students pay with their tuition helps reduce the Academy’s tuition. This is done to create affordable care for students who are parents. Please contact the childcare office for a detailed fee statement.

If you are interested in the program, please call the facility and someone will guide you through the process of enrollment. Getting on the waiting list is the first step, followed by: visiting the program, completing required paperwork and attending an orientation.

REGISTRATION / SUPPLY FEE

A \$25.00 nonrefundable fee is charged to each child in the fall, spring and summer session.

BILLING

Billing is done on a 4-week cycle. Payments are processed through Tuition Express. Billing disputes follow the program's grievance policy. There will be documentation provided to assist with the process. No cash payments will be taken.

CARD INFORMATION

Any information needed about key cards can be found in the administrative office.

FIELD TRIP FEES

Field trip fees are determined prior to scheduling and will be included on permission slips.

REGISTRATION/SCHEDULES

Registration forms are required at the time of enrollment and throughout the year: Fall and Summer Semester. The program also offers interim sessions. During interim sessions families can have the benefit of flexible scheduling. If you would like to add extra days, please notify program administration, by phone or email, to see if we have space (See drop-in care). You are not allowed to exchange days during the week.

Interim periods (in January, May, and August) allow flexibility in scheduling. Interim is a time that you can change schedules, opt out enrollment for the period, and take periodic days off. Tuition will not be charged if it is indicated on the registration form. During Spring and Fall semesters and summer you will be charged for the days that you are registered for, regardless of absences and scheduled vacations.

Parents, who are students at UWEC, may change their registration within 10 days after the semester begins. A \$25.00 charge is assessed for all schedule changes. However, changes may result in a loss of your child's spot. The program reserves the right to hold a spot for an infant if space allows; however, families must pay for a minimum of two days from the time a child is 6 weeks old. Additional details will be explained upon enrollment.

A 2-day minimum is required. However, if you opt for 2-day programming you may be asked to switch days to offset another part-time schedule. The enrollment coordinator will help you work this schedule out individually.

There will be a 5% discount on the second child based on the lowest tuition rate.

CHILD TRACKING

Each classroom maintains an attendance sheet with arrival and departure times of all children. Identification will be checked if the caregiver in charge does not recognize the authorized pick up. If your child has not arrived by 10:00 am, and we are not aware of the absence, program staff will attempt to notify the family by phone. It is important to update all contact information so that we can always reach you. Children will not be released to unauthorized individuals and all changes must be specified in writing. We will notify parents/guardians by phone if an unauthorized individual attempts to pick up your child

EMERGENCY CONTACT

Parents/guardians must provide an emergency contact person who can be reached if they are unavailable.

The program will report all emergencies within 24 hours to the Department of Children and Families Licensing Division.

FORMS REQUIRED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Prior to the first day of attendance: (all children)

- Registration Form
- Food Program Form
- Child Enrollment Form
- Special Dietary Request
- Health History
- Getting to Know You
- Billing Information Form
- Tuition Express Form

Information is put in the computer and a computer-generated child information form is printed for the classroom so that contact information is readily available.

Prior to the first day of attendance: (infants/toddlers)

- SIDS Policy Form
- Academy Consent Form
- Intake Form (under age 2)

Within 30 days of start date (all children):

The Health Report and Immunization Record documents are due within 30 days of the start date. Please see the immunization schedule for dates. Immunization schedules are updated

every 6 months up until age 2 and yearly after age 2. Please see the Department of Children and Families guidelines for Immunization exemptions.

All forms, including assessments, are confidential. Teaching and administrative staff will have access to these forms so that they can provide optimal care for children within a safe environment. Medical need, including allergies, are kept confidentiality in each classroom. A photo release form is also given to families which gives the program permission to take and use photos for publicity or other purposes. Other forms may be required by collaborative entities (the table below continues onto the next page).

Birth	1 Month	2 Months	4 Months	6 Months	12 Months	15 Months	18 Months	19-23 Months	2-3 Years	4-6 Years
HepB	HepB			HepB						
		RV								
		DTaP				DTaP				DTaP
		Hib			Hib					
		PCV13			PCV13					
		IPV		IPV						
				Yearly Influenza (Optional)						
					MMR					MMR
					Varicella					Varicella
					HepA					

Dark blue shaded boxes indicate the vaccine can be given during shown age range.

Note:
If your child misses a shot, go back to your child's doctor if you have questions.

Caution:
If your child has any medical conditions that put them at risk for infection, consult your child's doctor about other vaccines they may need.

Developmental history (updated every 3 months):

Each parent needs to fill out an intake form if their child is under the age of two. The form educates the teacher of the child's routines/schedule/tendencies/etc. The parents and teacher will also meet to discuss this information and answer any questions. A "getting to know your child form" is like the intake forms. Both forms are used to ensure that families and teachers are collaborating on routines and needs.

CANCELLATION POLICY

A two-week written notice is required prior to your child's last day. You will be charged for contracted time that does not meet these criteria. This rule also applies to enrollment prior to the start of a term.

DISCHARGE POLICY

Enrollment may be canceled by family or program administration. A written notice will be given if cancellation is involuntary. Timeline for discontinuation of services will be included in the notice. However, all threats that pose a risk to the health and wellbeing of children and staff will be cause for immediate termination. Academy reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment for any of the following reasons:

- Failure to pay fees.
- Failure to submit required forms.
- Failure to observe rules of the program.
- Child's behavior is hazardous to self or others.
- Repeated child behaviors that are disruptive to the classroom and not resolved

through positive behavior strategies.

- Disruptive parent behaviors that are threatening to children or staff. Behaviors include but is not limited to the use of profanity and/or threats, abusive, or noncompliance.

If program staff feel behavior creates concern for the safety of individuals, University police will be notified. Refer to policies on health and wellness and/or behavior guidance for specific details.

ORIENTATION

Family orientation is an important part of transitioning into the program. Upon registration, the program coordinator sends out paperwork and the parent handbook for review. Parents schedule an individual orientation afterwards.

Orientation Checklist:

Meet the Teacher	Child Abuse Reporting
Turn in paperwork	Curriculum
Meet program administration	Conflict Resolution
Ask questions	Parent Involvement
Fingerprint scan	Community Resources
Bring materials	Family Language Support
Get information. i.e., Calendar	Termination Policy
Meet the Teacher	Communication and Conferences
Nature-Inspired Programing and Property	Security

We ask that all families complete a transition survey when their child moves to a new classroom and/or school. This survey will give your child's new teacher insight into some of the basics. This survey includes a release of information to give permission to the program to share information with the new classroom.

https://uweauclaire.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d7qDzrjhOCzvRid

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

OPEN DOOR POLICY

We value our families and believe children benefit when schools and families build strong relationships. We welcome families to visit the center and spend time with their child whenever they wish.

We encourage families to share traditions, be guest readers, help with art projects, etc. Teachers are always looking for ways to connect with families so that they feel welcome. If you have any cultural information to share with us, please do so at any time. We want to be inclusive in every way possible!

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The calendar and newsletters provide helpful information. Multiple viewpoints are considered during training. Please contact the administration if you require adaptations or translation.

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

The Children's Nature Academy is a learning environment in which families and teachers are partners in caring for and educating each child. Communication tools used throughout the program are:

- Verbal or written daily personal communication.
- Website: <http://www.uwec.edu/children>
- Conferences – offered 2 times each year. Conference forms and progress reports are used to guide the conversation however, collaboration is the ultimate goal.
- Parent bulletin boards located outside each classroom.
- Phone calls, newsletters, emails
- Family fun nights
- Annual evaluation forms

Several bulletin boards are around the center: by the check in computer and by the front office. This is where you will find licensing rules, the certificate for licensing and accreditation, recent violations, and other notice. A staff handbook is available for your review in the lobby of the building. Additional parent boards are located outside of each classroom. You may check these spaces weekly for updates and general information. The program has an open-door visitation policy. Please visit any time. The program is staffed so that families can speak verbally a minimum of once time per week, if not daily.

TRIPLE P POSITIVE PARENTING

The program director is a trained facilitator and practitioner of Triple P Positive Parenting seminars and discussion groups. Each month training is offered that promotes this evidence-based program and support families through education. The program also provides resources to other reputable education in the area.

EVENING CARE

Please speak with the coordinator for details on evening care.

SUMMER AND SCHOOL-OUT SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAM

When elementary schools are closed, the Academy offers a school-age program for children kindergarten through twelve years of age. School age curriculum is based around the DNR curriculum: Project Learning, Project Wild and Project Wet. Summer nature and language camps work in collaboration with the UWEC Language Department and Eau Claire Area School District for curriculum guidance.

School out is defined as when the public schools are closed, whether it is for a snow day, holiday break, summer vacation, and so on.

Families must register for school out days at least one week in advance. Summer programming requires a signed registration form.

DROP-IN CARE

The Children's Nature Academy understands that our families sometimes need care outside of their contracted hours. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Program administration must approve all drop-in care. Please call the office if you have a request for care. Drop-in requests will result in a \$2.00 charge. Paperwork must be completed before leaving the child at the facility.
- Contact the office if you are going to cancel. Cancellations made 24 hours before the requested date will result in a \$5.00 fee. No-shows or cancellations after the 24-hour time will result in full charges. Fees and charges are due on the day of care if a family does not have a contract with the Academy.
- Ensure that you have drop-in care, school-age, or school out by scheduling it and contracting for it each semester. Enrollment is limited, so be sure to schedule early.

CURRICULUM

The UWEC Children's Nature Academy believes learning should occur naturally, based on the needs and interests of the child. This curriculum supports child development through intentional engagement and play.

We carefully plan unit studies based on the interests of the children to capture the excitement of learning. Qualified teachers trained in child development facilitate these unit studies. As the unit study evolves over time, the child can make choices and direct the flow of learning.

CREATIVE CURRICULUM

The Creative Curriculum is the foundational system used by all classrooms in the program. This research-based curriculum provides the structure for teachers to enhance child-learning experiences through purposeful activities and creates a cohesive flow throughout the program. Teachers observe children to determine the next steps in learning and build on individual strengths through this approach. Whenever possible the family's primary language should be included in the curriculum. This information is put into a curriculum plan.

Relationships provide a foundation of security, and the cycle of assessment helps define the learning goals for each individual child. Whenever possible the teachers work with families to create learning goals, implement interests and family culture, gather ideas for learning, and enriching experiences through family resources.

We post weekly lesson plans outside each classroom and email them to families for collaborative review. Program stakeholders review the curriculum annually so that changes can be made if necessary. A copy of the curriculum is available for review at the fall orientation night. Each classroom creates a unique schedule that reflects the development needs of the individual age group. The lesson plan reflects the individual goals of the child and allows for opportunities to revisit concepts and lessons throughout the year. The curriculum is included in the annual review and adapted with a curriculum committee.

Feedback is solicited from families at family conferences, through qualtrics surveys, through an open-door policy and informally through casual conversations.

The program follows the [Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards](#). These standards provide a framework for development and learning for children from ages birth through first grade. The programs assessment tool, The Portage Guide, originated in Wisconsin and aligns with the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards. More information about the Portage Guide can be found in the assessment portion of this document.

NATURE CURRICULUM COMPONENTS

Nature-inspired learning is implemented throughout the program. We center core learning concepts around the many natural resources on the property, in Eau Claire, and throughout Wisconsin. The Wisconsin DNR and Beaver Creek Nature reserve play a pivotal role in accessing information for learning. Project Learning Tree is one of the guides that teachers use to structure learning.

We are proud to have a bluebird trail on the property that children monitor for 12 weeks during the spring and summer months. This property has been recognized by the National

Wildlife Federation as a bird habitat. Children, citizen scientists, and other supportive adults collect data to be shared with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Each classroom has a daily schedule that supports the developmental needs of children. This schedule allows for flexibility as children's needs change daily. The schedule also allows for the flexibility to revisit topics, support a range of abilities, adapt for special learning needs, and balance active and quiet play. During the early morning and late afternoons classrooms may combine. Children will be involved in developmentally appropriate learning.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Classrooms are organized according to the best environmental practices of ITERS, ECERS, and SACERS. These environmental guidelines promote high elements of self-selection and independence in organized environments and centers that may include dramatic play, science, and nature, sensory, blocks, manipulatives, math, literacy, music, and movement. You will notice that as the children get older the classroom environment becomes more structured and centers become more defined.

The outdoor environment also supports learning in all domains and offers many opportunities for developmental growth. Wisconsin Early Learning Standards are incorporated into outdoor programming, so skills are supported both indoors and outdoors. We have included living plants in our environments as they can have positive health benefits. However, all plants are labeled and those that are potentially toxic are inaccessible to children.

ASSESSMENT

The Portage Guide aligns with Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards. The assessment guide supports teachers and challenges to look at the whole child: the family, environment, development, and interactions. The assessment encourages collaboration with the family and stresses.

The Ages and Stages (SE) is given to families with enrollment paperwork. Results are used to make vision and hearing referrals. The Ages and Stages (basic) is provided in the fall at Staff Development Days.

The Academy works with many agencies to seek help for children who may be at risk for developmental delays. We make referrals to various agencies when assistance is needed using information such as assessments, screeners, documentation, and behavioral documentation.

We selected the portage assessment tool based on two key factors. First, the assessment tool aligns with the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards. Secondly, the assessment encourages input from families. We encourage families to provide observations and input about their child's development.

Families have opportunities to meet with teachers to share goals and aspirations for their child's learning. Additionally, families have resources and consultants for special learning such as the following:

- Eau Claire Area School District (and other school districts where children reside)
- Birth to Three
- UWEC Communication Disorders
- UWEC Special Education Department
- Early Autism Program
- Family Pediatricians and Mental Health Professionals
- Local Autism Programs, Spots House, Head Start Agencies
- Other health care consultants as needed.
- Eau Claire Family Resource Center
- Child Care Partnership

If the teachers in the program identify a mental and/or behavioral health concern, information is documented, and families are provided the necessary information to access the resources most appropriate to the child's need.

Objectives for learning incorporate the following learning domains:

- Social-emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Early Language & Literacy
- Early Mathematics
- Science & Technology
- Creative Expression & Art Appreciation
- Health & Safety
- Social Studies & culture

LANGUAGE & EARLY LITERACY

Language development is emerging rapidly during the preschool years. Early literacy research states that:

- Language, reading, and writing skills develop at the same time and are intimately linked.
- Early literacy development is a continuous developmental process that begins in the first years of life.

- Early literacy skills develop in real life settings through positive interactions with literacy materials and other people.” (Zero – Three, 2003)

Resources:

- Early Literacy From www.zerotothree.org/BrainWonders
- http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/developing_literacy.html
- PLANNING FOR EARLY LITERACY SUCCESS (Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards)

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

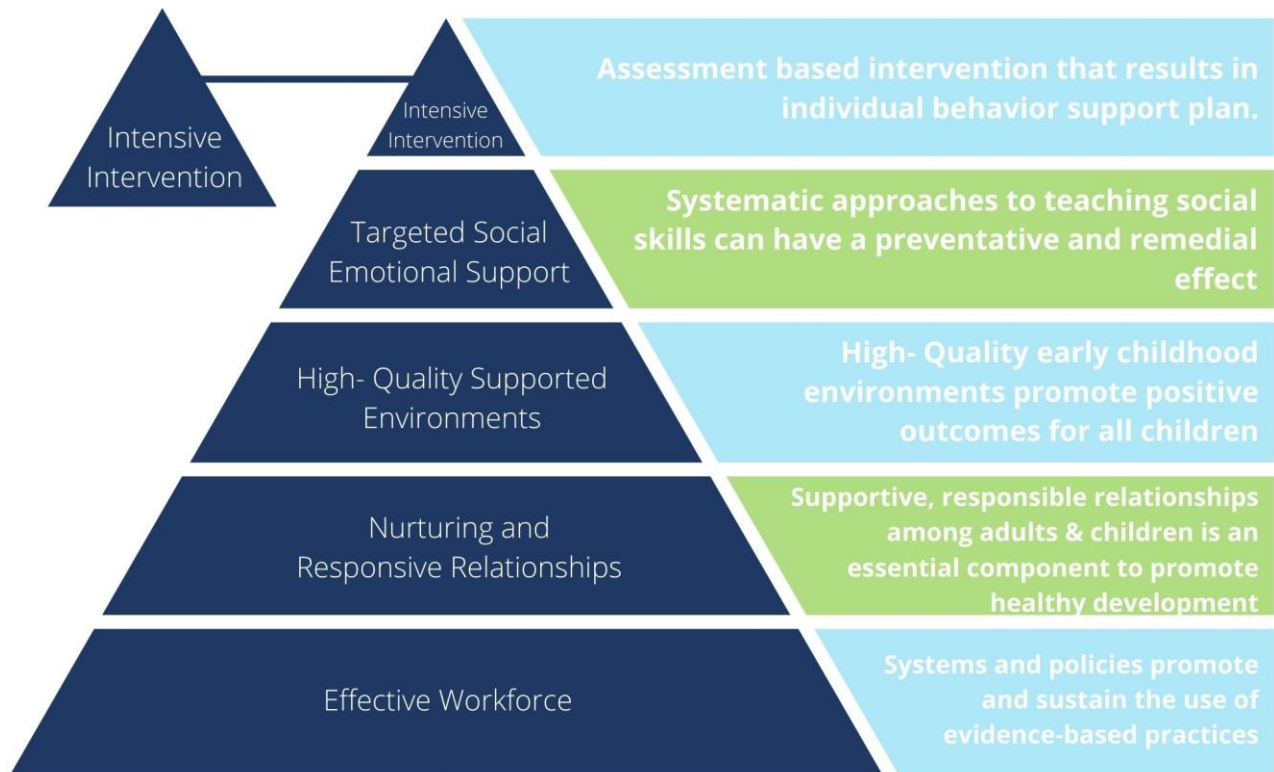
Social/Emotional Development is a critical component of the classroom curriculum. This starts with creating a warm and secure environment that supports the needs of individual age groups, involves teaching skills, and reinforces desirable behaviors.

Each semester the program recruits interns that work with children throughout the program to provide support within the classroom environment. Classrooms use the **Pyramid Model** as a foundation for this portion of our curriculum. <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/> is the major resource for the program’s social/emotional curriculum component.

THE PYRAMID MODEL

The Program uses the Pyramid Model for supporting child behaviors. We have a team of teachers who meet monthly to look at specific behaviors to determine the best supports to consider. This team also plans active learning opportunities to reinforce program rules and teach skills for success.

Behavioral Analysis helps identify the motivation behind the behaviors. There are many ways that this can be established. However, the first step starts with tracking behaviors.



Incident Reports (BIRs). The Wisconsin Pyramid Model Specialists and the Eau Claire Area School District Early Learning Programs recommend these forms.

*See the attached BIR samples.

Research has found that looking at data can help us pinpoint strategies for success. The assistant director inputs the BIR into a spreadsheet that can be analyzed objectively. The BIR does not take the place of working with families but looks at behaviors from an external standpoint.

Behaviors can be challenging at times so remember that:

- A team of administrators and teachers are here to support you and the children in your care.
- Children and teachers may need a break from the classroom to regain composure from time to time. Assistance is always available.
- Children will get help from Teachers on how to gain self-control.
- Teachers will always work with families. Being positive and consistent.
- Additional support and resources are available.

Referring Agencies:

- Birth – Three
- Early Autism Program
- Eau Claire Area School District
- UWEC special education and early childhood education
- Local health care providers

CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Children are encouraged to imagine, create, and express themselves through music, art, dance, and other activities. All art supplies are non-toxic and used under adult supervision in well ventilated areas to ensure safety. Neither children nor adults can eat or drink while they are using art supplies.

ADULT LEARNING AND INVOLVEMENT

The Academy offers families many learning and involvement opportunities.

- The family resource library is available in the lobby. The Academy encourages families to check out books. The library highlights PBIS books that help families support children’s behaviors and teach social and emotional development. Family conversation kits help families facilitate all important talks about diversity and inclusion.
- The monthly newsletter highlights learning opportunities and resources in the community.
- The center offers seasonal education opportunities about many topics of interest.
- The family support class meets for six weeks in the winter. The class supports families and gives opportunities for developing relationships with others in the program.
- The advisory board of parents/guardians, students, and other program stakeholders meets monthly to assess the needs of the program. The board is a contact for families, the program, and camps, and helps members understand the program. The board discusses the budget, fees, and services. The board’s primary goal is community outreach. The board shares their mission through opportunities in the community. Program members advocate for kids and families throughout Wisconsin.
- UWEC helps translate for families whose primary language is not English.

SCREENING

Teachers conduct the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) screeners within three months of a child’s first day of attendance. The ASQ is a developmental and social-emotional screener. Teachers share the information with the parents, which is helpful for the teacher and the parents in planning developmentally appropriate activities to challenge and enhance the

child's development. The center holds Family Night in September, where the ASQ is presented and discussed with parents.

CHILD DROP-OFF

At drop-off, teachers assess each child's general health. If children are asleep and still in their car seats, parents must remove their children and place them in their cribs.

DAILY SCHEDULES/PROCEDURES

INFANTS

Infant schedules are based on the needs of each child. Teachers work with parents to promise an easy shift from home to the center.

TODDLERS & TWOS SCHEDULE

Toddlers and children of 2 years follow a schedule that includes these elements:

- Flexible and adaptable to meet individual needs.
- Unhurried and allow for routines, play, and transitions.
- Balanced between activities and rest time.
- Time adjustable for individuals and/or group play
- Designed for outdoor play twice a day.

The infants, toddlers and twos teachers work with each child to:

- Meet children's basic needs.
- Foster social/emotional development
- Develop relationships.
- Support cognitive and brain development.

A qualified teacher plans activities to meet these four foundations and ensures that learning is developmentally appropriate.

PRESCHOOL AND 4-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN

Teachers plan developmentally appropriate activities in the curriculum. Teachers maintain schedules of routine classroom activities that are posted for each classroom. Each schedule has a balance of the following:

- Active and quiet areas

- Indoor and outdoor activities (weather permitting)
- Free selection of individual activities for children
- Large and small group activities
- Meal and snacks
- Quiet time for rest

Staff members and teacher's stagger their schedules. Children start in one classroom until all teachers arrive. Children then go to their assigned classrooms. As children leave for the day, classrooms combine and "close" in one room, allowing staff to stagger their end times so they may complete an eight-hour day and maintain appropriate licensing and accreditation ratios.

The Children's Nature Academy works to broaden each child's interest and understanding of the surrounding world. Qualified teachers prepare purposeful activities. The academy supports nature-inspired programming and uses the indoor and outdoor environment to meet the objectives set by the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards.

Teachers use the inquiry approach in curriculum facilitation as children grow and develop attitudes toward learning as well as a foundation of knowledge and readiness. The environment supports the development of each age group and diverse learning materials are provided. Teachers prepare lesson plans so children will learn:

- Literacy skills
- Language skills
- Social and emotional development skills
- Social studies skills
- Math skills
- Science and technology skills
- Skills in the Arts
- Physical activity
- Self-help skills

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The Children's Nature Academy provides active indoor and outdoor play time. Play time is provided to all preschool children, including children with special needs, for a minimum of 120 minutes each day. In preschool structured classrooms, teacher-led activities are provided to all children, two or more times each day. Children should dress in clothing that is comfortable to play and move in. This includes closed-toed shoes or tennis shoes. There are multiple playgrounds on the facility grounds, designed for developmentally appropriate learning.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Children's Nature Academy supports the development of skills and builds confidence in the child. Consistent and clear limits are provided, and appropriate behaviors are modeled. The program follows the basic guidelines of the Eau Claire Area School District by Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS).

Center-wide rules are as follows:

- Be Kind and Respectful
- Be Safe
- Be Responsible and Make Good Choices

DISCIPLINE

The Children's Nature Academy children understand their own feelings and the feelings of others. Teachers act as facilitators and help children name feelings, offer positive alternatives for redirection, discuss feeling cues, and coach problem solving skills. Teachers use simple and direct language.

Children, ages three and older, will occasionally be directed away from the group to a safe place where they are able to regain their composure. If a child's behavior is deemed unsafe to themselves or others, it may be necessary to bring in support from administration or other professionals in the building. Sometimes a child must be removed from the classroom temporarily. Once the child has calmed down and it has been determined that they are ready to be safe, the child may return to the classroom. If a time away is used, it will be documented. The program reserves the right to contact a parent to pick up their child if warranted by the child's behavior. The staff at the Academy are prohibited by law to use any form of physical or verbal abuse.

QUESTIONS STAFF CONSIDER WHILE EXAMINING A CHILD'S BEHAVIOR

Questions about the child's environment:

- Do the environment/relationships support the child's growth?
- Does the classroom reflect the interests of the child and provide opportunities for developmental challenges?
- Is the child under stress, at home or at school? Are their needs unmet?
- Are all adults modeling what desired behaviors are?

Questions about the child's developmental abilities:

- Have you worked with the parent / guardian to seek suggestions and develop consistency?
- Does the child have the developmental ability to understand the feedback you are providing and/or to do what you are asking? I.e., “use your words” etc.
- Does the child communicate, or do they need supportive adaptations to do so? This includes receptive and expressive communication.
- Is there a skill that the child needs to learn to be successful? Is that skill developmentally appropriate?
- Are the child testing boundaries for consistency or exploring?
- Is there a personality conflict between children and/or adults in the child's life that may be overlooked?

Child guidance supports learning and appropriate child guidance instills a sense of self as well as a sense of security. The goal is providing children with skills and feedback to develop self-discipline and problem-solving abilities. Adults should always seek to reinforce the positive, provide safety for the child and others in the classroom community and minimize the behavior that is not desired. If a child is fussy or distraught, the teacher will console the children and ensure their safety. If a distraught child cannot be comforted the parent will be notified.

PREVENTION

Environmental Factors:

- Classroom room arrangement
- Clearly defined routines and expectations
- Working with the family to provide consistency.
- Providing fresh air, physical activity, and healthy food choices.
- Minimized transitions and “waiting time.”

Communication Factors:

- Developing relationships with children and families
- Prompting through verbal or visual reminders.
- Teaching skills through intentional lessons.
- Providing security by offering a child quiet space, time to work and play alone, balanced activities.
- Teaching children to recognized “strong emotions,” naming these emotions and teaching ways to deal with these feelings.

REDIRECTION

Environmental Factors:

- Observing the child to determine triggers and redirecting behaviors before they start.
- Changing activities

Communication Factors:

- Preventing behaviors from becoming out of control (i.e., wrestling turns into fighting, competition turns into hard feeling)
- Observing the signals that children give when they are bored, tired, overstimulated, and intervening before they become an issue.
- Simple words of reinforcement, quietly to encourage or to help the children to think about their actions.
- Helping children move past negative emotions.
- Always provide a brief explanation of the reasons for the redirection. This should include the reason and provide clear feedback about what the desired behavior should be.
- Catching children doing the desired behaviors and providing verbal reinforcement and encouragement is an important part of effective feedback.

DISCUSSIONS

- Discuss behaviors in short simple statements, taking time to listen to the child.
- Having discussions about behaviors at various times throughout the day.

SEEK HELP, TAG TEAM, OR BRING IN SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Behaviors may present a threat to the child, other children, or even adults.

Parents should keep the following behaviors in mind when dealing with children:

- Be patient and remain calm.
- Use positive ways to stop the behavior immediately.
- Acknowledge feelings and model breathing techniques (this is helpful for the child and the adult).
- Describe what you see and the reasons that the behavior must stop in a clear and controlled manner.
- Behaviors should never be labeled “good” or “bad.”
- State the behavior in a positive manner.

Phrase Replacements (What we do not say → What we say instead):

"Stop running."	"Walk safely."
"Don't hit."	"Gentle touches; Hands to ourselves."
"Don't stand on the chair."	"Feet on the floor."
"No throwing sand."	"Sand stays in the sandbox."

The Academy uses language that shows clear limits and positive choices instead of negative language.

Child mistreatment is prohibited from any staff or teacher. This includes physical and/or mental abuse.

*After reading this section we ask that you sign the behavior policies at the end of this handbook and turn it into the office. Thank you. ++++++

STEPS TO BEHAVIORAL SUCCESS

TEACHERS APPROACH

- Concerns will be discussed with the family informally to gather information and share insight.
- A systematic approach will be determined to track behaviors. Relevant information will be documented to determine patterns of behaviors. Interventions will be determined based on parent recommendations, the Pyramid Model for social and emotional development, and suggestions from staff, teachers, and administration.
- A written action plan will be devised.
- The action plan will be implemented for a predetermined period. Success will be monitored, and observations will continue. Adjustments to the plan are an ongoing part of the process.
- If behavior improves, the teacher will continue to monitor success.

PARENTS APPROACH

- A care conference will be held to determine a plan for action. This meeting will include parents/guardians, teachers, administration, and in some cases outside specialists.
- If behavior continues to be a problem, a decision will be made regarding the best placement for the child's success. In the best interest of the child, it may be necessary to find alternative childcare arrangements.
- If the parent/ guardian feels that this decision is unfair he/she may follow the grievance policy to appeal the process.

BITING

Biting can be a normal part of a child's development; It is not usually deliberate. It is impulsive and often a result of a child not yet having the language skills needed to communicate an emotion. Young children do not have the cognitive ability to empathize or understand how their actions affect other people.

If a biting does occur, we wash the injury with soap and water and will inform the families of both children. The academy will record any incident in the classrooms' medical logbook. The classroom teacher will develop a plan of action to help prevent further incidents and will inform both families of the plan. The teacher, Academy director, and families will meet and discuss further plans or options if the biting persists.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPEMENT

The teacher will do an ASQ (Age and Stages Questionnaire) assessment within three months of a child's first day of attendance. The ASQ is a developmental and social-emotional screener that includes a section on communication. This is helpful in determining where the child is at as far as his/her language development.

If the parents and teacher feel it is needed, an outside professional may be sought to provide extra support and instruction for the child. The center has worked in collaboration with the Birth-to-Three program as well as the Eau Claire Area School District in providing this extra support.

Families whose primary language is not English should work with their child's teacher to ensure that every effort is made to support language acquisition and communication development. We do not want language to be a barrier. UWEC has several departments that are willing to provide interpretation and support.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The Academy prides itself on supporting the health and wellness needs of the children in our care. Health and wellness needs are reflected in our food and nutrition program as well as our daily physical activity schedule. We recognize that the habits created in the formative early childhood years can influence good health choices for a lifetime. The assistant director serves as the health advocate for the program. This individual uses head of the UWEC Nursing Program and UWEC health services as a resource for questions that may come up regarding health and wellbeing.

NOURISHMENT AND FOOD

The Academy participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP requires the program to adhere to the guidelines set by the agency including meal components, minimum serving sizes (for all ages), recordkeeping, sanitation standards, and preparation guidelines. The kitchen supervisor is responsible for the health and sanitation of food preparation and is certified in food protection/handling. Children are offered food every 3 hours, or on demand for infants.

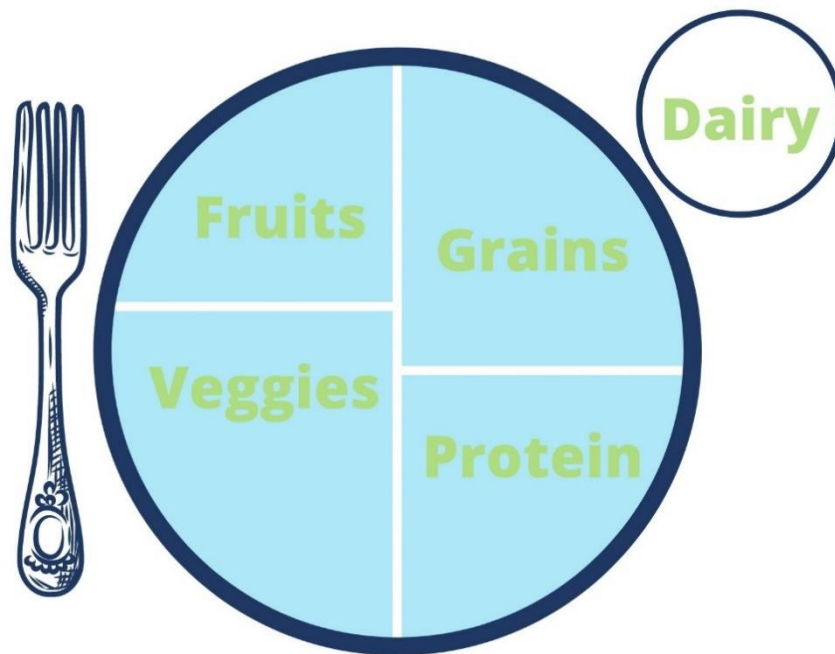
The Nature Academy employs a kitchen supervisor who is responsible for meal preparation, food storage, dishwashing, and serving. This individual is trained in food-safe practices.

Multiple staff members are available to oversee attendance tracking, quantities of food served, production records, and number of children eligible for free or reduce meals. The program

goes through a review process through the US Department of Agriculture to ensure compliance and regulations.

Meals are served every three hours with staff seated at the tables with the children. Mealtime offers a wonderful opportunity to learn about health and nutrition as well as a time to socialize. If a family has special requests, such as vegetarian or organic meals, the child is welcome to bring his/her own meal from home. All meals must meet the nutritional guidelines set by the program. Please talk to the director if you have special dietary needs.

The Academy provides a model of healthy nutrition for children and families. Whenever possible, meals include farm to table components from local suppliers. The program does not include desserts or other sugary sweets in their meal planning. Children are encouraged to try new foods, but they will not be forced to eat anything. The withholding of food is not used as a method of discipline.



Resources for families in Eau Claire County:

- [Eau Claire County University Extension](#)
- [UW-Eau Claire Campus Harvest Food Pantry](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

BREASTFEEDING

The Children's Nature Academy accommodates mothers who choose to continue breastfeeding after returning to work. The Academy allows enough time for breastfeeding employees to express milk while at work. A private room (#004, downstairs) is available with access to an electrical outlet for the use of an electric breast pump, supplied by the employee. The office is locked so please ask a staff member to unlock it for you.

If a mother is delayed for a feeding, a plan for supplemental feedings is determined with families on an individual basis. Resources are available on the benefits of nursing for expectant mothers in the infant classrooms. All staff are trained in appropriate feeding and breastfeeding of infants.

Equipment for breast milk storage and preparation is available. Breastmilk can be brought in and will be stored in the fridge or freezer. We ask that you date it and label it with your child's name. Please consult with your child's teacher regarding further details or questions.

FOOD ALLERGIES AND SENSITIVITIES

Food allergies should be disclosed with administration and the classroom teacher upon enrollment. If your child is diagnosed with an allergy, it is critical for you to notify the administration as soon as possible. Please note that for the Academy to comply with the CACFP guidelines, additional forms must be filled out by a health professional. Alternative diets and food sensitivities must also be kept on file as part of the CACFP guidelines.

The program will work with you and your family to provide the best alternative to dietary requests while meeting the USDA requirements. Nutrition fact labels are available for families to review if a parent has a concern about foods that may pose a health risk to their child. A discount will not be offered in situations where families choose to supplement the food that is served in our facility.

Monthly menus are emailed to parents and are posted on the parent board outside of each classroom. If your child has foods that should be avoided, please cross them out on the menu and give the menu to the teacher. The Children's Nature Academy will share information with staff in a confidential manner.

SPECIAL NEEDS/CHRONIC ILLNESS

Sometimes a child has already been identified with a special need before enrolling in the program. In this case, an appropriate report from the child's physician or other early

intervention professional is requested. Staff work as a team with the parents and other professionals to develop an individualized education program (IEP) appropriate to the child's special needs. The program supports inclusion, and a collaborative decision is made as to what the child needs to be successful.

Teachers may develop a concern about an enrolled child's development or behavior. In this case the teacher may need extra help and support in pinpointing the areas of concern and developing strategies that meet the child's individual needs. In this case the teacher will:

- Observe and document behavior.
- Talk to the parent and management about the concerns; obtain background information and get their input.
- Continue to observe and document the behavior, share resource, and work cooperatively with the parents.
- After a reasonable time has passed and the concerns still exist, the teacher may propose a screening by an outside professional. Parents will be given information about available resources and staff will request parent permission. The initial screening may indicate no follow-up, a re-screen within 6-12 months or determine that more evaluation is required to determine the child's special needs more clearly.
- If the initial screening indicates that further evaluation is necessary, then the staff will work as a team with the parents and other professionals to develop an individualized education program (IEP) appropriate to the child's special needs.
- If the parents do not agree to screening or to work with an outside professional the Director may consider different options. In a case where the child's behavior is having a consistent negative effect on the well-being and development of other children, the Director will evaluate the feasibility of continued care for the child at the center.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

No medications will be given without the written permission of the families. All medications must be in their original container. Medications will be kept in a separate container in the refrigerator or a locked container in the classroom.

Authorization forms are located at the front desk and should be completed and given to your child's teacher. Details of the form include dosage, not to exceed doctor's dosage, starting and ending dates, times, and the name of the medication as listed on the medication container.

All medications and accidents will be recorded in bound record books located in each classroom and on the backside of the medication authorization form. The Director and Assistant Director review these books every 6 months. Families may check the medication form to see the times of administration. If a dose of medication is missed or there is an error in distribution, the parent/guardian will be notified.

The program works with the Eau Claire Health Department to minimize the prevent the spread of illness. In addition, the director of the UWEC Health Services, assisted in preparing an infection control policy. This emphasizes thorough and frequent hand washing, and prevention methods. CDC guidelines are used to determine protocols for illness and exclusion from childcare services.

To reinforce healthy practices, do the following, at home:

- Cover mouths when coughing
- Cover noses when sneezing
- Turning head when sneezing
- Washing hands frequently and thoroughly

As a rule, please keep your child home if he/she exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 101+ (or as directed by the CDC)
- Diarrhea (2 or more incidents)
- Rash
- Vomiting
- Persistent cough
- 2 minor symptoms, not limited to, runny nose, sore throat, tiredness, headache, etc.

If a child exhibits the symptoms listed above, they will be removed from the classroom and parents/ guardians will be notified. Children are to be picked up within 30 minutes of being contacted. They can return 24 hours after symptoms are gone. Public health authorities will be contacted if the disease poses a significant threat to the program. If we notice a child acting in an unusual manner, parents/guardians will be contacted.

If your child is diagnosed with a contagious disease (chicken pox, strep throat, etc.), please contact the Academy at the soonest convenience. This will ensure the safety of others. Communicable diseases will be posted on the classroom door, and if required, will be reported to public health. The program will maintain confidentiality in all cases. In the event of an influenza outbreak or pandemic the program will follow the recommendations of the Department.

HEAD LICE

If a child has head lice, they are expected to stay at home until treatment is complete. If we have reason to believe the treatment was not successful, the family will be notified. The program will take necessary precautions to prevent an outbreak of head lice.

FIRST AID AND INJURIES

Teachers have been instructed in First Aid and CPR. More serious injuries will be handled by the classroom teacher or appropriate administrative staff. The emergency manual (see "Emergency Procedures") contains sections on first aid. 911 will be contacted if the situation is deemed an emergency or life threatening and the individual will be transported to the nearest emergency facility, or the hospital indicated on the child's information form (depending on the recommendation of the EMT) Emergency contact information is listed on the child's information form.

There is a first aid kit in the lobby and smaller ones in each classroom. A first aid kit will also be taken on walks, field trips, and evacuations.

Incidents and injuries are documented in the classroom's medical logbook. Soap and water will be used to clean injuries. If an injury requires medical care, the emergency contacts will be contacted. An injury report will be completed and submitted to state licensing. Complete our report form and fax to ECASD if your child is injured during EC4T hours. A copy of both forms will be kept in the child's permanent file.

The university does not provide blanket medical coverage. Parents are responsible for any costs not covered by their insurance.

Other rules:

- All arts and crafts materials are non-toxic.
- No eating or drinking while using arts and crafts materials.
- Supplies are used in well ventilated areas.
- All plants are labeled and identified.
- Potentially harmful plants are inaccessible to children.
- No paint containing lead more than 0.06 % is used.

PETS

Pets provide many benefits and valuable learning opportunities. Children have an active role in the care and nurturing of all classroom pets (holding, feeding, etc.). Teachers will have a list of the types of pets posted outside the classroom door. Please contact the director if your child has any pet allergies. Parents are notified in advance if pets will be visiting.

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

Children should dress comfortably to play and interact with the environment. Recommended play clothes include:

- Washable and seasonally appropriate clothing
- Closed-toed shoes with heel strap.
- Outdoor clothing for various weather conditions

Children are taught simple tricks like the “fireman flip” that encourages their self-sufficiency. Your child may play outdoors in weather that is drizzly, snowy, wet, and/or windy; please plan accordingly. Your child is recommended to have rain boots and coats in these weather conditions.

Hiking is a daily activity and tennis shoes are recommended. You may leave an extra pair of tennis shoes in your child’s cubby. Flip flops, Crocs, and open sandals are not appropriate and present a safety concern for many activities.

Please bring two extra changes of clothing, in case of spills or potty accidents, and place it in your child’s cubby.

CLOTH DIAPERS

Cloth or disposable diapers are welcome. Parents must provide the diapers, liners (waterproof outer covering), a bag for the dirty diapers, and anything else needed for the process. The staff ensures the process is completed properly.

You must provide a labeled container with a tight lid or a sealed plastic bag for soiled cloth diapers. Families must take all soiled diapers home daily. Staff will store soiled diapers out of children’s reach.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES/NATURAL DISASTERS

The manual of Academy emergency procedures can be found in each classroom or is available for viewing by request.

Fire and tornado guidelines are posted in each classroom. These are practiced monthly so that the children become familiar with the routine.

FIRE

Teachers will quickly and carefully bring the children outside, in case of a fire in the building, taking their Child Information Binder with them.

- Infants will be placed in fire evacuation cribs and wheeled out the front doors.
- Toddlers will walk out the front doors and meet the infant classrooms in the grassy area in the middle of the turn-around area.

- Preschoolers and school-agers will walk out the back doors and meet in the driveway behind the building.

The director, assistant director, coordinator, and any support staff available will assist the classes in evacuating the building and making sure everyone has left. The teachers will take attendance to ensure that all children are accounted for.

TORNADO

Each classroom has a specific destination posted near the classroom's main door. Classrooms will bring their Child Information Binder and a flashlight to the location. The assistant director will bring a radio downstairs.

Staff and children must:

- Walk to their designated safe room or an interior hallway quickly and quietly.
- Sit along the walls in their designated area and away from windows.

The director, assistant director and coordinator must:

- Check all communal areas throughout the building.

All support staff will assist with the needs of the children.

Staff will take children to the building next to the Academy if needed to evacuate. Each teacher will take the emergency contact information with the class. Families will be notified, if needed, by cell phone. Emergency supplies (blanket, water, radio, and flashlight) are stored in the storage room off the lobby. All classrooms have their own flashlight.

In the event of an evacuation, children, and staff with physical or mental disabilities will be supported by all staff. These individuals have been identified, and a plan has been devised for implementation.

Each child must have at least two emergency contact names on their information sheet. We will call these people if we are having difficulty contacting the parents/guardians. Children who require special personal or medical considerations for emergency situations should discuss these issues with administration beforehand so that an action plan can be implemented.

MISSING OR ABDUCTED CHILD

If a child is not accounted for at any time:

- The Childcare director on duty must be notified.
- All available staff members must search both indoor and outdoor premises for the child.
- Attendance records must be checked to eliminate the possibility that the child was not picked up by the parent/guardian.
- Child's parents/guardian must be notified.
- 911 must be called.
- Child's features, clothing, and other details must be identified.
- Lock Down Procedure must be followed – the building will be secured to make sure all children are safe.

SECURITY SYSTEM

The Academy has a security system on all entrances and exits. An activated Blugold or community card is required to enter. A doorbell can be found at the front door of the building for individuals without an access card. The program reserves the right to charge a \$1.00 fee for each time we answer the door for those who repeatedly forget or do not use their cards.

Please notify/speak with the office if:

- You have lost your card.
- Your card has not been activated.
- Your card does not work.

The building and parking lot are monitored by security cameras. Be advised that you are under surveillance. This additional security measure is a crucial step to make sure the environment is safe for everyone. Suspicious behavior will be reported to the university police.

A generator is maintained in the event of a power outage to ensure appropriate lighting, indoors and out. If the phone lines to the Academy are not working, please contact the University Police at (715-836-2222). The program director maintains a cell phone for use when a land line is not available. Emergency phone numbers are posted by all program telephones.

LOCKDOWN

The UW-Eau Claire Children's Academy reserves the right to lockdown the premises in the event of suspicious or threatening behavior. A detailed intruder plan has been developed by

the Campus Police. If you have any questions regarding this plan, please contact administration.

Emergency numbers are posted by all telephones with outdoor lines.

MULTIPLE RESIDENCE, LEGAL CUSTODY AND COURT ORDERS/RECORDS

The program staff is a neutral environment for custody arrangements. The facility may not be used as a place for visitation. You must provide the Academy with copies of all court-ordered documents. Information about your child's care with us will be released to all parents/guardians unless specified differently in a court order.

You must discuss all personal issues outside of the center to maintain a healthy environment for all children. Failure to do so may result in termination of childcare service. Please inform your child's teacher(s) if multiple addresses and/or e-mail addresses are required for communication.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING

The law requires that all staff of the Academy (or any childcare) report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Children are observed regularly for signs of injury, illness, or abnormal behavior. Unusual observations will be documented in detail in the medical logbook.

Anything requiring intervention will be reported to the director as per HFS 46.07 (6) (a) and then to required agencies as listed in HFS 46.04(8) (a & b).

Any staff member who physically or verbally abuses a child or another staff member will be dismissed. The matter will then be turned over to UW system attorneys for further investigation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All records and information on families and children will be kept confidential. Children's records are accessible only to the parent/guardian, administration, and teachers in the program. Information will not be released to unauthorized parties without parental written consent. Personal information may be discussed with the child's teacher/s or the parents if it is in the best interest of the child and is aiding in meeting the needs of the child.

CONCEALED CARRY POLICY

DCF 251.06(2) (c) addresses the presence of firearms and ammunition in a licensed group childcare center as follows:

“Firearms, ammunition, and other potentially dangerous items may not be kept on the premises.”

Weapons are banned in all campus buildings, even for those licensed to carry concealed weapons. All employees will be prohibited from carrying weapons while at work. This does not apply to law enforcement personnel.

TRANSITION POLICY/PROCEDURES

OVERVIEW

Transitioning into the program should be smooth and comfortable for both children and families. All families need to meet with their child’s teacher before their first day. This allows the child to become familiar with the teacher, as well as the classroom. When children transition internally or externally, the program can provide support.

Steps taken include:

- Getting a written release of information form
- Prepare all these documents: needs summary, family needs assessment, ASQS, assessment information, intake forms and other materials requested by the family (A conference is available upon request)
- **Infant/Toddler transition.** Transitioning from the infant room, where a child is on their own napping/feeding schedule, takes longer for some than others. It is best to work through this change, allowing a child to adjust to our schedule in their own time.

Families will receive either written or verbal notice for a classroom visit. Initially, the visit is for a short period of time, then the child will return to his/her original classroom. We have the visits at various times of the day, so the child gets a glimpse at how things run during various times throughout the day.

TRANSITION TO 4K

Before the beginning of the school year, the children entering our 4-year-old-kindergarten program participate in a 4K Orientation. The children spend time doing an activity to become familiar with their teacher and new classmates.

TRANSITION FROM 4K TO 5-YEAR-OLD-KINDERGARTEN

During the Spring of a child's 4K experience, the teachers meet with the kindergarten teachers from the Eau Claire School District. This allows them to share assessment results and provide the teachers with information that may help the child's transition.

The teachers spend a lot of time talking to the children about what they can expect in 5-year-old kindergarten.

SEPARATION

The staff at the Academy is here to help your child as they transition into the program. Talking about the new experiences prior to your child's first day of attendance and participating in program visits can take away some of your child's negative feelings.

You are welcome to call the office to find out how your child is doing. As children develop, they may experience separation anxiety. Work with your child's teacher to determine the best action plan.

INDOOR TEMPERATURE

State licensing regulations suggest that classroom temperatures are between 67 and 80 degrees. Dressing in layers will help your child stay comfortable during the day.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

The program's nature-inspired focus centers on the belief that children need fresh air and exercise to maximize their physical and emotional health. All children who are well enough to be at the Academy will play outside, weather permitting. Teachers provide a minimum of 45 minutes of physical activity during both the morning and afternoon time (this may be indoors or out)

Exclusions include temperatures, wind chills, and stormy conditions that pose a threat to the health and well-being of children and adults. Licensing does not have a temperature that prohibits outdoor play. However, after reviewing the research on temperatures and children, the program adheres to the following table:

OUTDOOR PLAY TEMPERATURES

Infant to age 2:

- Minimum temperature → 20 degrees Fahrenheit
- Maximum temperature → 90 degrees Fahrenheit

Ages 2 and up:

- Minimum temperature → 0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Maximum temperature → 90 degrees Fahrenheit

WATER PLAY

Water play is included in our summer experiences. Sprinklers and other water activities are set up on the lawn for fun and excitement.

The program follows the regulations set by the state of Wisconsin so that safety is a priority. Your child's teacher will notify you of any special supplies that are needed.

WOOD TICKS AND OTHER OUTDOOR HAZARDS

Since we are a nature-inspired program, there is a potential for wood ticks and other outdoor hazards. Childcare providers may not remove wood ticks that are imbedded in the skin of a children, per State of Wisconsin Licensing Regulations. Check your child for ticks daily and contact your health care professional if you are unsure of the procedure for tick removal.

Permission to use outdoor insect repellent is on the child enrollment form. You will need to give authorization and provide your insect repellent.

Information on ticks, mosquitoes, and other outdoor pests is available on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources website: www.dnr.wi.gov/.

SUN SAFETY

As a step to prevent skin cancer, the American Academy of Dermatologists (AAD) recommends using sunscreen in addition to wearing protective clothing and utilizing shaded areas.

Parents/guardians are responsible to provide their preferred brand of sunscreen for their child to use before outdoor play. A permission form is located on the enrollment form and must be completed before admission. Teachers follow the licensing protocol when administering sunscreen. Sun safety education is a part of the school's safety curriculum. More information about sun safety can be found at the [AAD](http://www.aad.org/).

REST

State licensing regulations state that “a child under 5 years of age in care for more than four hours shall have a nap or rest period for a minimum of 30 minutes” (HFS 46).

The Children’s Academy has sheets that are laundered weekly, but you may provide a blanket, “special stuffed animal,” and/or pillow. The Children’s Academy believes that a quiet rest time is beneficial to all children.

SIDS

All teachers and assistants are trained in SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) as part of their orientation. We comply with the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association. This information is clearly stated in the Infant/Toddler Safe Sleep Policy.

Teachers always maintain sight and sound supervision. They are also required to be able verify the number of children that are in their care. This may mean moving a shelf or other barrier while rubbing backs. Children who sleep in a crib are prohibited from using blankets while they sleep but can use sleep sacks. Soft toys, bumpers, pacifier attachments, and jewelry are not allowed.

BIRTHDAYS AND HOLIDAYS

Birthdays can be celebrated at school. However, as an alternative to “birthday treats,” we encourage sending a special book to donate to the classroom that will be marked with the child’s name and birth date. This leaves an impression on the child and validates the importance of reading.

UW-Eau Claire Children’s Nature Academy embraces family diversity through the sharing of family traditions. However, the inclusion of holidays that are centered on religious beliefs proves to be challenging. Therefore, child-initiated conversations regarding these holidays are permitted without planning on the part of the classroom teachers.

Holidays will be acknowledged in a generic sense that incorporates values such as giving, sharing, and friendship. Our program has created its traditions such as our Spring Picnic that serve to unite individuals of all beliefs.

TOYS

The Academy will not be responsible for lost or damaged toys. Toys from home are discouraged and have the potential to disrupt classroom activities.

Please talk to your child’s teacher about “show-n-tell,” “sharing-time,” or “letter-of-the week,” activities.

PASSIVE MEDIA VIEWING

Children under the age of three will not participate in passive media viewing. All other media will be limited, to enrich the classroom curriculum. Media is reviewed and limited to 30 minutes per week. Program staff utilizes technology for assessment, lesson planning, and communication. Computers and iPads are the devices used in the classroom.

BABYSITTING

The Children’s Nature Academy is not responsible for any services provided by our employees. Please do not ask employees to babysit during their scheduled work time.

FIELD TRIP PROCEDURES

OVERVIEW

Teachers will notify parents/guardians of upcoming field trips and provide necessary information, via a permission form. If the parent/guardian chooses to have their child stay behind, or does not complete the required form for participation, the child will join another classroom at the Academy until their class returns. The facility uses a contracted bus company for field trips off site. Walking field trips are limited to hikes on the facility.

Items teachers will bring on field trips:

- Cell phone
- Students' emergency information
- Attendance list
- Students' medications
- First aid kit

Field trip fees are not included in tuition. Payments for field trips will be given to the classroom teacher. Emergency and first aid procedures are in effect. Staff supervises children to ensure they are riding safely. We do not transport children in a program vehicle or personal vehicles.

PRIOR TO LEAVING THE FACILITY

- Children will be counted, and attendance will be taken.

- Children will be given a label that identifies the facility name and number.
- Safety rules will be reviewed for all participants.

Every time the children depart from the bus, a teacher will:

- Count children and take attendance.
- Walk down the bus aisle checking to make sure each child has gotten off the bus.
- Assign a student assistant to any child who requires special assistance.

DURING TRANSPORTATION

Staff will be responsible for supervising children.

This includes:

- Making sure children are seated and facing forward.
- Ensuring noise levels are maintained.
- Providing security to students who may be unsure of the experience.

FIELDTRIP PROTOCOL

- Support the fieldtrip objectives.
- Maintain safety.
- Be responsible for taking children to the bathroom.

HOLIDAYS, SNOW DAYS AND SCHOOL CLOSINGS

The Academy is closed on holidays and staff development days. Nature Academy's Half days are 7 a.m. – 12:00 noon or 12:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Please refer to the calendar included with your parent letter for specific dates.

The Children's Academy is open unless the university closes classes for the day. In case of inclement weather, please listen to WQOW for program closings and check the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire website. Families will be notified by phone or email in the event of an unexpected closing during the day. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, the authorized emergency contacts will be notified.

PARKING/SIGN-IN

Parking is available on the grounds. University guidelines for parking will be followed regarding usage, permits, loading zones, etc.

It is critical to remember that children are often difficult to see and are subject to impulsive behaviors. This requires diligence on the part of the parent and the drivers of all vehicles.

Do not park next to the playgrounds when picking up your child. A gate has been installed blocking this area. However, even if the gate is opened, unauthorized vehicles may not enter this area.

SIGN-IN PROCESS

- Parents/Guardians should enter the program at the front door and check in on the computer located in the front lobby. Children should not touch the computer due to the sensitivity of the enrollment tracking software.
- Parent/Guardians must walk their child to their classrooms. Locations will be posted on classroom doors.
- Make eye contact and/or speak with program staff before you leave so pick-up time can be recorded.
- Parents/Guardians must check out at a computer before leaving the building.

STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS

GROUP SIZES AND RATIOS

Age Group	Age Range for Ratio	Child: Staff Ratio	Max Group Size
Infants/Toddlers/Twos	Birth to 12 Months	3/4: 1	6/8
	12 - Months	4: 1	8
Pre-School	3 to 4 Years	10: 1	20
4K	4 to 5 Years	13: 1	24
School-Age	5 to 6 Years	17: 1	34
School-Age	6 and older	18: 1	36

*These are the recommended ratios for licensing.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The parties involved with any grievances or concerns should be the first people addressed. If the issue persists, please bring the concern to the Academy director. If the question or concern cannot be immediately addressed, the following problem-solving outline will be used.

Both parties will:

- Agree on the statement of concern.
- Brainstorm solutions to the problem.
- Agree on attempting one of the solutions.
- Evaluate the solution.
- Repeat this process until the concern is resolved or until both parties agree that further assistance by a third party is needed.

If still unsatisfactory, the concern may be brought to the attention of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance.

Feedback is always appreciated. The program distributes feedback surveys yearly. However, if you have concerns or compliments you may email them at any time using our online form. This can be found at <http://www.uwec.edu/Children/families/parent.htm>

STAFF

We maintain high educational standards in keeping with the belief of the organization that the early years are formative years of brain development and growth.

Staff at the Academy has the following qualifications:

Director	Master's Degree in Early Childhood or a Related Field
Assistant Director	Degree in Education with addition training in leadership and financial processes.
Coordinator	Degree in Education with DPI certification
Lead Teachers	Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood or a Related Field
EC4T Teachers	Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood or a Related Field with current Wisconsin DPI Licensure in Early Childhood
Students Assistants	Students enrolled in UW-Eau Claire or CVTC from various departments.
Volunteers /Practicum	As determined by program requirements

STAFF ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

The Department of Children and Families has provided the following guidelines for staff orientation:

- Review of licensing rules for group childcare and of our center's policies as well as the schedule of center activities.
- Review of contingency plans; fire and tornado evacuation plan and operation of fire extinguishers as well as first aid procedures.
- Job responsibilities and job descriptions.
- Training in recognition of childhood illnesses and infectious diseases, hand washing procedures, and universal precautions.
- Child abuse and neglect; laws, identification, and reporting procedures. as well as how to contact a parent/guardian if a child is absent from the center without prior notification from the parent/guardian.
- Procedures that ensure that our workers always know children assigned to their care and know their whereabouts, including during transportation provided by the center.
- Behavioral management techniques as well as information on any special needs a child may have and a plan on how to meet those needs. Procedures for sharing information related to a child's special health care needs including any physical, emotional, social, or cognitive disabilities with any childcare worker who may be assigned to care for that child throughout the day.
- Review of procedures to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) (prior to the first day of work).

(Taken from DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Division of Early Care and Education DCF-F-(CFS-2026) (R. 04/2009))

Additional Orientation Training Requirements:

- Civil Rights
- Importance of Breastmilk
- Child pick-up procedures
- Building and Playground Safety
- Hazardous Materials and Bloodborne Pathogens
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Medication training
- Behavior Management Policy
- Confidentiality Policy

UWEC Children's Academy:

Tax ID Number: # 39-1805963

Original License Date: June 14, 1974

License Amended: June 1, 2002

Infant/Toddler Original License Date: January 23, 2006

Our Licensing Specialist: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, 610 Gibson Street, Suite 2, Eau Claire, WI 54701-3687. Phone: 715-836-2187. Fax: 715-836-2516.

Eau Claire Area School District: Early Learning Programs, 500 E. Main St, Eau Claire, WI 54701. Phone: 715-852-3077. Fax: 715-852-3004.

Revised 11/21/05, 3/24/06, 4/28/06, 5/11/06, 5/23/06, 5/26/06, 6/22/06, 2/08, 5/12, 4/15, 5/17, 7/18, 4/21, 4/27

RATES FOR FALL 2023-2024

COMMUNITY

Program	Weekly	Daily	Evening/Hourly
6 wks. – 3 years	\$280.00	\$57.00	\$14.00
3 – 4 years	\$245.00	\$50.00	\$14.00
4K Wrap Around		\$48.00 (Non 4K day) \$38.00 (4K day)	\$14.00
School Age Care			

- 2 full day minimum. 2-day programs must balance an existing schedule. For 4K children a minimum of 2 days of wrap around care is required.
- Program withdrawals will require a 2-week written notice. All withdrawals will be considered permanent. If you wish to reenroll, you will be asked to complete an interest forms and reenrollment will be based on availability.
- During the semester, no days will be credited due to absences. This includes planned or unplanned absences. This ensures that our teachers can count on being paid their full salary throughout the year. Please see program policies for more details.
- A calendar of billing dates and days that the center is closed is available each fall. If you did not receive one, please do not hesitate to ask.
- The program reserves the right to hold a spot for an infant if space allows; however, families must pay for a minimum of two days, per week, from the time a child is 6 weeks old.

- In the event of overpayment or cancellation of services, refunds will be processed by UWEC.

Extra Charges: \$5.00 late fee for 1- 5 minutes.
\$1.00 late fee for each additional minute after 5 minutes.
Registration / Supply fee: \$25.00 per registration period: Fall / Spring / Summer
Drop-in days are charged at \$2.00 extra per day.
\$15.00 for insufficient funds.

Rates are reviewed each semester.

Bills are emailed to families every four weeks. Beginning June 1, 2021, no cash payments will be accepted. Delinquent payment fees will apply.

The Academy gives eligibility for a tuition discount if parent or guardian is part of the UWEC Faculty and Staff. The Academy asks those eligible to see the office for verification.

DEFINITIONS FOR STUDENTS, AND FACULTY/STAFF

- You must enroll at UWEC with a minimum of 6 undergraduate credits or 3 graduate credits and show proof of paying segregated registrar to qualify for the student rate.
- You must show proof of UWEC employment for the semester to receive the staff rate. A schedule or written notice from the department will suffice.

ADDENDUM 1.1

DAILY PRESCHOOL SAMPLE SCHEDULE

7:00 am – 8:45 am	Center Opens Free Play in designated classrooms
8:45 am – 9:00 am	Large Group Learning
9:00 am – 9:30 am	Breakfast Self Help Skills / Bathroom
9:30 am – 10:30 am	Centers (Free Choice)
10:30 am – 11:30 am	Large Music Play (Outdoor Weather Permitting)
11:30 am – 11:45 am	Story Time
11:45 am – 12:00 pm	Self Help Skills / Bathroom
12:00 pm -12:30 pm	Lunch
12:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Rest Time
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Snack Self Help Skills / Bathroom
3:30 pm – 3:45 pm	Story Time
3:45 pm – 5:00 pm	Large Music Play (Outdoor Weather Permitting)
5:00 pm – 5:30 pm	Free Play in designated classrooms Center Closes

All schedules are subject to change based on the needs of a child.

Bathroom skills are determined on an “as needed” individual basis. Family bathrooms are located on the main level of the facility. We ask that all families refrain from using the bathroom while children are present, closing the main doors, and check with office administration for further instructions.

All classrooms open in one classroom within their age group at 7:00 a.m. As teachers arrive for the day children will split off into their separate age groups. At the end of the day, the cycle reverses.

ADDENDUM 1.2

The Academy participates in the USDA food and nutrition program and supports:

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In agreement with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations and policies, all participating in or using USDA programs are not allowed to discriminate based upon:

- Race
- Color
- National origin
- Sex
- Disability
- Age
- Reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons who require alternative means of communication for information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact their State or local Agency where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities must contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

ADA STATEMENT

The Academy follows the Americans with Disabilities Act and encourages all program participants to do the same. We provide reasonable options for inclusion in the program.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write:

USDA, Director
Office of Civil Rights
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410

Or call (800)795-3272 or (202)720-6382(TTY)

The UW-Eau Claire Children's Nature is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

ADDENDUM 1. 3

WHAT TO BRING ON THE FIRST DAY

Infant and Toddler: (please label everything)

Personal Items:

- Two or three pairs of extra clothing including pants, shirts, and socks.
- Blankets from home for children over the age of one.
- A pacifier or nook that can stay at the Academy.
- Sunscreen for use during spring and summer months.
- Jackets, coats, snow pants, boots, hats, mittens, etc. as appropriate for the weather.
- Disposable or cloth diapers and wipes. If diaper ointment is needed you will need to submit directions and permission in writing and provide the ointment.

Classroom Needs:

- Two boxes of Kleenex at the beginning of each semester.
- One package of small (3 oz.) paper cups ("Dixie" cup style).

Food / Drink Requirements:

- Formula or Breast Milk
- At least three bottles so that a clean bottle is available for every feeding during the day. Please label them with your child's full first and last names. Please do not use initials. We will label any bottles that are not labeled and will re-label them if necessary.
- Jarred baby foods and finger food snacks for children one. The program will provide table foods when your child begins to eat those. Please talk to your child's teacher.

Twos and Preschool: (please label everything)

Teachers request that you bring the following items on your child's first day:

- Clearly labeled diapers and wipes, for children still wearing or in training.
- Two changes of clothes including a shirt, pants or shorts, underwear, socks, and an extra sweater or sweatshirt. Please remember to label and change these extra clothes with each season and as they are used. One box of Kleenex each semester.
- A blanket for rest time.
- Sunscreen and bug spray for use during the summer months.

ADDENDUM 1.4

WEATHER GUIDELINES

Weather Watch Wisconsin Child Care

Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)										
Wind Speed in mph										
		Calm	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
Temperature in Fahrenheit	40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27
	30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13
	20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1
	10	10	1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15
	0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29
	-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43

Comfortable for outdoor	Caution	Danger
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Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)														
Relative Humidity (Percent)														
		40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
Temperature in Fahrenheit	80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87
	84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
	90	91	93	95	97	100	103	105	109	113	117	122	127	132
	94	97	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	129	135			
	100	109	114	118	124	129	130							
	104	119	124	131	137									

Understanding this image:

- Wind-chill
 - Uncomfortable → 30 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Cold → 15 to 30 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Very cold → 0 to 15 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Bitter cold with risk of frostbite → -20 to 0 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Extreme cold and frostbite is likely → -20 to -60 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Heat Index
 - Comfortable → 78 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Uncomfortable → 85 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Uncomfortable and may be hazardous → 90 degrees Fahrenheit.
 - Dangerous → 100 degrees Fahrenheit

HANDBOOK CHECKLIST

Please date and initial the following statements as you review them:

POLICIES TO REVIEW

- ___ 1. Registration for school age children, school-out days, and summer.
- ___ 2. Childcare contracts, vacations, changes, and cancellations.
- ___ 3. Food and nutrition; especially days when sack lunches are needed.
- ___ 4. Children's allergies, health concerns and emergency procedures.
- ___ 5. Security systems, the need for Blugold/community cards and possible associated fees.
- ___ 6. Dress Code, hand washing on arrival, outdoor activities, items to bring from home, extra clothing, rest time, and toys.
- ___ 7. Health care policies.
- ___ 8. Policies and procedures listed about field trips.

INFORMATION TO BE AWARE OF

- ___ 9. Curriculum, class groupings and changes that may happen during interim.
- ___ 10. Required completed paperwork prior to the first day of attendance.
- ___ 11. Attendance and drop off and pick-up policies.
- ___ 12. Hours of operation and holidays.
- ___ 13. Fee information, late pick-up fees, and outstanding account balances.
- ___ 14. Parent/teacher communication.
- ___ 15. Procedures listed about concerns, grievances, and discharges.

Any questions? Please contact the administrative staff at: **715-836-2178**

CONSENT

I have read and understood the UW-Eau Claire Children's Nature Academy parent handbook.

Child's Name (print): _____

Parent Signature: _____

BEHAVIOR POLICIES

I have read and agree to the Nature Academy Guidance Policy provided in this document.

Signature

Date

Children over the age of 3 should review the policies with their child, in order to maintain consistency between home and school.

I have reviewed the PBIS rules with my child.

Signature

Date

Center-wide rules are as follows:

- Be Kind and Respectful
- Be Safe
- Be Responsible and Make Good Choices

More information about PBIS is available in the family resource center, including social stories and books about behaviors.

All handbooks are reviewed yearly, in collaboration with our licensing process. The program is in constant review:

- a. Feedback Forms
- b. Advisory Board Meetings
- c. Emails and Confidential Surveys
- d. Open Door Conversations
- e. Emails
- f. Conferences

The Children's Nature Academy is fortunate to be able to provide unique experiences like hiking and sledding. The Nature Academy does not provide any type of blanket medical coverage and the parents are ultimately responsible for any costs not covered by their insurance.

As part of UWEC, the University has liability coverage. To review this coverage, please use the following [Insurance Page](#)